

May 2026

CURRENT AFFAIRS

- TOPIC WISE CURRENT AFFAIRS
- 150 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE
- ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANT EVENTS



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PREFACE

This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for various Central & State level Competitive Examinations, covering content from the month of May 2026.

The Magazine is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

The first section is dedicated to Topic Wise Current Affairs with a short description to provide information about all major happenings this month.

Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers

The Second Section contains 150 Multiple Choice Questions based on daily current affairs.

Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Event

The Third Section covers some major happenings in this month along with analysis. The content has been covered from various online & offline sources including reputed newspapers like The Hindu, Indian Express etc. All the news topics have been explained keeping in mind their underlying issues. Every issue has been covered comprehensively. Some of the information provided may not be directly relevant for the examination. As the content is very wide, we have only covered a limited set of issues. You can utilize it smartly along with Daily Study of News Papers as well as other sources.



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Section 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs

Section 2

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SECTION 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short



1: Important Days



Labour Day : 01 May :-

Labour Day (May Day) is observed globally to honor the contributions of workers and the labor movement. Its roots trace back to the Haymarket Affair in the United States, which advocated for an eight-hour workday. In India, Labour Day is also known as Antarrashtriya Shramik Diwas and was first celebrated in 1923 in Chennai. The day highlights workers' rights, fair wages, and safe working conditions. It is marked by rallies, awareness programs, and recognition of workers across industries. The theme for International Labour Day 2026 is "Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working Environment".



World Tuna Day : 02 May :-

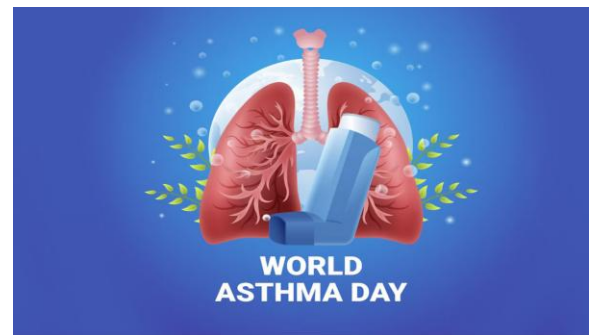
World Tuna Day is observed every year on May 2 to raise awareness about the importance of tuna fish and promote sustainable fishing practices. The day was officially established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2016 through a resolution recognizing the significant role of tuna in global food security, economic development, and livelihoods—especially for coastal and island nations. This day highlights the need for

sustainable fishing methods, conservation of marine ecosystems, and responsible consumption to ensure tuna populations remain stable for future generations.



World Press Freedom Day : 03 May :-

World Press Freedom Day is observed every year on 3 May to highlight the importance of a free and independent press. It was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, following the 1991 Windhoek Declaration adopted by African journalists advocating for press freedom. The day emphasizes that freedom of expression is a fundamental human right under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It also serves as a reminder to governments to respect media independence and honors journalists who have lost their lives while reporting. The theme for World Press Freedom Day 2026 is "Shaping a Future at Peace: Promoting Press Freedom for Human Rights, Development, and Security".



World Asthma Day 2026 : 05 May :-

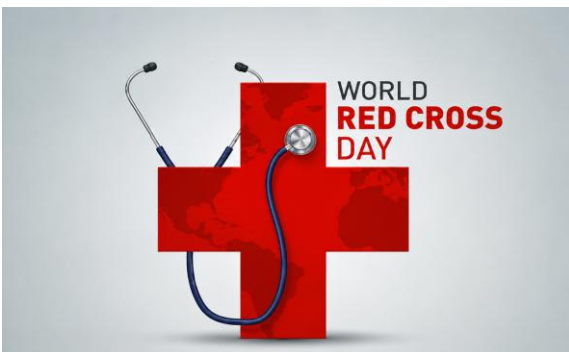
World Asthma Day is observed every year on the first Tuesday of May (in 2026, it falls on May 5). It was first organized in 1998 by the Global Initiative for Asthma in

collaboration with the World Health Organization. The day is dedicated to raising awareness about asthma, a chronic respiratory disease that affects millions of people worldwide. It highlights the importance of proper diagnosis, treatment, and management, and encourages governments and healthcare systems to improve access to care and reduce asthma-related deaths. The theme for World Asthma Day 2026 is "Access to anti-inflammatory inhalers for everyone with asthma – still an urgent need".



World Athletics Day : 07 May :-

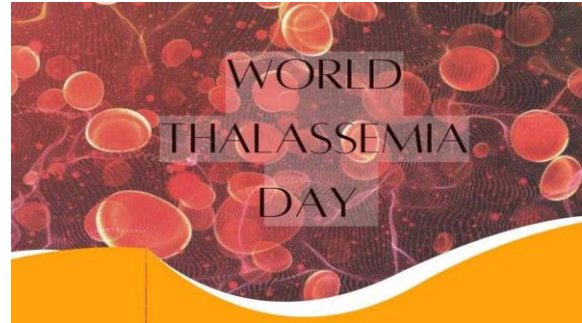
World Athletics Day is observed every year in early May (generally around 7 May) to promote athletics and encourage youth participation in sports. It was initiated by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), now known as World Athletics. The day aims to spread awareness about the importance of fitness, identify young talent, and strengthen grassroots sports development across the world. Its significance lies in promoting a healthy lifestyle and encouraging mass participation in athletics, especially among school and college students.



World Red Cross Day : 08 May :-

World Red Cross Day is observed every year on May 8 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Henry Dunant,

who founded the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and became the first Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1901. The day highlights the humanitarian work carried out by Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers across the world during disasters, wars, and health emergencies. It also promotes values of humanity, neutrality, and voluntary service. The theme for World Red Cross Day 2026 is "United in Humanity".



World Thalassaemia Day : 08 May :-

World Thalassaemia Day is observed annually on May 8 to raise awareness about thalassaemia, a hereditary blood disorder that affects the production of haemoglobin. The day was established by the Thalassaemia International Federation to support patients and encourage better treatment, prevention, and research. It also honours patients, families, and healthcare professionals working against the disease. The theme for World Thalassaemia Day 2026 is "Hidden No More: Finding the Undiagnosed. Supporting the Unseen".



World Lupus Day : 10 May :-

World Lupus Day is observed every year on May 10 to spread awareness about lupus, a chronic autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks its own tissues and organs. The day was first observed in 2004 after an international lupus conference highlighted

the need for better diagnosis, treatment, and patient care. Symptoms of lupus include fatigue, joint pain, skin rashes, and organ inflammation. The theme for World Lupus Day 2026 is "Make Lupus Visible."



Mother's Day (Second Sunday of May) : 10 May :-

Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday of May in many countries, including India. In 2026, it falls on May 10. Mother's Day traces its modern origins to the United States. It was started by Anna Jarvis in the early 20th century to honour mothers and their sacrifices. The day became officially recognized in 1914. The day recognizes the love, care, and contributions of mothers and maternal figures in families and society. People celebrate it by expressing gratitude through gifts, greetings, family gatherings, and acts of appreciation.



National Technology Day (India) : 11 May :-

National Technology Day is observed every year on May 11 in India to celebrate the country's achievements in science and technology. The day commemorates the successful Pokhran-II nuclear tests conducted in Rajasthan on May 11, 1998, under "Operation Shakti," which established India as a nuclear-capable nation. The day also marks other technological milestones such as the successful test flight of the indigenous Hansa-3 aircraft and the testing of the Trishul missile. It was

officially declared by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1999.



International Nurses Day : 12 May :-

International Nurses Day is observed every year on May 12 to honour the dedication and contribution of nurses toward healthcare and patient welfare. The day marks the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, who is regarded as the pioneer of modern nursing. The day highlights the vital role nurses play in hospitals, emergency care, community health, and public health systems worldwide. The International Nurses Day 2026 theme is "Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives."



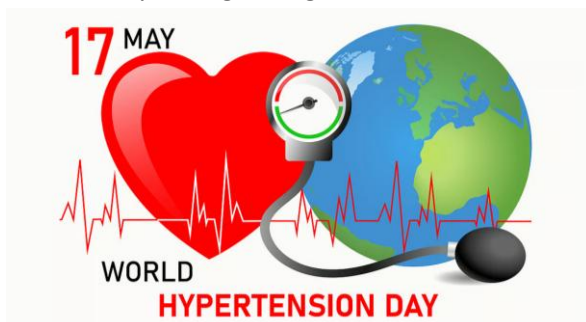
International Day of Families : 15 May :-

International Day of Families is observed every year on 15 May to highlight the importance of families as the basic unit of society and to raise awareness about social, economic, and demographic issues affecting families worldwide. The day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993. It promotes discussions on topics such as work-life balance, gender equality, child welfare, poverty reduction, and social inclusion. The 2026 International Day of Families theme is "Families, Inequalities and Child Wellbeing".



World Telecommunication Day : 17 May :-

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day is observed every year on 17 May to highlight the importance of communication technologies and the internet in social and economic development. The day commemorates the establishment of the International Telecommunication Union in 1865 after the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in Paris. In 2006, World Telecommunication Day and World Information Society Day were merged to form the present observance. The 2026 theme is “Digital lifelines – Strengthening resilience in a connected world,” focusing on the need for resilient digital infrastructure, secure communication systems, and uninterrupted connectivity during emergencies and crises.



World Hypertension Day : 17 May :-

World Hypertension Day is observed annually on 17 May to spread awareness about high blood pressure, often called the “silent killer” because it usually shows no early symptoms. The day was initiated by the World Hypertension League to encourage regular blood pressure monitoring and healthy lifestyle practices. The 2026 theme is “Controlling Hypertension Together: Check Your Blood Pressure Regularly, Defeat the Silent Killer,” emphasizing collective action by individuals,

families, healthcare workers, and governments to prevent and manage hypertension.



World AIDS Vaccine Day : 18 May :-

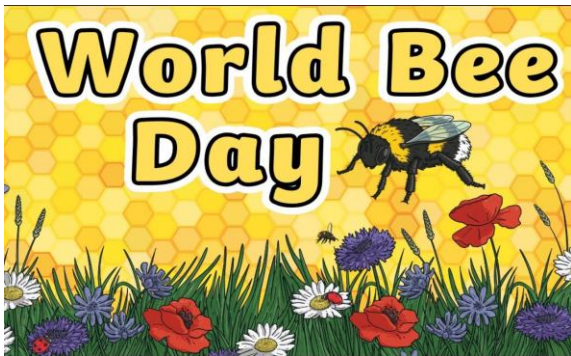
World AIDS Vaccine Day is observed every year on 18 May to spread awareness about the need for an effective vaccine against HIV/AIDS and to recognize the contribution of scientists, healthcare workers, volunteers, and organizations involved in HIV vaccine research. The day was inspired by a 1997 speech delivered by Bill Clinton, who called for greater efforts to develop an AIDS vaccine. It has been observed globally since 1998. The day highlights the importance of research, prevention, treatment, and public awareness in the global fight against Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.



International Museum Day : 18 May :-

International Museum Day is observed every year on 18 May to highlight the role of museums in preserving cultural heritage, history, art, and knowledge. The day was established in 1977 by the International Council of Museums. Museums play an important role in education, research, and cultural exchange by protecting historical artifacts and showcasing civilizations and traditions. On

this occasion, museums across the world organize exhibitions, educational activities, and awareness programs to encourage public participation and interest in heritage conservation. This year's International Museum Day theme is "Museums Uniting a Divided World."



World Bee Day : 20 May :-

World Bee Day is observed every year on 20 May to raise awareness about the importance of bees and other pollinators in maintaining biodiversity, food security, and ecological balance. The day highlights the threats faced by bees due to climate change, habitat loss, pesticides, and pollution. The United Nations declared World Bee Day in 2017, and the date was chosen to mark the birth anniversary of Anton Janša, an 18th-century Slovenian pioneer of modern beekeeping. The 2026 theme is "Bee together for people and the planet," emphasizing the role of bees in sustaining agriculture and ecosystems.



National Anti-Terrorism Day (India) : 21 May :-

National Anti-Terrorism Day is observed every year on 21 May in India. The day marks the death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who was assassinated in 1991 during an election campaign in Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu. The Government of India declared 21 May as National Anti-Terrorism Day to

spread awareness about the dangers of terrorism and violence. The observance was started with the aim of promoting peace, harmony, and national unity among citizens.



International Tea Day : 21 May :-

International Tea Day is celebrated annually on 21 May to recognize the cultural, economic, and social importance of tea across the world. The United Nations General Assembly officially recognized International Tea Day in 2019 following a proposal supported by tea-producing countries, including India. The first UN-recognized observance was celebrated in 2020. The day aims to support sustainable tea production and improve the livelihoods of tea workers and small growers. The official themes for International Tea Day 2026 are "Fostering Growth and Inclusion" and "Sustaining Tea, Supporting Communities."



International Day for Biological Diversity : 22 May :-

The International Day for Biological Diversity is observed every year on 22 May to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity and the need to protect ecosystems across the world. The day commemorates the adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity during the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. In 2026, the theme is "Acting locally for global impact", highlighting how local

conservation efforts can contribute to achieving global biodiversity goals and sustainable development targets.



World Turtle Day : 23 May :-

World Turtle Day is observed every year on 23 May to raise awareness about the protection and conservation of turtles, tortoises, and their habitats. The day was founded in 2000 by the organization American Tortoise Rescue to encourage people around the world to help these endangered reptiles survive and thrive. Turtles are among the oldest living reptiles on Earth, but many species are threatened due to habitat destruction, plastic pollution, illegal wildlife trade, and climate change.



Africa Day : 25 May :-

Africa Day is observed every year on 25 May to celebrate African unity, freedom, and the progress of the African continent. The day marks the foundation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The OAU was later transformed into the African Union in 2002. Africa Day highlights the rich cultural heritage, diversity, and achievements of African nations. The official African Union theme for Africa Day 2026 is "Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063."



28 May MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

Menstrual Hygiene Day : 28 May :-

Menstrual Hygiene Day is observed every year on 28 May to spread awareness about the importance of menstrual health, hygiene, and access to sanitary products for women and girls. The day also aims to break social taboos, myths, and stigma surrounding menstruation and promote proper menstrual education worldwide. Menstrual Hygiene Day was initiated in 2014 by the German-based organization WASH United along with several global partners working in health, sanitation, and women's rights. The theme for Menstrual Hygiene Day 2026 is "#PeriodFriendlyWorld".



International Day of UN Peacekeepers : 29 May :-

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is observed every year on 29 May to honour the bravery, dedication, and sacrifice of UN peacekeepers serving in conflict zones around the world. The United Nations General Assembly officially established this observance in 2002. The date marks the anniversary of the first UN peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which began operations in the Middle East on 29 May 1948 after the Arab-Israeli conflict. The theme for the 2026 International Day of UN Peacekeepers is "Invest in Peace".



World No Tobacco Day : 31 May :-

World No Tobacco Day is observed every year on 31 May to raise awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption and to encourage people to quit smoking and other forms of tobacco use. The World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of the WHO, passed a resolution in 1987 calling for a global observance against tobacco use. Since 1988, World No Tobacco Day has been observed annually on 31 May. The theme for World No Tobacco Day 2026 is “Unmasking the appeal – countering nicotine and tobacco addiction.”

2: Agreements



India-New Zealand FTA Boosts Ayush Systems and Wellness Mobility :-

The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) includes a Health and Traditional Medicine Annex, recognizing India's Ayush systems as globally relevant healthcare practices. The agreement facilitates market access for Indian wellness services and introduces mobility pathways for practitioners. This FTA positions Ayush as a pillar of global healthcare, promoting holistic and sustainable health solutions.

Foreign Language Skills Enhance Job Prospects: Dharmendra Pradhan :-

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan emphasized the importance of foreign language skills for job opportunities during a ceremony in Jaipur. The Rajasthan government signed MoUs with institutions like the English and Foreign Languages University to enhance language proficiency. Pradhan highlighted the role of foreign languages in connecting societies and boosting employment, particularly with the proposed EU free trade agreement. These initiatives align with the National Education Policy 2020, promoting multilingual education and skill development.



India Expands Mobility Pacts to Protect Migrants :-

India has signed 27 migration and mobility agreements with 23 countries, focusing on safe migration pathways and diaspora protection. Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh emphasized the importance of

these partnerships in enhancing worker welfare and social protection. Agreements with the EU, Britain, and New Zealand highlight India's commitment to aligning its workforce with global standards. Initiatives like Skill India International Centres and digital platforms further support India's efforts in governance and migrant protection.



India Signs MoUs with Jamaica to Boost Bilateral Cooperation :-

During External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Jamaica, India signed three MoUs focusing on health, solar energy, and broadcasting. This visit, the first by an Indian foreign minister to Jamaica, aimed to strengthen bilateral relations and explore new areas of cooperation. The agreements align with India's commitment to supporting Jamaica's recovery efforts and enhancing collaboration in key sectors like healthcare and digital transformation. This engagement reflects India's strategic interest in the Caribbean region and its dedication to fostering global partnerships.



India-US Economic Ties Reach Record \$20.5 Billion Investment :-

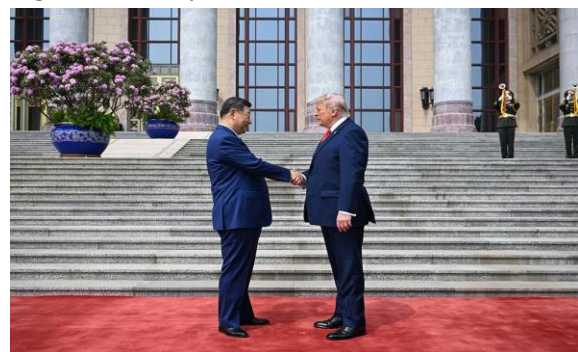
In a significant boost to bilateral relations, Indian companies have committed to a record \$20.5 billion

investment in the U.S. economy, announced by U.S. Ambassador Sergio Gor. This includes \$1.1 billion in deals signed by 12 Indian firms at the SelectUSA Summit on May 8, 2026. The investment underscores India's expanding economic influence under the India-US trade deal. Both nations are working towards achieving \$500 billion in bilateral trade by 2030, focusing on sectors like artificial intelligence and critical minerals, reflecting a deepening economic partnership.



IndiaAI signs MoU with Karya to strengthen India's inclusive AI ecosystem :-

The IndiaAI Mission signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Karya to promote an inclusive and accessible artificial intelligence ecosystem in India. Karya is known for creating AI datasets through rural and local language communities, helping generate employment opportunities while improving language technology. The partnership aims to support the development of high-quality Indian language datasets, encourage responsible AI innovation, and ensure participation from underserved communities in the digital economy.



Trump's Trade Wins in China Amid Tensions Over Taiwan, Iran :-

During his visit to China, US President Donald Trump highlighted trade agreements with China, including a deal to sell 200 Boeing jets. However, tensions persist over Taiwan and the Iran conflict. China's Foreign Ministry criticized the US-Iran war, while President Xi Jinping warned against mishandling Taiwan. Despite these challenges, Trump seeks to bolster his domestic approval ratings with economic wins. The outcomes of these diplomatic engagements could influence US-China relations and regional stability.



Ayush Ministry Partners with BHASHINI for Multilingual Healthcare :-

The Ministry of Ayush signed an MoU with the Digital India BHASHINI Division to enhance multilingual access to Ayush digital services. This partnership aims to integrate AI-powered language technologies across Ayush Grid portals, expanding access to healthcare in 22 Indian languages. The initiative will promote inclusivity and improve healthcare delivery at the grassroots level, aligning with India's Digital Public Infrastructure vision and supporting the dissemination of traditional knowledge systems.



India and UAE Sign Major Pacts on Energy, Defence, AI :-

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Abu Dhabi, India and the UAE signed agreements across energy, defence, and technology sectors. The UAE announced a \$5 billion investment in India, enhancing economic ties. Key agreements include strategic collaborations in petroleum reserves, defence partnerships, and the establishment of a supercomputing cluster supporting India's AI mission. These developments underscore the deepening of bilateral relations, focusing on mutual growth and security cooperation, and highlight the strategic significance of the India-UAE partnership.



India, Netherlands Sign MoU for Semiconductor Facility :-

In a significant move to boost India's semiconductor manufacturing capabilities, Tata Electronics and ASML signed an MoU to develop a semiconductor facility in Dholera, Gujarat. The agreement was witnessed by PM Modi and Dutch PM Jetten, reflecting strong cooperation in advanced technology sectors. ASML will support Tata Electronics in setting up and scaling operations, contributing to India's self-reliance in semiconductors. This collaboration highlights India's focus on technology-driven growth and the creation of opportunities for its youth in high-tech industries.



India and Netherlands Deepen Ties with Strategic Agreements :-

Prime Minister Modi and Dutch Prime Minister Jetten announced 17 strategic outcomes during Modi's visit to the Netherlands, reinforcing ties across multiple sectors. Key agreements include the India-Netherlands Strategic Partnership Roadmap, Chola copper plates restitution, and collaborations in semiconductors, green hydrogen, and dairy excellence centers. These developments signify a strengthened partnership focused on innovation, trade, and cultural exchange, reflecting shared democratic values and economic aspirations.



India, Cyprus Sign Strategic Agreements in Defence and Trade :-

India and Cyprus have elevated their bilateral ties to a Strategic Partnership, signing key agreements in defence, cybersecurity, and trade. The partnership aims to enhance cooperation across multiple sectors, including maritime security and innovation. Cyprus supports India's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, reflecting strong diplomatic relations.



Google and UNICEF to Train Assam Teachers in AI-Enabled Learning :-

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced a collaboration between Google and UNICEF to train teachers in AI-enabled classroom learning. The 'AI Educator Series' aims to equip educators with skills to integrate AI tools into teaching, enhancing classroom engagement and learning outcomes. The initiative focuses on adapting to evolving educational requirements and improving digital literacy.



India and Canada Accelerate CEPA Negotiations :-

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal's visit to Canada aims to conclude the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) by 2026. Meeting with Canadian PM Mark Carney, the agreement is hailed as a 'game changer' for unlocking new markets. The visit focuses on strengthening bilateral trade, with both nations targeting \$50 billion expansion by 2030, emphasizing agriculture, trade, investment, and strategic partnerships.



India Strengthens Energy Security with Norwegian LNG Partnership :-

The Ministry of External Affairs highlighted India's ongoing efforts to diversify energy sources, welcoming LNG shipments from Norway. This collaboration aligns with India's energy security priorities amid global supply concerns. The first shipment under a long-term agreement with Equinor marks the beginning of a strategic energy partnership. The development supports India's broader trade cooperation under the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Free Trade Association, enhancing reliable LNG supply chains for the Indian industry.

3: Appointments



Dilip Kumar Assumes Role as SAIL's Chief Vigilance Officer :-

Dilip Kumar has taken charge as the Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL). A veteran of the Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers (IRSME), Kumar brings over two decades of experience in train operations, rolling stock maintenance, and human resource management. His notable achievements include developing the first ISO 9001 certified train in East Central Railway and pioneering in-situ wheel replacement techniques.



Visa Appoints Suresh Sethi as Group Country Manager for India :-

Visa Inc. has appointed Suresh Sethi as the new Group Country Manager for India and South Asia. Based in Mumbai, Sethi will oversee operations across India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, and Bhutan. Sethi succeeds Sandeep Ghosh and will report to Stephen Karpin, Regional President for Asia Pacific. With a background as former MD & CEO of Protean e-Gov Technologies, Sethi brings extensive experience in digital public infrastructure and fintech transformation.



Vishvajit Sahay Appointed Defence Finance Secretary :-

Vishvajit Sahay, a seasoned officer in the Indian Defence Accounts Service, has been appointed Secretary (Defence Finance) in the Ministry of Defence. With over three decades of experience in defence finance and public administration, Sahay is expected to enhance financial management and support strategic decisions within the ministry. His appointment marks a significant step in strengthening India's defence financial framework, crucial for national security and operational efficiency.



Bharat Khara Takes Charge as MSME Secretary :-

Bharat Khara, a 1995-batch IAS officer, has assumed the role of Secretary in the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. With extensive experience in both central and state governments, Khara aims to strengthen the MSME sector, crucial for India's GDP and employment. His previous roles include Additional Secretary in the Department of Consumer Affairs and key positions in the Ministry of Defence. An engineering graduate with advanced public policy training, Khara's leadership is expected to drive growth and innovation in the MSME sector.



PM Modi Congratulates New NITI Aayog Members Balasubramaniam and Aniya :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Dr. R. Balasubramaniam and Dr. Joram Aniya on their NITI Aayog appointments. He praised their expertise and expressed confidence in their contributions to policymaking. This move aligns with India's focus on innovation and growth. NITI Aayog plays a crucial role in shaping development agendas, and these appointments are expected to bolster policy frameworks across various sectors.



Writer Prasoon Joshi Appointed Chairman of Prasar Bharati :-

Prasoon Joshi, a renowned lyricist and communications expert, has been appointed as the Chairman of Prasar Bharati. Known for his creative prowess, Joshi is expected to bring new energy and purpose to India's public broadcaster. His appointment comes amid rapid changes in the broadcasting landscape, emphasizing the need for innovation in public messaging. Prasar Bharati oversees All India Radio and Doordarshan, playing a key role in disseminating credible information nationwide.



Shashi Shekhar Vempati Named CBFC Chairperson :-

Shri Shashi Shekhar Vempati has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) for a three-year term, following the elevation of the outgoing chief, Shri Prasoon Joshi, to Chairman of Prasar Bharati. Vempati, known for his expertise in media and public communication, is expected to bring modern technical and administrative insights to the board. His leadership comes at a pivotal moment as the CBFC navigates the evolving landscape of Indian cinema and digital integration, marking a significant transition in its operational and regulatory approach.



Kumar Mangalam Birla Appointed Chairman of Vodafone Idea :-

Kumar Mangalam Birla has been appointed as the Non-Executive Chairman of Vodafone Idea Limited, effective May 5, 2026. This leadership change sees Ravinder Takkar stepping down as Chairman to become the Non-Executive Vice Chairman. Birla, a key figure in the Aditya Birla Group, aims to revitalize the company amid challenges like debt and subscriber losses. His appointment is expected to bolster investor confidence

and drive strategic initiatives to navigate the competitive landscape of the telecom industry.



Actor Vijay Sworn in as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister :-

In a significant political shift, actor-turned-politician C. Joseph Vijay was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. This marks the end of nearly six decades of alternating rule by the DMK and AIADMK. Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar administered the oath at a ceremony attended by national leaders and supporters. The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam-led alliance, backed by parties like Congress and CPI, secured the support of 120 MLAs, crossing the majority mark in the assembly.



UK PM Starmer Appoints Gordon Brown as Global Finance Adviser :-

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has named former PM Gordon Brown as his special envoy on global finance. The appointment comes as Starmer seeks to strengthen his leadership following significant losses in local elections. Brown, credited with stabilizing banks during the global financial crisis, will advise on leveraging global finance to boost the UK's security and resilience.

Starmer's move is seen as an effort to reset his leadership and regain party support in the wake of the electoral setback.



Madison Media appoints Mayank Bhatnagar as Chief Client Officer :-

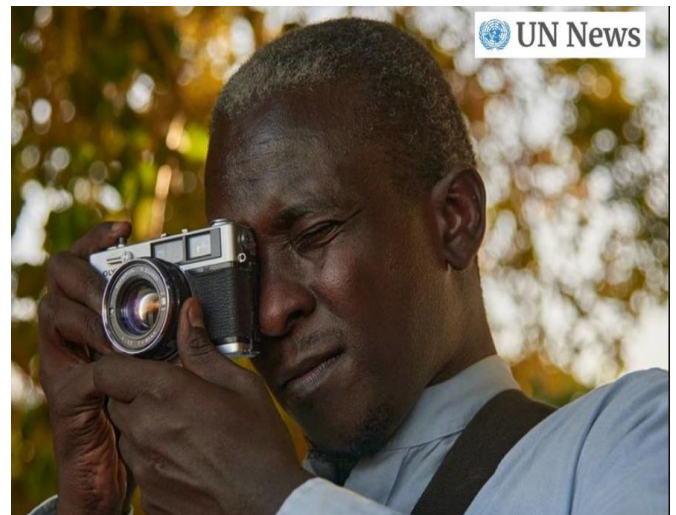
Madison Media has appointed Mayank Bhatnagar as its new Chief Client Officer. Bhatnagar returns to Madison with more than 25 years of experience in the advertising and media industry across India, Malaysia, and Singapore. During his career, he has worked with major global agency networks including OMD Malaysia, Carat India, and Mindshare. The appointment is part of Madison Media's strategy to strengthen integrated media, content, and client solutions capabilities in a rapidly evolving advertising landscape.

4: Awards



Sur Jyotsna National Music Awards Honor Classical Music Legends :-

The 13th Sur Jyotsna National Music Awards celebrated the contributions of Hindustani vocalists Sumitra Guha and Pandit Laxman Krishnarao Pandit in preserving Indian classical music. Held in New Delhi, the awards, instituted in memory of Jyotsna Darda, aim to honor music veterans, encourage young talent, and sustain traditional music forms. The ceremony, attended by dignitaries like Ramdas Athawale and Ghulam Nabi Azad, featured a performance by Kailash Kher and his band.



Sudanese journalists awarded UNESCO press freedom prize :-

The Sudanese Journalists Syndicate has been awarded the prestigious UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize for its courageous efforts in defending press freedom. The award, given annually by UNESCO since 1997, recognizes individuals or organizations that show exceptional commitment to journalism, often under risky conditions. The syndicate was honored for its work during Sudan's ongoing conflict, where journalists have faced threats, violence, and censorship. Despite these challenges, they continued reporting facts, documenting violations, and providing reliable information.



Tamizh Amudhan Sukumar Azhikode centenary award for Medha Patkar and Perumal Murugan :-

The Tamizh Amudhan Sukumar Azhikode Centenary Award has been conferred on noted social activist Medha Patkar and renowned Tamil writer Perumal Murugan. The award commemorates the birth centenary of Sukumar Azhikode, a respected literary critic and thinker. Medha Patkar has been recognized for her lifelong work in social justice and environmental movements, while Perumal Murugan is honored for his significant contribution to Tamil literature. The award celebrates excellence in literature, social reform, and intellectual thought.



Indian Journalists Win Pulitzer for CybercrimeExpose :-

Indian journalists Anand RK and Suparna Sharma were awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Illustrated Reporting for exposing cybercrime in India. Their Bloomberg report highlighted the case of a neurologist defrauded by criminals posing as officials. Another finalist, Devjyot Ghoshal, reported on cybercrime and trafficking in Southeast Asia. These accolades underscore the critical role of investigative journalism in bringing global attention to the challenges of digital crime and its impact on individuals.



Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority Wins National Award :-

The Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority has been awarded the Subhas Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for 2026, recognizing its outstanding contributions to disaster management. Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang hailed this achievement as a testament to the authority's dedication to enhancing disaster preparedness and resilience. Sikkim, vulnerable to natural disasters due to its location in the Himalayan region, has made significant strides in improving early warning systems and community preparedness.



Soma Mandal wins South Asia award in Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Awards 2026 :-

Soma Mandal received the South Asia regional honour in the Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Awards 2026 for her contribution to education and mentorship initiatives. The Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Awards, organized by Cambridge University Press Assessment, recognize exceptional educators worldwide who have made a significant impact on students and communities. Mandal was appreciated for encouraging skill development,

innovation, and inclusive learning practices. The award highlights the growing recognition of educational leadership and teacher empowerment in South Asia.



Adolescence makes history at Bafta TV Awards 2026 :-

Adolescence created history at the BAFTA TV Awards 2026 by emerging as one of the biggest winners of the ceremony. It broke the record for most wins in a single year, taking home four awards including Best Limited Drama. Stephen Graham won his first-ever BAFTA for Leading Actor for his role in Adolescence. Owen Cooper at age 16, became the youngest actor ever to win a BAFTA TV Award (Supporting Actor). The series received widespread recognition for its storytelling, performances, and social themes, marking a significant achievement in British television history.



Laura Wolvaardt, Nahid Rana named ICC Player of the Month for April :-

South African women's cricket captain Laura Wolvaardt and Bangladesh fast bowler Nahid Rana were named the ICC Players of the Month for April. Wolvaardt received the women's award for her consistent batting performances and leadership in international cricket. Nahid Rana earned the men's award after impressing

with his pace bowling and match-winning spells for Bangladesh. The ICC Player of the Month award is presented by the International Cricket Council to recognize outstanding individual performances in international cricket every month.



Sweden Confers Royal Order of Polar Star on PM Modi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received Sweden's prestigious Royal Order of the Polar Star Commander Grand Cross. The honor recognizes Modi's contributions to international diplomacy and India-Sweden relations. This award marks Modi's 31st international accolade, highlighting India's growing global influence and diplomatic achievements.



Karnataka Grameena Bank gets PFRDA award for Atal Pension Yojana enrolment :-

Karnataka Grameena Bank has been honoured by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) for its outstanding enrolment performance under the Atal Pension Yojana (APY). The award recognizes the bank's efforts in expanding social security coverage among rural and unorganized sector workers. APY, launched by the Government of India in 2015, aims

to provide guaranteed monthly pension benefits to citizens after the age of 60. The recognition reflects the increasing role of regional rural banks in promoting financial inclusion and pension awareness across the country.



Chandrayaan-3 Honored with AIAA Goddard Astronautics Award :-

India's Chandrayaan-3 lunar mission received the 2026 Goddard Astronautics Award from the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. As the first mission to land near the Moon's south pole, Chandrayaan-3 provided critical data for future lunar

exploration and confirmed the presence of key elements in the lunar soil. This prestigious award highlights India's contributions to space exploration and its growing role in global scientific advancements.



Harmanpreet Kaur Dedicates Padma Shri to Supporters

India women's cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur dedicated her Padma Shri award to those who supported her journey. Conferred by President Droupadi Murmu, the award recognizes her contributions to Indian cricket. Harmanpreet expressed gratitude to her family, coaches, teammates, and fans, highlighting the impact of collective support on her career.

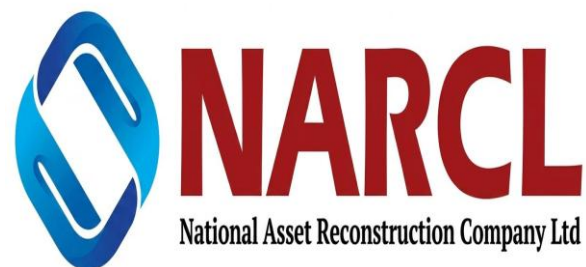
5: Banking



MobiKwik Secures RBI Approval for NBFC Licence :-

One MobiKwik Systems has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) licence, marking a pivotal moment for the fintech company. This approval, granted within four months, enables MobiKwik to expand its services into regulated lending. The company will introduce MobiKwik

Financial Services Private Limited (MFSPL), a subsidiary dedicated to providing custom credit products for consumers and merchants. With a user base exceeding 18.6 crore, MobiKwik is positioned to significantly scale digital lending.



NARCL Drives Recovery of ₹4,364 Crore in Stressed Assets in FY26 :-

National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL) recovered ₹4,364 crore in FY 2025-26, supporting India's

stressed asset resolution framework. The government-backed 'bad bank' aims to ease the burden on banks and enable fresh lending. The company has acquired 33 borrower entities, with recoveries exceeding 48% of the acquisition cost, highlighting effective asset resolution strategies.



Axis Bank opens its first Digital Locker-focused branch in India :-

Axis Bank has inaugurated its first branch dedicated to digital locker services at Capital Green, DLF Midtown Plaza, New Delhi, marking a step toward enhancing secure digital storage solutions for customers. Digital lockers allow individuals to safely store important documents such as certificates, IDs, and financial records in electronic form, reducing reliance on physical paperwork. This initiative aligns with India's broader push toward digital banking and paperless services, improving convenience, accessibility, and security for users while supporting the government's digital infrastructure initiatives.



IDBI Bank and IIT Madras Launch I2SSL Lab for Secure Digital Banking :-

IDBI Bank, in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology Madras, has launched the I2SSL (IDBI-IITM

Secure Systems Lab) to strengthen secure digital banking systems. The lab will focus on developing advanced cybersecurity solutions such as fraud detection, secure authentication, and data protection technologies. This initiative aims to enhance the safety of digital transactions in India, promote research in fintech security, and support innovation in building a robust and secure digital banking ecosystem.



Federal Bank to acquire Standard Chartered's credit card portfolio to expand metro presence :-

Federal Bank has announced the acquisition of a select credit card portfolio (around 4.5 lakh cards) from Standard Chartered Bank in India. This portfolio mainly includes customers who only hold standalone credit cards without broader banking relationships. The deal is part of Federal Bank's strategy to strengthen its retail credit business and expand its presence, especially in metro markets, by gaining access to a younger, high-quality customer base. Meanwhile, Standard Chartered is restructuring its India operations to focus more on wealth management and multi-product banking relationships.



NSE Launches Electronic Gold Receipts to Enhance Market Transparency :-

The National Stock Exchange of India has introduced Electronic Gold Receipts (EGRs) to improve transparency and efficiency in India's gold market. EGRs represent dematerialized ownership of physical gold stored in SEBI-accredited vaults. This initiative aims to integrate gold into the financial system, facilitating efficient price discovery and market participation. By enabling investors to trade gold as a digital asset, the NSE is fostering financial inclusion and modernizing gold investment practices.

**ADB to Mobilize \$50 Billion for Pan-Asia Power Grid :-**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced a \$50 billion commitment by 2035 to develop a Pan-Asia Power Grid. This initiative aims to enhance regional connectivity, reduce energy costs, and promote clean energy trade across Asia and the Pacific. ADB President Masato Kanda highlighted the need for integrated regional systems to support economic growth and energy security. The project will focus on cross-border power trade and integrating renewable energy, with the potential to improve energy access for millions and create hundreds of thousands of jobs.

**RBI allows HDFC Bank group entities to hold up to 9.95% in ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank :-**

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved proposals allowing group entities of HDFC Bank to acquire or hold aggregate stakes of up to 9.95% in ICICI Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank. Such approvals are required under banking regulations whenever a financial institution or its group companies seek to hold substantial ownership in another bank. The approval reflects regulatory oversight aimed at maintaining stability, transparency, and proper governance in India's banking sector. The permission is subject to RBI norms and compliance conditions.

**RBI and ECB sign a new MoU for strengthening central bank cooperation :-**

Reserve Bank of India and European Central Bank signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation between the two central banks. The agreement aims to strengthen collaboration in areas such as financial stability, banking supervision, payment systems, fintech, cybersecurity, and exchange of technical expertise. The MoU will help both institutions improve coordination on global financial challenges and promote stronger economic and monetary cooperation between India and the European Union. Such agreements are important for maintaining resilient banking systems and ensuring stability in international financial markets.



Shivalik SFB set to acquire affordable home loans player ManiBhavnam for Rs.109-Cr :-

Shivalik Small Finance Bank announced plans to acquire ManiBhavnam Home Finance India in a deal valued at around ₹109 crore. ManiBhavnam operates in the affordable housing finance segment, providing home loans mainly to low- and middle-income customers. Through this acquisition, Shivalik SFB aims to strengthen its presence in the housing finance sector and expand its customer base in semi-urban and rural markets. The move reflects the growing trend of consolidation in India’s financial sector, where banks are acquiring

specialized finance companies to diversify their lending portfolio and improve financial inclusion.



UPI Dominates Digital Payment Transactions in India :-

According to the RBI's latest report, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) accounted for 85.5% of digital payment transaction volume in the second half of 2025. UPI's dominance reflects its role in driving mass retail digital payments in India. In contrast, RTGS remains the leader in transaction value, emphasizing its importance for large-value settlements. The report highlights the rapid growth of India's digital payments ecosystem, driven by technological advancements and increased public trust.

6: Books and Author



Cabinet minister Sanjeev Arora launched a book titled 'Wheat Fields of Punjab – The Spirit of Vaisakhi' :-

Cabinet minister Sanjeev Arora launched a book titled 'Wheat Fields of Punjab – The Spirit of Vaisakhi', which highlights the cultural, agricultural, and spiritual significance of the festival of Vaisakhi. The book, by State Information Commissioner Harpreet Sandhu, was first launched on April 14 by Governor Gulab Chand Kataria in

Chandigarh. The book focuses on Punjab’s agrarian traditions, especially the importance of wheat harvesting during Vaisakhi, and reflects the vibrancy and heritage of rural life in the state.



Justice Surya Kant To Preside Over Launch Of SG Tushar Mehta's Books At Bharat Mandapam On May 10 :-

Justice Surya Kant will preside over the launch of books authored by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on May 10,

2026, at Bharat Mandapam. The books, titled “The Bench, the Bar and the Bizarre” and “The Lawful and the Awful”, explore unique, interesting, and lesser-known aspects of the legal system and courtroom experiences. The event is expected to be attended by eminent members of the judiciary and legal fraternity. This highlights the growing engagement of legal professionals in literature and helps bring legal insights closer to the public.



Chief of Defence Staff launched the book Ek Sainik Ki Diary :-

Anil Chauhan, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of India, launched the book Ek Sainik Ki Diary during the Joint Commanders’ Conference held at the Sapta Shakti Command in Jaipur. The book contains a collection of personal diary notes written by Honorary Captain Mohar Singh Bainsla between 1943 and 1971, reflecting his experiences during military service in the Indian Army. The work was published after his death and compiled by his niece, retired IRS officer Sunita Bainsla. Manjinder Singh, Army Commander of Sapta Shakti Command, also participated in unveiling the book.



English edition of ‘Gangamma Jatara’ book released in Tirupati :-

The English edition of the book Gangamma Jatara authored by Peta Srinivasulu Reddy was released in Tirupati. The book explains the history, traditions, rituals, and cultural importance of the famous Gangamma Jatara festival celebrated in Tirupati. Gangamma is regarded as the village deity (Grama Devata) of Tirupati, and the week-long festival attracts thousands of devotees every year. The English version aims to introduce the cultural and spiritual significance of the festival to a wider audience, including researchers, tourists, and non-Telugu readers.

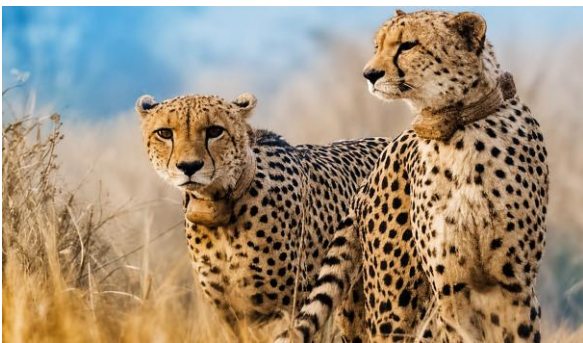


Book on Telugu woman warrior Govindamma released
Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Communications Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar has unveiled a book titled Gandikota Veeranari Govindamma, based on the life of the lesser-known Telugu woman warrior from the Kadapa region. Notably, Govindamma belonged to the Pemmasani clan. She is remembered for fighting bravely alongside her younger brother, Pemmasani Chinna Thimma Naidu, who ruled the Gandikota region, and sacrificing her life in battle. The book has been written by Nemalidinne Nagaveni, a social activist and history enthusiast from Kadapa.



Shivraj Singh Chouhan to release his book chronicling 35-year association with PM Modi on May 26 :-

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced the release of his new book titled 'Apnapan', which narrates his 35-year-long personal and political association with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The book is scheduled to be released on 26 May 2026. According to Chouhan, the book contains memories, experiences, and important political moments shared with PM Modi, including events such as the 1991 Ekta Yatra. The author stated that the book aims to inspire readers through PM Modi's leadership journey and public life.



New book about 'Project Cheetah' set to be launched on May 23 :-

A new book, 'Bringing the Cheetah Back to India', published by Hachette India, based on India's ambitious Project Cheetah initiative is scheduled to be launched on May 23. The book authored by Prashant Agrawal, highlights the story behind the reintroduction of cheetahs into India, conservation efforts, wildlife diplomacy, and the execution of the world's first intercontinental translocation of wild cheetahs from Africa to India. Project Cheetah was launched in 2022 to reintroduce cheetahs, which had become extinct in India in 1952.



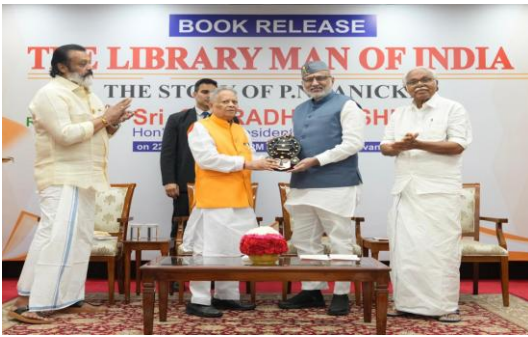
Indian Literary Icon Ruskin Bond Celebrates 92nd Birthday in Dehradun With Latest Book Launch :-

Celebrated Indian author Ruskin Bond marked his 92nd birthday in Dehradun with the launch of his latest book, All-Time Favourite Friendship Stories. Despite recovering from spinal surgery and using a wheelchair, the legendary writer interacted warmly with readers and shared nostalgic stories from his childhood. Known for classics such as The Blue Umbrella and The Room on the Roof, Bond has written more than 500 works including novels, essays, and children's stories. Born in Kasauli in 1934, he has received major honours including the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Sahitya Akademi Award for his contribution to Indian literature.



Senior Advocate Indira Jaising's new book, 'The Constitution is my Home' launched :-

Senior Advocate Indira Jaising recently launched her new book, "The Constitution Is My Home: Conversations on a Life in Law." The book reflects on her long legal career, landmark constitutional cases, gender justice, civil liberties, and the role of the judiciary in India. The memoir is presented in conversation with writer and feminist publisher Ritu Menon. Indira Jaising is one of India's most prominent human rights lawyers. She became the first woman to be designated as a Senior Advocate by the Bombay High Court in 1986 and later served as the first woman Additional Solicitor General of India.



Vice President Releases Book on P.N. Panicker, Stresses Reading Revival :-

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar recently released a book "The Library Man of India: The Story of P.N. Panicker" at Uprashtrapati Bhavan based on the life and contributions of P. N. Panicker, who is widely known as the "Father of the Library Movement in Kerala." The book authored by P. P. Sathyan highlights Panicker's efforts in promoting reading habits, public libraries, literacy campaigns, and social education in India, especially in Kerala.

7: Defence



Indian Coast Guard Boosts Maritime Tech Collaboration with Fincantieri :-

The Indian Coast Guard engaged in discussions with Italian shipbuilding company Fincantieri to explore maritime technology collaboration. The talks focused on enhancing vessel capabilities, operational efficiency, and indigenous development of niche technologies. The initiative aligns with India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat mission, aiming to strengthen maritime capabilities and foster innovation in defense shipbuilding.

Indian Army Participates in CINBAX-II Exercise in Cambodia :-

An Indian Army contingent is participating in the CINBAX-II military exercise in Cambodia from May 4-17. This exercise, focusing on counter-terrorism, features 120 Indian personnel alongside 160 Cambodians. It's held under the UN mandate to enhance interoperability and operational skills. The exercise reflects growing India-Cambodia defense ties and includes drone operations and sniper tactics. Such joint ventures are crucial for regional security and peacekeeping capabilities.



Navy Chief's Visit to Myanmar to Bolster Maritime Cooperation :-

Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi's visit to Myanmar aims to strengthen maritime cooperation between the two navies. Discussions will focus on enhancing operational



linkages and exploring new collaboration avenues. The visit underscores India's commitment to regional security and stability in the Indian Ocean. Engagements include key meetings with Myanmar's defense leadership, reflecting the deepening defense ties and shared maritime interests.



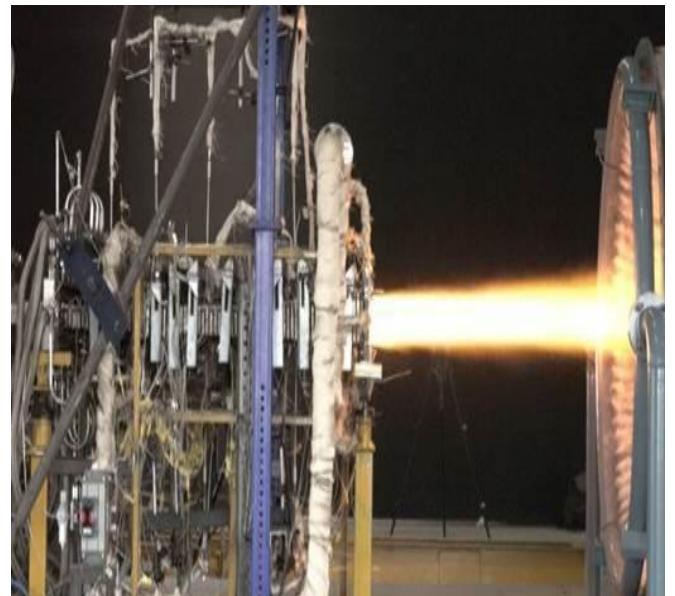
Operation Sindoor Anniversary: Celebrating India's Strategic Military Success :-

On the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor, India commemorates a decisive military action that targeted high-value terrorist infrastructures across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Launched on May 7, 2025, in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, the operation highlighted India's military precision and strategic resolve. It involved coordinated efforts from the Indian Army, Air Force, and Navy, successfully neutralizing over 100 terrorists and destroying major terror camps. The operation reinforced India's zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism and showcased the country's growing military capabilities and self-reliance in defense technologies.



Indian Navy Chief Enhances Maritime Security with Myanmar :-

Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff of India, engaged in a high-level meeting with Myanmar's naval leadership to strengthen maritime security cooperation. The discussions, held on May 8, 2026, focused on anti-piracy initiatives, combating illegal fishing, and ensuring stability in the Bay of Bengal. This engagement aligns with India's 'Act East' policy, aiming to fortify defense ties and secure crucial sea lanes amid evolving regional dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. The meeting underscores India's strategic intent to bolster maritime partnerships and enhance regional security.



India Advances Hypersonic Missile Technology with DRDO Test :-

India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully conducted a long-duration ground test of a scramjet combustor, marking significant progress in hypersonic missile technology. The test achieved a runtime of over 1,200 seconds at the Scramjet Connect Pipe Test facility in Hyderabad. This advancement places India among the leading nations in next-generation warfare technologies. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hailed the achievement as a strong foundation for India's Hypersonic Cruise Missile Development Programme.



India Successfully Tests Nuclear-Capable ICBM :-

India conducted a successful test of a nuclear-capable Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) from Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha. The missile launch covered a 3,560 km danger zone in the Bay of Bengal, marking a significant advancement in India's strategic defense capabilities. This test follows the Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation glide weapon trial on May 7. Abdul Kalam Island serves as the primary missile testing facility of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). ICBMs are crucial for national security, given their range exceeding 5,500 km.



Amit Shah Honors NDRF's Achievements at President's Colour Ceremony :-

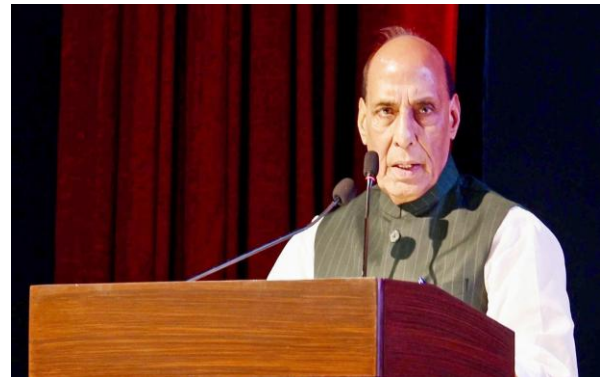
Union Home Minister Amit Shah praised the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) at the President's Colour Award Ceremony for its exemplary disaster response and humanitarian service. The award, symbolizing exceptional service and dedication, recognizes NDRF's contributions to national disaster management. Shah highlighted the force's role in earning the trust of millions

through its effective and timely interventions in crises across India.



U.S. and Nigerian Forces Eliminate ISIS Second-in-Command :-

U.S. President Donald Trump announced the elimination of Abu-Bilal al-Minuki, the second-in-command of ISIS globally, in a joint operation with Nigerian forces. The operation marks a significant victory in the fight against terrorism, targeting a key figure within ISIS who was designated as a global terrorist by the U.S. This strategic move underscores the ongoing collaboration between the U.S. and Nigeria in combating extremist threats and enhancing regional security. It reflects the broader international effort to dismantle terrorist networks globally.



Rajnath Singh to Strengthen Indo-Pacific Ties :-

Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh embarks on a critical visit to Vietnam and South Korea from May 18 to 21, aiming to bolster defence and maritime cooperation. The visit marks ten years of the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, with discussions focusing on defence industrial partnerships and strategic military cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Singh's itinerary

includes bilateral talks with Vietnam's Minister of National Defence and South Korean counterparts, highlighting India's commitment to regional peace and strategic partnerships.



Israeli Strikes Intensify in Gaza Amid Ceasefire Efforts :-

Israeli airstrikes in Gaza resulted in at least eight Palestinian deaths, as ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hamas remain stalled. The ongoing conflict underscores the humanitarian crisis in the region, highlighting the urgent need for diplomatic resolutions to prevent further escalation and civilian casualties.



Assam Rifles and Army Enhance Disaster Response Readiness in Northeast :-

Ahead of the monsoon season, Assam Rifles and the Indian Army conducted joint flood relief and disaster response training in Tripura and Mizoram. This initiative aims to strengthen coordination and operational preparedness for natural disasters. The exercises focus on improving interoperability and ensuring timely assistance to civil authorities, reflecting the commitment of security forces to public safety and regional resilience.



Indian Navy Launches 'Sanghmitra', Next-Gen Offshore Patrol Vessel :-

The Indian Navy launched 'Sanghmitra', a Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel, at GRSE Kolkata. This indigenously built vessel enhances the Navy's operational capabilities in maritime surveillance, coastal defence, and humanitarian missions. The launch is a testament to India's advancements in indigenous shipbuilding and aligns with the nation's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.



India Successfully Test-Fires Agni-1 Ballistic Missile :-

India has successfully conducted the test-launch of the Agni-1 short-range ballistic missile from Odisha, under the Strategic Forces Command. The test validated all operational and technical parameters, reaffirming India's strategic defense capabilities. The Agni-1 missile forms a crucial component of India's deterrence architecture.



Rajnath Singh Inaugurates Defence Manufacturing Complex in Shirdi :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a private sector defence manufacturing facility in Shirdi, focusing on advanced artillery and missile systems. The complex, developed by NIBE Limited, will enhance India's indigenous defence capabilities. Singh emphasized the significance of self-reliance in defence production for national security and economic resilience. The event also marked the launch of India's first 300-km Universal Rocket Launching System, 'Suryastra', reinforcing India's position in advanced weaponry development.



Russia Launches Major Missile Attack on Kyiv, Uses Hypersonic Oreshnik :-

Russia launched a large-scale missile attack on Kyiv, using the hypersonic Oreshnik missile in one of the heaviest bombardments since the war began. The attack resulted in casualties and significant damage to residential and cultural sites, including the Chernobyl museum. European leaders condemned the escalation, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called for international action. The use of the nuclear-capable Oreshnik missile highlights the ongoing tensions and the need for diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict.



Multinational Military Exercise PRAGATI 2026 Underway in Meghalaya :-

The PRAGATI 2026 military exercise, hosted in Meghalaya, involves over 400 personnel from 12 nations, fostering regional peace and cooperation. The exercise focuses on enhancing interoperability, with mixed teams training in diverse terrains. Key activities include rock craft, jungle lane shooting, and slithering exercises. The event emphasizes camaraderie through sports and informal interactions, aiming to strengthen military bonds and readiness.



Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar Appointed Vice Chief of Naval Staff :-

Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar has assumed charge as the 48th Vice Chief of Naval Staff, bringing over 37 years of distinguished service to the role. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Kochhar has held various command and operational assignments, including the command of INS Vikramaditya. Recognized for his leadership, he has been awarded the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal and the Param Vishisht Seva Medal. His appointment is expected to further enhance operational coordination and jointness within the Indian Navy.

8: Economy



India Approves 58 Companies for Critical Mineral Recycling Scheme :-

The Ministry of Mines approved 58 companies for a scheme promoting the recycling of critical minerals, aimed at reducing import reliance and supporting the clean energy sector. With a focus on lithium-ion battery recycling and e-waste processing, the initiative aligns with India's National Critical Mineral Mission, enhancing domestic capacity and fostering a robust recycling ecosystem.



India–Tanzania Trade Reaches \$9 Billion Milestone :-

India and Tanzania have strengthened their economic partnership, with bilateral trade crossing the \$9 billion mark in 2025-26. The 5th India–Tanzania Joint Trade Committee session emphasized collaboration in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, and mining. Both nations are exploring local currency settlements and easing visa processes to boost trade. India’s support in capacity building and digital cooperation was highlighted, with a

focus on sectors like agriculture and digital public infrastructure.



US Naval Blockade Costs Iran \$4.8 Billion in Oil Revenue: Report :-

The US Navy's blockade on Iranian ports has reportedly cost Iran \$4.8 billion in oil revenue. The blockade aims to pressure Iran into a ceasefire agreement. Shipping patterns have shifted due to US enforcement actions, affecting global oil markets. This development underscores the economic impact of geopolitical tensions and the strategic use of maritime power in international diplomacy.



GameStop Proposes \$56 Billion Acquisition of eBay :-

GameStop has announced a bold \$56 billion bid to acquire eBay, offering a 50-50 mix of cash and stock. CEO Ryan Cohen is prepared to take the offer directly to shareholders if eBay's board is unresponsive. This acquisition aims to create synergies and position the combined entity as a formidable competitor to Amazon.

GameStop's strategic move signals a significant shift in the e-commerce landscape, with potential impacts on market dynamics and competitive strategies in the online marketplace sector.



OPEC+ Agrees to Oil Output Quota Hike Amid Hormuz Closure :-

OPEC+ has agreed to increase oil output targets by 188,000 barrels per day in June, marking the third consecutive monthly hike. This decision, largely symbolic due to the ongoing Iran conflict and Hormuz strait closure, signals OPEC+'s readiness to raise supplies post-conflict. The move aims to stabilize market perceptions amid constrained physical supply. As geopolitical tensions continue to impact oil flows, the group's actions reflect a strategic approach to managing global oil market dynamics.



Apple Commits Rs 100 Crore to India's Clean Energy Infrastructure :-

In a significant move towards sustainability, Apple has announced an investment of Rs 100 crore in India's renewable energy sector. Partnering with CleanMax, the tech giant aims to develop over 150 megawatts of renewable energy capacity, enough to power

approximately 1.5 lakh Indian households. This initiative aligns with Apple's global goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. The investment will bolster renewable energy adoption across Apple's supply chain in India and includes projects on rooftop solar installations.



India and Norway Explore Maritime and Green Energy Opportunities :-

India and Norway are exploring collaboration in maritime and green energy sectors, with Prime Minister Modi's upcoming visit to Oslo expected to strengthen ties. Norwegian companies are keen to invest in India's maritime and renewable energy industries, while India aims to leverage Norway's technological expertise. This partnership is poised to enhance bilateral trade and investment, contributing to sustainable development and innovation in both countries.



Centre Revises Customs Duty on Precious Metals Amid Global Uncertainty :-

The Indian government has revised customs duty rates on precious metals, effective May 13, in response to global economic volatility. Duties on gold and silver have been increased to 15%, while platinum now attracts a

15.4% duty. This policy measure aims to conserve foreign exchange reserves and moderate non-essential imports, safeguarding macroeconomic stability. The revised structure also includes concessional rates for specific imports, reflecting a strategic response to heightened global uncertainty, particularly in West Asia.



India Halts Sugar Exports to Ensure Domestic Supply :-

India has imposed an immediate ban on sugar exports until September 2026 to ensure sufficient domestic supply. The move aims to stabilize local markets and maintain food security. Exemptions are in place for international commitments and existing trade schemes. This decision highlights the government's proactive measures to manage agricultural exports in response to fluctuating global demand and domestic needs.



Petrol and Diesel Prices Hiked by Rs 3 Per Litre :-

The Indian government has increased petrol and diesel prices by Rs 3 per litre due to rising international crude oil rates. This hike follows months of unchanged pump prices amid the West Asia conflict. The surge in global crude prices has led to under-recoveries for oil marketing companies, impacting their financial health. The government continues to manage fuel supplies despite

challenges, with the latest price adjustments reflecting ongoing efforts to balance consumer impact and fiscal health.



India's Total Exports Rise 13.59% to \$80.80 Billion in April 2026 :-

India's exports, including merchandise and services, grew by 13.59% in April 2026, reaching \$80.80 billion. This increase reflects robust performance in sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, and agriculture. Merchandise exports rose to \$43.56 billion, while services exports increased to \$37.24 billion. The trade deficit narrowed to \$7.81 billion, indicating improved trade dynamics. This positive trend in exports bolsters India's economic outlook, supporting growth and employment. Maintaining this momentum is crucial for sustaining economic resilience amid global uncertainties.



Anthropic Approaches Profit, Partners with SpaceX for AI Computing :-

Anthropic, a leading AI startup, is nearing its first quarterly operating profit as its revenue soars. The company reported potential June quarter sales of \$10.9 billion, significantly up from \$4.8 billion in the previous quarter. Anthropic has entered into a major agreement

with SpaceX, committing to pay \$1.25 billion monthly for computing power. This partnership underscores the growing demand for AI computing capacity and positions both companies at the forefront of AI development.



RBI Announces Record Rs 2.87 Lakh Crore Dividend to Centre :-

The Reserve Bank of India has declared a record surplus transfer of Rs 2.87 lakh crore to the Central Government for the financial year 2025-26. The decision, taken during the RBI Central Board meeting, is expected to provide fiscal support amidst global economic uncertainties and geopolitical tensions, bolstering government finances.



Fuel Prices Rise for Third Time in 10 Days Across Indian Cities :-

Fuel prices in major Indian cities saw another hike, with petrol nearing Rs 100 per litre in Delhi. The increase marks the third rise in less than 10 days, driven by volatility in global crude oil markets. Rising tensions in West Asia and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz contribute to the uncertainty in oil prices. Despite elevated global crude prices, the Indian government assures adequate fuel reserves to meet domestic demand.



NITI Aayog's Panel Aims to Boost India's Services Sector :-

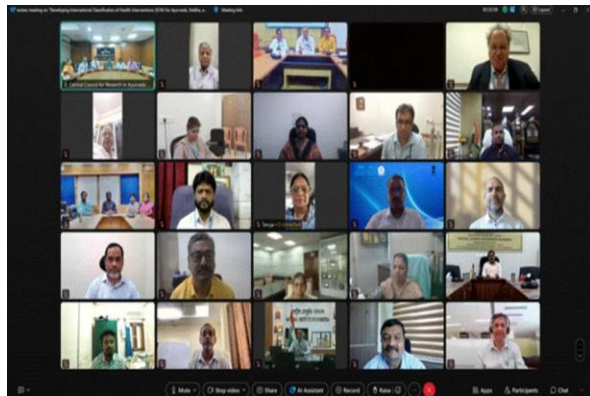
NITI Aayog held its first meeting of the High-Powered 'Education to Employment and Enterprise' Standing Committee. The panel seeks to align education, skilling, and entrepreneurship with India's goal of achieving a 10% share in the global services market by 2047. Chaired by NITI Aayog CEO Nidhi Chibber, the committee includes representatives from ministries, state governments, and industry bodies. Discussions emphasized the potential of India's demographic dividend, the impact of AI on jobs, and the need for industry-relevant skilling pathways.



Tamil Nadu Textile Sector Eyes Europe and UK for Expansion :-

Tamil Nadu's textile industry is poised for growth as proposed free trade agreements with the European Union and the United Kingdom offer new export opportunities. These agreements are expected to reduce dependence on the United States by creating tariff parity with other manufacturing hubs. The sector is preparing to enhance its presence in European markets through trade fairs, overseas showrooms, and local appointments. Industry experts predict strong double-

digit growth in textile exports from 2027-28, with potential for long-term investments in India's textile sector. However, capacity expansion remains a challenge.



Ayush Ministry Develops Global Coding Framework for Traditional Medicine :-

The Ministry of Ayush concluded a consultative meeting to develop an International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI) for Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani systems. This initiative aims to integrate traditional medicine into global health frameworks, enhancing clinical research and healthcare data exchange. The coding system will improve interoperability in digital health systems, supporting insurance integration for

traditional practices. The effort underscores India's commitment to promoting traditional medicine on a global scale.



India and Canada to Conclude CEPA by Year-End :-

India and Canada have launched the Trade and Investment Forum, targeting the conclusion of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement by the end of 2026. The initiative aims to enhance bilateral trade and investment ties, focusing on sectors like clean energy and digital technologies. Both countries are committed to improving market access and strengthening supply chains, reflecting growing economic cooperation.

9: International



Nepal Removes 1,594 Political Appointees, Sparks Administrative Disruption :-

Nepal's President Ram Chandra Poudel enacted an ordinance removing 1,594 political appointees across various sectors. This sweeping administrative overhaul has left numerous institutions leaderless, raising concerns about operational continuity. The ordinance

mandates the removal of officials appointed before March 26, regardless of their tenure. This move follows the recent elections where Rastriya Swatantra Party gained power. Critics argue the abrupt dismissals and lack of immediate replacements could hinder governance.



UK to Join EU's \$105.9 Billion Loan to Ukraine :-

The United Kingdom is set to enter talks with the European Union to join a \$105.9 billion loan aimed at supporting Ukraine. This move signifies deepening defense ties between the UK and Europe amid increasing U.S. pressure. The loan will primarily support Ukraine's military needs in its ongoing conflict with Russia. As geopolitical alliances evolve, the UK's participation underscores its commitment to European security and defense cooperation, reflecting broader strategic realignments post-Brexit.

**US Closes Consulate in Peshawar Amid Safety Concerns**

The United States has decided to close its consulate in Peshawar, Pakistan, citing safety concerns in the region. The U.S. embassy in Islamabad will now manage diplomatic engagements with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. This decision underscores ongoing security challenges in the area, which borders Afghanistan and has seen increased militant activity. The closure follows violent incidents, including a protest that breached the U.S. consulate in Karachi. This move reflects the U.S. commitment to safeguarding its diplomatic staff while ensuring effective resource management.

**North Korea Alters Constitution, Drops Unification References :-**

North Korea has revised its constitution to omit references to the reunification of the Korean Peninsula, signaling a shift towards treating North and South Korea as separate entities. This constitutional change solidifies leader Kim Jong Un's stance on the two Koreas as distinct states. The revision emphasizes North Korea's territorial boundaries with China, Russia, and South Korea, while also reinforcing Kim's control over the nation's nuclear arsenal. This move may impact inter-Korean relations and regional stability, as North Korea continues to pursue a more isolated and militarized approach.

**Vivek Ramaswamy Wins Republican Nomination for Ohio Governor :-**

Vivek Ramaswamy, a former biotech executive and conservative commentator, has won the Republican nomination for the governorship of Ohio. Known for his critiques of 'woke' capitalism, Ramaswamy's campaign focused on conservative policy positions and economic growth. A Hindu raised in the Midwest, Ramaswamy's diverse background includes a career in biotech and a stint as a 2024 presidential candidate. As he prepares for the November election against Democrat Amy Acton, Ramaswamy's candidacy highlights the dynamic political landscape in Ohio and the broader national discourse on social and economic issues.



Mount Dukono Eruption: Search Resumes for Missing Hikers :-

Indonesian authorities have resumed the search for three hikers missing after Mount Dukono erupted on Halmahera Island. The eruption, which spewed ash up to 10 km high, prompted evacuations and a search involving over 100 personnel. The missing include two Singaporeans and one Indonesian. Authorities continue to monitor the volcanic activity as search efforts are hampered by ongoing eruptions. The incident highlights the challenges posed by Indonesia's location on the Pacific 'Ring of Fire,' known for frequent seismic activity.



Chola Copper Plates to Return to India from Netherlands :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the 11th-century Chola Copper Plates, preserved in the Netherlands, will be repatriated to India. The historic artefacts, containing inscriptions in Tamil, relate to Rajendra Chola I and reflect the maritime strength of the Chola dynasty. This move highlights the growing cultural cooperation between India and the Netherlands. The Prime Minister thanked the Netherlands government and Leiden University for their role in preserving and

returning these significant cultural items, marking a milestone in bilateral relations.



PM Starmer to Continue Amid Labour Party Pressure :-

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer faces mounting pressure from his Labour Party colleagues following poor local election results on May 7. Despite calls for his resignation from nearly a quarter of Labour lawmakers, Starmer, supported by Deputy PM David Lammy, remains firm in his decision to not set a departure timetable. With political rivals like Wes Streeting and Andy Burnham eyeing leadership positions, Starmer's leadership is under scrutiny.



Iran War Costs Global Companies \$25 Billion :-

The ongoing U.S.-Israeli conflict with Iran has cost global companies at least \$25 billion, impacting energy prices and supply chains. Businesses face increased operational costs, leading to defensive strategies like price hikes and production cuts. The conflict's economic repercussions resemble the global financial crisis, affecting profit margins and consumer confidence, with no resolution in sight.



EU Finalizes Legislation to Remove Tariffs on U.S. Goods

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The European Union has reached a provisional agreement to eliminate import duties on U.S. goods, a pivotal aspect of the trade deal with Washington. This legislation is seen as a move to prevent increased tariffs on EU products. The agreement, a result of negotiations at President Trump's Turnberry golf resort, aims to stabilize EU-US trade relations. The European Parliament and the Council have paved the way for these duty reductions, expected to be confirmed in June. This development is significant for maintaining transatlantic trade stability.



India-Nordic Green Technology Partnership Announced by PM Modi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has introduced a Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership with Nordic countries. This initiative aims to leverage Nordic expertise in areas like geothermal energy, maritime sustainability, and advanced technologies to address global challenges. The partnership represents a significant step in strengthening India's ties with Nordic nations, promoting sustainable development and

innovation. The collaboration is expected to create solutions that benefit both regions and contribute to global sustainability efforts.



India and US Strengthen Ties in Emerging Technologies and Space :-

India and the US are expanding their collaboration in biotechnology, quantum technologies, and space sectors. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh discussed with US Ambassador Sergio Gor about private sector participation in nuclear research and new opportunities for investment in advanced technologies. The India-U.S. TRUST initiative aims to deepen ties in AI, semiconductors, and space technologies, underscoring the countries' commitment to innovation and global leadership in science and technology.



Indian War Memorial in Seoul Honors Korean War Contributions :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the Indian War Memorial in Seoul, commemorating India's role during the Korean War. The memorial, built with South Korea, recognizes the contributions of Indian troops, particularly the 60 Para Field Ambulance and the Custodian Force of India. This initiative underscores the

historic ties and strategic partnership between India and South Korea, reflecting a commitment to peace and international cooperation.



Mango Mania Festival Showcases Over 85 Varieties in GCC :-

The 23rd edition of Mango Mania, organized by LuLu Hypermarket and APEDA, was launched across GCC countries, featuring more than 85 premium mango varieties. The festival, inaugurated by India's Ambassador to the UAE, highlights the cultural and trade ties between India and the GCC region. With a focus on promoting Indian mango varieties like the Kesar, the event aims to strengthen agricultural trade and support Indian farmers by introducing approximately 3,200 tonnes of produce to GCC consumers.



PM Modi Condolences Lives Lost in China Mining Accident

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed condolences to Chinese President Xi Jinping over the loss of lives in a mining accident in Shanxi Province, China. PM Modi conveyed India's solidarity with China during this tragic time and extended prayers for the recovery of those missing. This gesture highlights India's commitment to fostering goodwill and cooperation with neighboring

countries in times of crisis, emphasizing humanitarian values in international relations.



Indian Students to Visit Japan Under Sakura Science Programme 2026 :-

The Department of School Education and Literacy flagged off a delegation of Indian students for the Sakura Science Programme 2026 in Japan. The program, organized by the Japan Science and Technology Agency, promotes scientific learning and cultural exchange. Indian students will experience Japan's advanced technology ecosystem and cultural heritage. This initiative aligns with India's National Education Policy, aiming to broaden students' global perspectives and encourage innovation.



Spain Confirms Second Hantavirus Case Among Cruise Passengers :-

Spain's Health Ministry confirmed a second hantavirus case among quarantined cruise passengers. The patient is asymptomatic and under medical supervision. Hantaviruses, rodent-borne pathogens, can cause severe illness in humans. The ministry assured that the new case does not alter the risk assessment for the general population.



US Senator Criticizes Pakistan's Role in Iran Diplomacy

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham has criticized Pakistan's refusal to join the Abraham Accords, calling its role in Iran-related diplomacy 'more than problematic.' He highlighted concerns over Pakistan's animosity towards Israel and alleged housing of Iranian military aircraft on its bases. Graham's comments follow reports of Iranian aircraft in Pakistan amid tensions in the Middle East. The senator urged Pakistan to respond to President Trump's call to join the Abraham Accords, as the US pushes for broader regional participation.



India Strongly Rejects J&K References in China-Pakistan Statement :-

India has strongly rejected references to Jammu and Kashmir in a joint statement by China and Pakistan. The Ministry of External Affairs reiterated that Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh are integral parts of India. India also opposed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects in territories claimed by India. The MEA emphasized no other country has the right to comment on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The statement underscores India's firm stance on its territorial claims and opposition to external interference.



Rubio Aide Mike Needham Promoted to Deputy National Security Adviser :-

Michael Needham, a longtime aide to Secretary of State Marco Rubio, has been promoted to Deputy National Security Adviser. Needham, known for his influence in promoting conservative policies, will work alongside Rubio, who serves as the acting National Security Adviser. His promotion reflects the Trump administration's focus on strategic policy issues, including US interest in Greenland and diplomatic talks between Israel and Lebanon.



India an Indispensable Partner for Japan in Indo-Pacific: MOFA :-

India is considered an indispensable partner for Japan in realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific, according to Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The two nations continue to strengthen maritime security and freedom of navigation through initiatives like the Quad Maritime Domain Awareness Initiative. Japan's commitment to cooperating with India reflects their shared goals of ensuring regional stability and economic growth. The collaboration underscores the importance of strategic partnerships in addressing geopolitical challenges.



CNN Sues Perplexity Over Copyright Violations :-

CNN has filed a lawsuit against Perplexity, alleging unlawful distribution of its copyrighted content. The lawsuit claims that Perplexity copied thousands of CNN stories, videos, and images to power its AI search engine products. CNN seeks monetary damages and a court order to prevent further intellectual property violations. This marks the latest legal battle between AI firms and news publishers over content repurposing and copyright issues.



US Sets Up Ebola Quarantine Facility in Kenya Amid Outbreak :-

The U.S. government has established a quarantine facility in Kenya for Americans exposed to Ebola, amid rising cases of the Bundibugyo strain. This marks a strategic shift from past practices, aiming to prevent the virus from reaching U.S. shores. The facility at Laikipia Air Base will provide care until patients are evacuated to third countries, with the U.S. contributing \$13.5 million to Kenya's Ebola preparedness efforts.



Indian-American Teen Shrey Parikh Wins Scripps National Spelling Bee :-

Fourteen-year-old Shrey Parikh from California has won the Scripps National Spelling Bee after correctly spelling 32 words in a 90-second spell-off. The competition saw Shrey outspelling his competitor Ishaan Gupta to claim the \$50,000 prize. The prestigious spelling bee, known for its challenging words, highlights the importance of linguistic skills and has been a significant academic event in the U.S. since 1925.



PM Modi Congratulates Janez Jansa on Becoming Slovenia PM :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Janez Jansa on his election as Slovenia's Prime Minister. Modi expressed confidence in strengthening bilateral ties between India and Slovenia, focusing on shared prosperity and mutual benefits. Jansa's election marks a new chapter in Slovenia's political landscape, with potential for enhanced international cooperation.



Myanmar President Visits India to Strengthen Bilateral Ties :-

Myanmar President U Min Aung Hlaing has embarked on a five-day state visit to India, marking his first official trip to the country since taking office. The visit underscores the historical and spiritual ties between the two nations, as President Hlaing offered prayers at the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya. Accompanied by a high-level delegation, he is set to meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss enhancing cooperation under India's 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policies.

10: Miscellaneous



Ladakh to Get Five New Districts for Improved Governance :-

Ladakh's administrative landscape is set to change with the creation of five new districts: Nubra, Sham, Changthang, Zaskar, and Drass. Approved by Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena, this decision raises the total number of districts from two to seven. The move addresses longstanding local demands for better administrative representation and governance, particularly in remote areas. It is anticipated to enhance public service delivery, reduce administrative burdens, and foster local economic development.



SSPU Launches Asia's First UNESCO Chair on Gender Inclusion :-

Symbiosis Skills and Professional University (SSPU) has launched Asia's first UNESCO Chair on Gender Inclusion and Skill Development. Inaugurated by Minister of State Jayant Chaudhary, the initiative was part of the international conference 'Women Leading the Future of Work'. Spearheaded by Dr. Swati Mujumdar, the Chair aims to empower women in sectors such as AI, robotics, and defence technology. With over 10,000 underprivileged girls already trained, the program will foster research and mentorship through the 'Kushal Saathi' program.



Aadhaar 'New Look' Claims Baseless, Government Clarifies :-

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has debunked recent claims of a new Aadhaar card format featuring only a photograph and QR code. The government clarified that there are no such plans and urged citizens to disregard unfounded rumors. The ministry emphasized the importance of relying on official communications from the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) for accurate information. This clarification aims to prevent misinformation and maintain public trust in national identification systems.



India as a Manufacturing Hub for South Korean Companies :-

Experts suggest India could become a major manufacturing and export hub for South Korea amidst global supply chain shifts. With a population of 1.4 billion and a growing GDP, India offers significant potential for Korean companies. The creation of a dedicated industrial complex in India is proposed to facilitate Korean firms' operations, aiming to make India a global export hub for South Korea, enhancing bilateral economic cooperation.



VAR Controversy in Premier League as West Ham Questions Consistency :-

West Ham United captain Jarrod Bowen criticized VAR consistency after a goal was disallowed in a match against Arsenal. The decision, following a lengthy review, has sparked debate on the impact of VAR on game flow and decision-making. The controversy highlights ongoing discussions about the role of technology in sports, with fans and players seeking clarity and fairness in officiating.



Jayant Chaudhary Represents India at Uganda President's Swearing-In :-

Union Minister Jayant Chaudhary represented India at the swearing-in ceremony of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, reaffirming India's commitment to bilateral ties. Chaudhary conveyed greetings from PM Modi and highlighted Uganda's progress and stability. During his visit, he emphasized India's support for education and skill development, visiting the National Forensic Sciences University's Uganda campus. Chaudhary's interactions with the Indian diaspora underscored the strong people-to-people ties between India and Uganda, reflecting shared aspirations for growth and cooperation.



India Declares Itself Naxal-Free, Focuses on Development :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah declared India 'Naxal-free', crediting the achievement to the sacrifices of security personnel and tribal communities. The government plans to transform 70 CAPF camps into development centres offering access to government schemes. Shah emphasized development, not violence, as the path forward for regions like Bastar, aiming for economic progress and cultural revival.



X Implements Posting Limits for Unverified Accounts to Enhance Stability :-

X, formerly Twitter, introduced daily posting limits for unverified accounts to improve platform stability and reduce technical issues. Unverified users can now publish up to 50 original posts and 200 replies daily, with additional restrictions on following activity. The new measures aim to manage platform activity more effectively and alleviate backend strain.



J&K Traffic Police Deploys Speed Radar Guns for Road Safety :-

In a bid to curb overspeeding and enhance road safety, the Jammu and Kashmir Traffic Police have deployed speed radar guns along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. The initiative aims to reduce traffic violations and accidents by integrating radar guns with a digital enforcement system that issues automatic e-challans for speed limit breaches.



NEET-UG Re-exam Scheduled with Enhanced Security Protocols :-

In response to a paper leak, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has announced the NEET-UG re-exam will occur on June 21 under strict security protocols. The National Testing Agency aims to ensure a seamless examination process, addressing previous gaps. Authorities are coordinating with district officials to ensure comprehensive arrangements for students. The decision underscores the government's commitment to maintaining exam integrity and transparency, ensuring fair opportunities for all candidates.



J&K Prepares for Smooth Conduct of Machail Mata Yatra :-

J&K Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo reviewed arrangements for the upcoming Machail Mata Yatra, ensuring a smooth and safe pilgrimage. Measures include enhanced sanitation, drinking water, healthcare, and transportation facilities. The administration is focused on crowd management and real-time monitoring. Special emphasis is placed on safety and emergency preparedness, with comprehensive plans to address potential challenges during the pilgrimage.



BSF Women's Team Conquers Mount Everest :-

Celebrating its Diamond Jubilee, the Border Security Force's all-women mountaineering team successfully summited Mount Everest. Union Home Minister Amit Shah praised their achievement, highlighting their courage and patriotism. The expedition, part of 'Mission Vande Mataram,' included members from diverse regions, symbolizing women's empowerment and national pride. This historic feat underscores the BSF's commitment to excellence and showcases the strength and resilience of Indian women in challenging environments.



Childhood Junk Food May Cause Lasting Brain Changes: Study :-

A study by University College Cork highlights the long-term impact of junk food on children's brain development. High-fat, high-sugar diets can alter appetite control regions in the brain, affecting eating habits into adulthood. However, beneficial gut bacteria and prebiotic fibers may help mitigate some effects. The findings underscore the importance of healthy diets in early life and suggest potential interventions using gut microbiota to support healthier eating behaviors.



PM Modi Reviews Rs 30,000 Crore Infrastructure Projects at PRAGATI Meeting :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the 51st PRAGATI meeting to review infrastructure projects across nine states, with investments nearing Rs 30,000 crore. Key projects in railways, power, and roads were assessed, emphasizing timely implementation and inter-state cooperation. The PM underscored the need for clean energy adoption and efficient water management, aiming for sustainable development.

11: National



IRCTC Launches 'Bharat-Bhutan Mystic Mountain Tour'

IRCTC has introduced the 'Bharat-Bhutan Mystic Mountain Tour', a 14-day international journey combining rail and road travel aboard the Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train. The tour begins in New Delhi and traverses scenic regions of Northeast India, including Guwahati, Shillong, and Cherrapunji, before entering Bhutan through Hasimara and Phuentsholing. Tourists will explore Thimphu, Punakha, and Paro, experiencing the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage. The package includes deluxe cabins, fine dining, 3-star accommodations, vegetarian meals, sightseeing, and insurance.



ECI Introduces QR Code-Based ID System for Election Security :-

The Election Commission of India (ECI) launched a QR code-based Photo Identity Card system to enhance security at counting centres. The system, starting with Assembly elections in May, aims to prevent unauthorized access and ensure secure identity verification. The

initiative is part of broader election management reforms, including over 30 new measures introduced last year.



New South Coast Railway Zone to Boost Connectivity :-

The Indian government has notified the creation of the South Coast Railway (SCoR) Zone, headquartered in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, effective June 1, 2026. This new zone will include divisions from South Central Railway and reorganized Visakhapatnam division from the East Coast Railway. Additionally, a new Rayagada division will be established under East Coast Railway. This restructuring aims to improve administrative efficiency, enhance regional connectivity, and bolster passenger and freight services in Andhra Pradesh and surrounding regions, contributing to infrastructure development and economic growth.



Cabinet Proposes Legal Protection for Vande Mataram

The Union Cabinet has proposed granting Vande Mataram the same legal protections as the National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana. Composed by Bankim

Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1875, Vande Mataram played a pivotal role in India's freedom struggle. As it approaches its 150th anniversary in 2025, an amendment to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act is suggested to penalize disrespect, interruption, or mockery. The penalties could include up to three years of imprisonment, a fine, or both. Currently, legal protections are explicitly afforded only to the National Anthem.



Jitendra Singh on Expanding Scientific Infrastructure in Universities :-

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh visited the Banaras Hindu University to review the 'SATHI' facility, highlighting the government's commitment to expanding scientific infrastructure across universities. This initiative aims to promote advanced research, innovation, and industry-academia collaboration. The Sophisticated Analytical & Technical Help Institute at BHU, supported by the Department of Science and Technology, serves as a national hub for scientific research, providing access to high-end equipment and training programs.



NEET-UG 2026 Cancelled, Fresh Exam to be Scheduled :-

The National Testing Agency (NTA) has cancelled the NEET-UG 2026 examination conducted on May 3 due to

alleged malpractices. A fresh exam will be held on dates to be announced later. The decision follows inputs from central agencies and law enforcement, with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) set to probe the matter. The NTA assured students that existing registration details will remain valid, with no additional fees for the re-examination. This move aims to uphold the integrity of the national examination system and ensure fairness for all candidates.



India Seizes Captagon Worth ₹182 Crore under Operation Ragepill :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced India's first seizure of Captagon, a synthetic stimulant known as the 'Jihadi Drug', valued at ₹182 crore. The operation, dubbed Ragepill, is part of the government's broader anti-narcotics campaign aimed at achieving a drug-free India. The consignment, intended for the Middle East, was intercepted, leading to the arrest of a foreign national. This significant operation reflects India's zero-tolerance policy towards narcotics trafficking, reinforcing its commitment to combat drug-related crimes and safeguard public health.



DGCA Inspects Air India Boeing 787 Following Technical Snag :-

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has ordered an inspection of an Air India Boeing 787-8 after a technical issue with the fuel control switch was reported. The aircraft was grounded following a flight from London to Bengaluru. The inspection, conducted in coordination with the Original Equipment Manufacturer, aims to ensure the switch functions as designed. This action underscores the DGCA's commitment to maintaining aviation safety and addressing technical concerns promptly.



PM Modi Concludes Successful Five-Nation Diplomatic Tour :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi returned to India after a productive tour of the UAE, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and Italy. The visit emphasized strengthening strategic partnerships, economic cooperation, and technological collaboration. Key outcomes include major agreements in energy, defence, and trade, alongside enhanced ties with European and Nordic countries. This diplomatic engagement positions India as a pivotal player in global geopolitics and economic development.



Health Ministry Regulates Pregabalin to Prevent Misuse

India's Health Ministry has moved Pregabalin to the stricter Schedule H1 category to curb its misuse. Widely prescribed for chronic pain and certain neurological disorders, Pregabalin has been abused for its sedative effects. The change mandates sales only with a valid prescription, and chemists must maintain detailed sales records. This regulatory shift aims to strengthen prescription monitoring, improve accountability, and protect public health from drug abuse, reflecting the government's proactive stance on pharmaceutical regulation.



PM Modi Distributes Over 51,000 Appointment Letters Under Rozgar Mela :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi distributed more than 51,000 appointment letters to new recruits under the Rozgar Mela initiative, emphasizing their role in India's development journey. The recruits will serve in crucial sectors such as railways, banking, and healthcare. The initiative aims to strengthen public service delivery and create employment opportunities for the youth.



IIT Experts to Resolve CBSE Re-evaluation Portal Issues

The Union Education Ministry has enlisted IIT experts to address technical glitches in CBSE's re-evaluation portal.

Following reports of difficulties faced by students, experts from IIT Madras and IIT Kanpur will enhance portal stability and IT infrastructure. The initiative aims to make the re-evaluation process transparent and efficient, ensuring smooth access for students. Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan emphasized the priority of student interests and directed CBSE to implement corrective measures to prevent further inconvenience.



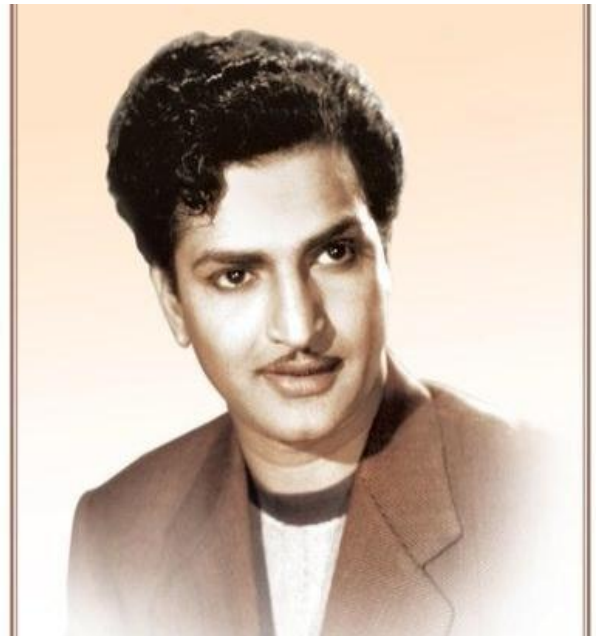
PM Modi Completes 12 Years in Office, Praised by CM Yogi :-

As the BJP-led NDA government marks 12 years at the Centre, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi, describing his tenure as epoch-making. Adityanath highlighted Modi's focus on service, governance, and public welfare, and credited him with transforming welfare delivery and enhancing India's global standing. Key initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Jan-Dhan Yojana were mentioned for expanding development to the grassroots.



Government of India Monitors Ebola Situation, Confirms No Cases in India :-

The Indian government is closely monitoring the Ebola situation following outbreaks in Africa. A traveler from Uganda with mild symptoms tested negative for the virus, confirming no cases in India. Public health protocols and surveillance continue at entry points and across the healthcare system. The Ministry of Health advises citizens to rely on official sources for information and avoid misinformation. India's preparedness reflects its commitment to maintaining public health and safety amid global health concerns.



PM Modi Pays Tribute to NTR on His 103rd Birth Anniversary :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi commemorated the 103rd birth anniversary of legendary actor and former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR) on May 28, 2026. NTR, a pivotal figure in Telugu cinema and politics, was known for his welfare schemes in Andhra Pradesh. PM Modi highlighted NTR's contributions to cinema and governance, noting his enduring influence on Telugu culture and politics. NTR's legacy continues to inspire through his cinematic portrayal of mythological characters and his political reforms that prioritized the underprivileged.



CCPA Takes Action Against Online Sale of Hazardous Substances :-

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has launched regulatory action against unauthorized online sales of hazardous chemicals like ammonium nitrate and gunpowder. Platforms such as IndiaMART and Justdial are under scrutiny for compliance failures. The CCPA has issued notices demanding detailed seller information and regulatory compliance. This move underscores the government's commitment to consumer safety and national security, ensuring that digital marketplaces adhere to strict legal standards for hazardous and explosive materials.



India's Design-Linked Incentive Scheme Shows Promising Results :-

India's design-linked incentive (DLI) scheme is yielding positive outcomes, as evidenced by the successful design of the country's first Edge AI System-on-Chip (SoC) by Netrasemi. The NETRA A2000 chip, developed at a 12 nm node, is poised to power smart vision devices across various sectors. The scheme, supported by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, aims to boost India's semiconductor industry and foster innovation. Netrasemi, one of the first startups to receive DLI support, plans to commence commercial production next year, marking a significant milestone in India's technological advancements.

12: Obituaries



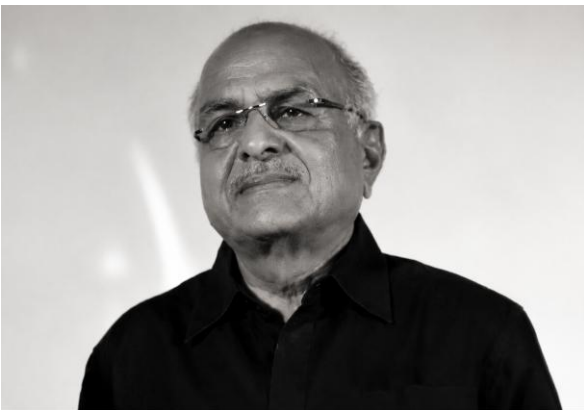
Former F1 driver and Paralympian Alex Zanardi passes away aged 59 :-

Italian motorsport legend Alex Zanardi, who competed in Formula One and later became a celebrated Paralympian, has passed away at the age of 59. Zanardi's life was marked by extraordinary resilience—after losing both legs in a racing accident in 2001, he reinvented himself as a para-athlete and went on to win multiple gold medals in handcycling at the Paralympics. His journey from elite racing driver to inspirational sports figure made him a global symbol of courage and determination. His death marks the loss of a remarkable personality in both motorsport and para-sports communities.



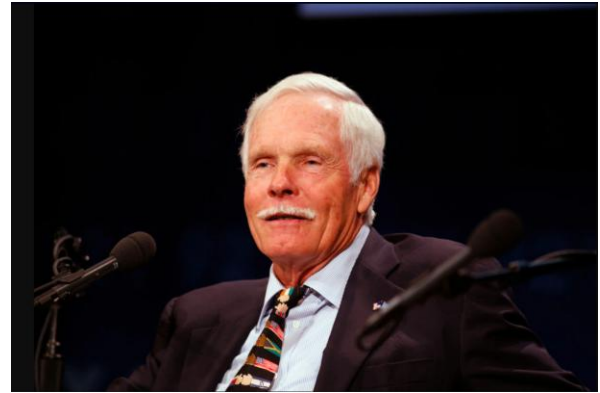
Malayalam actor Santhosh Nair passes away at 65 following fatal road accident :-

Veteran Malayalam actor Santhosh Nair passed away after a tragic road accident in Pathanamthitta, Kerala. His car reportedly collided with a lorry, and while undergoing treatment for injuries, he suffered a fatal heart attack. Santhosh Nair had acted in over 100 films and was known for his roles in Malayalam cinema, including performances connected with classical themes like Mohiniyattam. His death is considered a major loss to the Malayalam film industry, where he had built a strong reputation over decades.



Ace producer RB Choudary passes away in road accident :-

Veteran film producer R. B. Choudary passed away following a road accident in Rajasthan. He was the founder of Super Good Films and produced several successful movies in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi cinema. RB Choudary played a major role in introducing and supporting many leading actors and filmmakers in the Indian film industry. His death has been widely mourned by the South Indian film fraternity.



CNN founder Ted Turner, a pioneer of cable TV news, dies at 87 :-

Ted Turner, the founder of CNN and one of the pioneers of 24-hour television news, passed away at the age of 87. He launched CNN in 1980, transforming the global news industry by introducing round-the-clock news broadcasting. Turner was also known for founding Turner Broadcasting System, which included channels like TNT and Cartoon Network. Apart from media, he was recognized for his environmental initiatives and philanthropy through the United Nations Foundation. His contribution changed the way audiences consume breaking news worldwide.



Karnataka minister D Sudhakar passes away at 66 following prolonged illness :-

Karnataka Planning and Statistics Minister D. Sudhakar passed away at the age of 66 after a prolonged illness in Bengaluru. The senior Congress leader and MLA from Hiriya constituency had been undergoing treatment for a severe lung infection for the past two months at Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), Electronic City. Sudhakar was a four-time MLA and served in various important positions in Karnataka politics, including as

Social Welfare Minister in the past. Known for his grassroots political connect in Chitradurga district, his death is considered a major loss for Karnataka politics and the Congress party.



Prateek Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav's Younger Son, Dies At 38 :-

Prateek Yadav, the younger son of former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav and half-brother of Akhilesh Yadav, passed away in Lucknow at the age of 38. He was reportedly taken to a civil hospital after his health suddenly deteriorated and was declared brought dead. Prateek largely stayed away from active politics and was known for his interest in fitness, real estate, and animal welfare. He was married to BJP leader Aparna Yadav. Political leaders across party lines expressed condolences following his sudden demise.



Tamil producer K Rajan passes away at 85 :-

Veteran Tamil film producer K. Rajan passed away at the age of 85 in Chennai. He was known for producing several Tamil films such as Brammacharigal, Doubles, and Ninaikatha Naaliai, and was also recognized for his outspoken speeches on issues affecting the Tamil film industry. According to reports, police have launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death after he reportedly jumped into the Adyar River.

Several actors and film personalities, including Khushbu Sundar, Vishal, and R. Sarath Kumar, paid tribute to him and remembered his contribution to Tamil cinema.



Olympian Jennifer Paes, Leander Paes's mother passes away :-

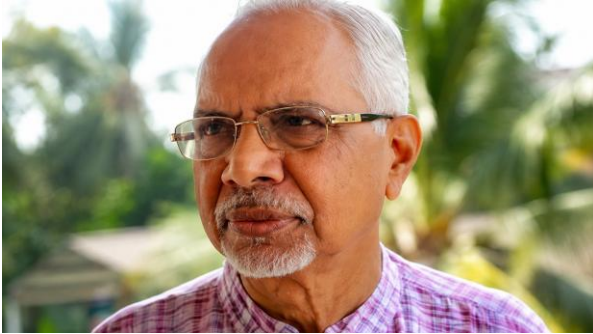
Former Indian basketball captain and Olympian Jennifer Paes, mother of tennis legend Leander Paes, passed away at the age of 72 after a prolonged battle with cancer. Jennifer Paes represented India in basketball at the 1972 Munich Olympics and later captained the Indian women's basketball team. She was regarded as one of the pioneers of women's basketball in India. She belonged to one of India's most celebrated sporting families. Her husband, Vece Paes, was part of India's bronze medal-winning hockey team at the 1972 Munich Olympics, while her son Leander Paes became one of India's greatest tennis players and an Olympic medalist.



British actor Michael Keating dies at 79 :-

British actor Michael Keating, best known for playing Reverend George Stevens in the BBC soap opera EastEnders and Vila Restal in the sci-fi series Blake's 7, has died at the age of 79. His death was confirmed by his agent, and tributes have poured in from fans and fellow

actors across the British television industry. Keating had a long acting career spanning nearly six decades and was especially admired for appearing in all 52 episodes of Blake's 7. He also featured in popular shows such as Doctor Who, Casualty, and Midsomer Murders.



Sahitya Academy Award laureate Father Francis D'Britto passed away :-

Sahitya Akademi Award-winning Marathi writer and Catholic priest Father Francis D'Britto passed away at the age of 81 at his residence in Nandakhal, Vasai, Maharashtra. He was widely known for his contributions to Marathi literature, social activism, and environmental movements. Father Francis D'Britto received the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 2014 for his Marathi translation of the New Testament titled Subodh Bible – Nava Karar. He was among the few scholars to translate the Bible into simple Marathi language, making religious literature accessible to common readers.

13: Ranks & Reports



UPI Transactions Surge to 22.35 Billion in April, Reflecting Digital Growth :-

India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) recorded a 25% year-on-year growth in April with 22.35 billion transactions, valued at Rs 29.03 lakh crore. This marks a significant milestone in India's digital payments landscape, showcasing UPI's role as a leader in global fintech. The platform's international adoption is facilitating remittances and promoting financial inclusion, further establishing India's position in the digital economy.



India-UAE CEPA Boosts Trade Growth :-

The India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) has significantly boosted trade, crossing the \$100 billion mark in merchandise trade. Union Minister Piyush Goyal highlighted CEPA's impact on sectors like gems, electronics, and agriculture, creating opportunities for Indian farmers and MSMEs. The agreement has also facilitated increased FDI inflows and overseas investments, reflecting deepening economic ties. The CEPA continues to strengthen India's position in global trade, offering tangible benefits for exporters and entrepreneurs.



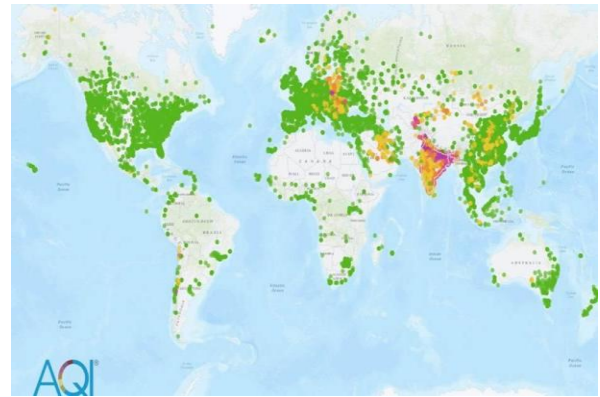
Hyderabad Yoga Mahotsav Sets Asia Record with 6,000 Participants :-

The Hyderabad Yoga Mahotsav saw 6,000 participants perform Bhujangasana, setting an Asia record. Organized by the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, the event marked the countdown to International Day of Yoga 2026. The gathering included participants from over 20 countries, highlighting yoga's global appeal. The initiative reflects India's cultural heritage and its role in promoting holistic wellness worldwide.



India's Manufacturing PMI Rises to 54.7 in April :-

India's manufacturing sector showed resilience in April with the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rising to 54.7 from March's 53.9. This growth is attributed to increased output, new orders, and employment. Despite ongoing inflationary pressures from the Middle East conflict, Indian manufacturers remain optimistic about future prospects. The data suggests a robust manufacturing environment, vital for India's economic growth and recovery. Continued strength in exports and improved supplier coordination are key factors supporting this positive trend.



Global Air Pollution Concerns in 2026: An Alarming Rise

In May 2026, air pollution emerged as a pressing global concern, with cities unexpectedly recording high Air Quality Index (AQI) levels. Irish coastal towns such as Cobh (AQI 208 - Severe), Dungarvan (196), and Clonmel (192) were among the worst affected. Indian cities like Kashgar, Bikaner, and Patna also reported alarming figures. The rise is attributed to weather stagnation, reduced wind flow, and local factors like traffic and construction dust. Experts emphasize the role of climate patterns in exacerbating pollution, highlighting the need for global action to address air quality unpredictability.



Delhi Tops NCRB Crimes Against Children Data for 2024

The National Crime Records Bureau's 2024 report has identified Delhi as having the highest incidence of crimes against children among Indian metros, with 7,662 cases recorded. Additionally, Delhi leads in juvenile crimes with 2,306 cases. The capital has witnessed alarming rates of kidnapping and abduction, with 5,404 cases and a crime rate of 138.4 per lakh children, significantly higher than the national average of 42.3. These statistics, published by the Ministry of Home Affairs, underscore

the urgent need for enhanced child protection measures in the region.



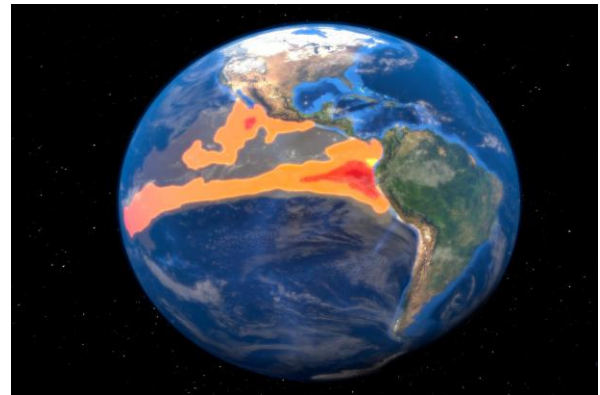
India's Economy Projected to Grow Despite Global Challenges :-

India's GDP is projected to grow at 6.6% in FY27, driven by resilient economic activity and strong domestic consumption, despite global headwinds. According to an SBI Research report, rural and urban consumption remain robust, supported by fiscal stimulus and government initiatives. The report highlights growth in bank credit and emphasizes the importance of domestic consumption in sustaining GDP growth, even amidst external crises.



Gold and Silver Prices Rise Amid Geopolitical Tensions

Gold and silver prices have increased by up to 1% due to escalating global uncertainty. On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold futures have seen a rise of Rs 336, while silver futures have gained Rs 1,988. The ongoing geopolitical tensions have led to a cautiously bullish outlook for precious metals. Commodity experts predict further price movements depending on global stability and market conditions, emphasizing the impact of geopolitical developments on commodity markets.



Global Fire Outbreaks Hit Record High :-

Record-breaking fire outbreaks have been reported globally, with Africa and Asia experiencing unprecedented levels of damage due to climate change. Over 150 million hectares of land have burned this year, surpassing previous records. The situation is expected to worsen with the onset of El Nino weather patterns. This development underscores the urgent need for global cooperation in addressing climate change and implementing effective fire management strategies to mitigate environmental impacts.



India's Top Warehousing Clusters Drive Growth in Logistics Sector :-

A report by Colliers India highlights that 13 key clusters account for 75% of India's warehousing demand and supply. Chennai leads with three major clusters, while others span Delhi NCR, Mumbai, and Bengaluru. These clusters are pivotal in India's logistics expansion, bolstered by infrastructure development and sector-focused initiatives. The report underscores the strategic importance of these hubs in strengthening India's position in the Asia-Pacific supply chain.



Indian Railways Sees 170% Increase in Cement Transport :-

Indian Railways reported a 170% rise in cement transportation due to logistics reforms, including innovative bulk cement tank containers. These reforms have improved efficiency and reduced costs, benefiting affordable housing projects. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw highlighted the environmental and economic benefits of the shift to rail-based freight. Plans to extend similar reforms to fly ash transportation aim to promote sustainability and enhance freight movement across the country.



India's Cheetah Population Grows Under Project Cheetah :-

India's Project Cheetah has successfully increased the country's cheetah population to 53, including 33 cubs born in India. This wildlife restoration initiative, involving translocation from Namibia and South Africa, aims to reintroduce cheetahs in India. The project has shown promising results, with cheetahs adapting well to Indian conditions. Efforts will continue to expand habitats and maintain genetic diversity, ensuring the long-term success of this significant conservation program.



स्वास्थ्य एवं
परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
**HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE**

Union Health Ministry Releases National Health Accounts Estimates 2022-23 :-

The Union Health Ministry released the National Health Accounts Estimates for 2022-23, highlighting significant increases in government health expenditure (GHE). GHE now accounts for 1.43% of GDP, up from 1.15% in 2013-14. The report shows a decline in out-of-pocket expenditure and a rise in social security spending on healthcare. Primary health care investments have more than doubled, reflecting the government's commitment to strengthening the public health infrastructure, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.



India's Economy to Grow at 6.9% Despite Geopolitical Risks: RBI Report :-

The Reserve Bank of India has projected India's real GDP growth at 6.9% for the fiscal year 2026-27, as per its Annual Report 2025-26. Despite geopolitical tensions and inflationary risks from the West Asia conflict, India's economy remains resilient, supported by robust macroeconomic fundamentals. The report highlights strong domestic demand and government capital expenditure as key growth drivers. However, inflationary pressures may intensify due to elevated crude oil prices.

and supply disruptions, with CPI inflation projected at 4.6% for the year.



IMD Warns of Below-Normal Monsoon and Heatwaves in June :-

The India Meteorological Department predicts below-normal monsoon rainfall for the 2026 season, with the country likely to receive around 90% of the Long Period Average. This below-normal category forecast comes with warnings of above-normal heatwave conditions in several states during June. The IMD advises precautionary measures to mitigate the impact on public health and essential services, especially in heatwave-prone states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

14: Schemes & Committees



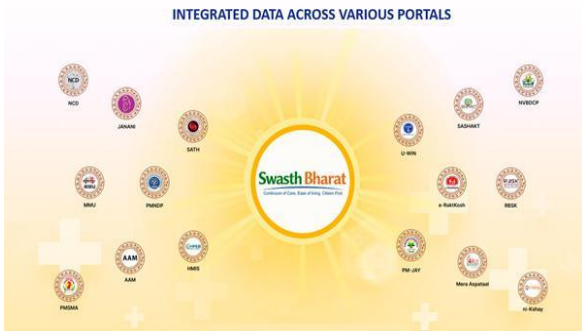
NITI Aayog Launches DPI@2047 Roadmap for \$30 Trillion Economy :-

NITI Aayog has unveiled 'DPI@2047: The Roadmap to Prosperity', a strategic initiative aimed at transforming India into a \$30 trillion economy by 2047. The roadmap is divided into two phases: DPI 2.0 (2025–2035), which focuses on building capable citizens through enhanced digital access, and DPI 3.0 (2035–2047), which emphasizes innovation-led growth. It leverages the success of Aadhaar and UPI from DPI 1.0 to drive transformations in sectors like MSMEs, agriculture, education, and healthcare.



PMGSY Projects Launched in Odisha's Rayagada District

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi launched PMGSY-IV projects worth Rs 1,700 crore in Rayagada, focusing on rural connectivity. The initiative includes 827 new roads spanning 1,702 km, aiming to improve access to essential services and boost local economies. The Centre also approved funds for rural housing and MGNREGA, reinforcing its commitment to rural development. These projects are expected to transform infrastructure, empower women, and enhance farmers' incomes in Odisha, contributing to the state's holistic growth.



Swasth Bharat Portal Launched to Enhance India's Health Systems :-

India's Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda has launched the Swasth Bharat Portal, a significant step towards integrating the country's digital health systems. This platform aims to unify various health program applications, reducing data entry duplication and improving resource utilization. It enables healthcare workers to access multiple programs through a single interface and supports evidence-based decision-making. The portal aligns with the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, enhancing interoperability and data-driven governance in India's health sector.



PMEGP Generates Over 36 Lakh Jobs, Boosts Rural Enterprises :-

The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) has facilitated the creation of over 4 lakh micro-enterprises and 36.33 lakh jobs during the 15th Finance Commission period. Implemented by the Ministry of MSME, the scheme has fully utilized its approved outlay, supporting first-generation entrepreneurs with margin money subsidies for bank loans. A significant portion of these enterprises are rural, reflecting a push towards rural industrialization. The

scheme has also seen high participation from women and socially disadvantaged groups, contributing to grassroots entrepreneurship and self-employment across India.



Cabinet Approves ₹5,659 Crore Cotton Productivity Mission :-

The Union Cabinet sanctioned a ₹5,659.22 crore mission to boost cotton productivity for the years 2026-31. The initiative aims to enhance cotton yield and quality while reducing contamination, thereby increasing farmers' income and solidifying India's textile market position globally. The mission adopts the 5F strategy - Farm, Fibre, Factory, Fashion, and Foreign - and will cover 140 districts across 14 states. Key goals include improving climate-resilient seeds and modern farming techniques, with a target of raising production to 498 lakh bales and productivity from 440 kg/ha to 755 kg/ha by 2031.



PM Modi Dedicates ₹1,535 Crore Railway Projects in Telangana :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dedicated railway infrastructure projects worth ₹1,535 crore in Telangana, aimed at enhancing rail connectivity and reducing congestion. Key projects include sections of the Kazipet-

Vijayawada multi-tracking corridor and the Kazipet Rail Under Rail Bypass. These projects are expected to improve operational efficiency, reduce travel time, and support faster transportation of goods, benefiting industries and passengers across the region. The initiatives are part of Indian Railways' broader push for modernization and regional connectivity.



PM Modi Highlights 11 Years of Jan Suraksha Schemes :

Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized the impact of the Jan Suraksha Schemes as they complete 11 years, noting their role in enhancing financial inclusion and social security. The PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, and Atal Pension Yojana have collectively reached over 94.5 crore enrolments, providing affordable financial protection to underserved communities. These schemes reflect the government's commitment to ensuring social security and have significantly contributed to improving the financial resilience of millions across India.



PMGSY-IV Launched in Madhya Pradesh to Boost Rural Development :-

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the fourth phase of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY-IV) in Sehore, Madhya Pradesh. The initiative

includes a development package worth thousands of crores, focusing on rural roads, housing, and infrastructure expansion. The PMGSY-IV aims to improve rural connectivity, benefiting over 987 habitations, and enhancing access to education, healthcare, and markets, contributing to the prosperity of villagers and farmers.



Rajasthan Ranks Second in PMGSY Road Development

Rajasthan has achieved the second rank nationally under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) for road length and quality performance. The state has constructed over 49,730 km of roads, connecting 15,983 habitations with all-weather roads. This achievement highlights Rajasthan's commitment to enhancing rural connectivity, which is pivotal for economic growth. The state continues to set benchmarks in infrastructure development, with ongoing projects aimed at further improving rural connectivity and development potential.



QR-Code Identity Cards Introduced for Census 2027 :-

In a move to enhance transparency and security, the government has introduced QR-code-enabled identity cards for enumerators involved in the 2027 Census. Citizens can authenticate the enumerators by scanning the QR code using their mobile devices, thereby

minimizing the risk of impersonation. The first phase of the Census began on April 1, 2026, involving around 30 lakh enumerators. The initiative also includes a self-enumeration portal and digital tools like mobile apps and real-time monitoring, aiming to boost efficiency in data collection.



India Launches Big Cat Conservation Programs Ahead of IBCA Summit :-

India's Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change has announced a series of conservation programs for the nation's five big cat species, leading up to the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit 2026. These initiatives aim to highlight conservation achievements and challenges, focusing on species such as the tiger and Asiatic lion. The programs will emphasize India's leadership in wildlife conservation and promote global cooperation. Key events will be held in locations like Gir, Gujarat, and Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, showcasing efforts such as Project Lion and Project Tiger.



India and IFAD Unveil New Strategy for Strengthening Rural Economy :-

India and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have launched a new eight-year strategy aimed at enhancing rural incomes and resilience. The Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) 2026-2033 focuses on empowering grassroots institutions and promoting sustainable livelihood opportunities. By aligning with India's Viksit Bharat@2047 vision, the strategy seeks to position India as a leader in rural development, sharing successful models with countries in the Global South.



Centre Launches Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool Amid Global Tensions :-

India's Department of Financial Services has launched the Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool, backed by a sovereign guarantee, to secure shipping risks amid geopolitical tensions. The initiative aims to reduce reliance on foreign reinsurers and ensure uninterrupted maritime insurance coverage, particularly in high-risk regions. This move strengthens India's financial sovereignty and maritime trade security.



Shivraj Singh Chouhan Unveils Agriculture Reforms to Aid Farmers :-

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced reforms under the 'Reform Express' initiative to simplify processes for farmers and agri-stakeholders. Key reforms include licensing simplifications for pesticides and streamlined fertiliser registration processes. Digital integration across customs ports aims to facilitate agricultural imports, enhancing transparency and efficiency in the agriculture sector.



Odisha Cabinet Approves New Marine Fishing Regulation Act :-

The Odisha Cabinet has approved the Odisha Marine Fishing (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2026, replacing the 1982 legislation. The new act aims to modernize the legal framework for marine fisheries, emphasizing conservation, coastal security, and mariculture. This reform aligns with Odisha's economic growth strategy and targets significant seafood export growth by 2036, supporting the state's Blue Economy initiatives.

All Your Health Records accessible in one place - ABHA

#ABDMilestone

Discharge Summaries, Prescriptions, Doctor Consultation & Follow-ups, Insurance & Billing Records, Lab Reports

100 Crore+
Health Records Linked Digitally
With Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts

India Crosses 100 Crore ABHA-Linked Health Records Milestone :-

India's digital healthcare ecosystem has surpassed 100 crore health records linked to Ayushman Bharat Health

Accounts under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission. This achievement marks a significant step toward an integrated and interoperable healthcare system, empowering citizens with secure access to their health information across various healthcare providers.



सत्यमेव जयते

Ministry of Social Justice
and Empowerment

PM-AJAY Portal and Mobile App to Enhance SC Welfare Scheme :-

The Ministry of Social Justice will launch the PM-AJAY portal and mobile app to digitize the Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojna (PM-AJAY) scheme. Designed to improve coordination and service delivery, the platform will monitor socio-economic development in SC-majority villages. It aims to enhance transparency and efficiency in delivering benefits to over 4 million beneficiaries.



Uttarakhand Announces Reward Scheme for Forest Fire Prevention :-

The Uttarakhand government is set to introduce a reward scheme offering up to Rs 1 lakh for significant contributions to forest fire prevention and control. This initiative comes amid a rise in wildfire incidents due to climate change factors, including erratic monsoon patterns and El Nino conditions. The state has recorded

over 14,000 forest fire incidents in the past decade, affecting thousands of hectares of forest land.



BHAVYA Scheme to Boost India's Industrial Parks and Manufacturing :-

The Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA) scheme is set to create investment-ready industrial parks, enhancing India's manufacturing ecosystem. DPIIT Secretary Amardeep Singh Bhatia emphasized the scheme's focus on long-term industrial viability and attracting investors. States and UTs are encouraged to prepare proposals showcasing competitive advantages. The scheme aims to generate employment and strengthen India's position as a manufacturing hub by ensuring rapid investment grounding and operational readiness of industrial parks.

15: Science & Technology



Union Ministers Amit Shah and Jyotiraditya Scindia Launched Mobile Disaster Alert System :-

Union Ministers Amit Shah and Jyotiraditya Scindia has Launched a nationwide mobile-based disaster alert system, enabling real-time emergency notifications. Developed by the Department of Telecommunications and NDMA, the system uses SMS and Cell Broadcast technology to deliver geo-targeted alerts. The initiative aims to enhance India's disaster preparedness and early warning capabilities, leveraging indigenous technology.



Hantavirus Outbreak Quarantines Cruise Ship Off Cape Verde :-

A suspected hantavirus outbreak on the luxury cruise ship MV Hondius has led to the quarantine of approximately 150 passengers off Cape Verde. Three fatalities have been reported, including a Dutch couple and a German national, with several others exhibiting symptoms. The Netherlands' RIVM confirmed hantavirus presence in one patient. Authorities are arranging evacuations, while WHO states the public risk is low. The situation underscores the challenges of infectious disease management in isolated environments.

**Atmosphere Discovered on Distant Solar System Body :-**

Astronomers have identified a thin atmosphere on trans-Neptunian object (612533) 2002 XV93, suggesting dynamism in distant celestial bodies beyond Pluto. The atmosphere, potentially composed of methane or nitrogen, challenges previous assumptions about such objects. Researchers propose it may be sustained by cryovolcanism or result from recent impacts. This discovery, made via stellar occultation, enhances understanding of solar system evolution and the characteristics of icy worlds.

**Moderna's mRNA Flu Vaccine Shows Superior Efficacy in Trials :-**

Moderna's mRNA-based flu vaccine has demonstrated superior efficacy in a large international trial, outperforming standard flu shots. The vaccine, currently under review by the U.S. FDA, could become the first mRNA flu vaccine in the U.S., offering a faster and potentially more effective approach to influenza prevention. The trial, involving over 40,000 adults, showed the vaccine to be 26.6% more effective than standard-dose flu shots. While side effects were slightly more common, they were generally mild and short-lived.

**Microbial Life Found Deep in Atacama Desert :-**

A groundbreaking discovery in Chile's Atacama Desert has unveiled a microbial ecosystem comprising bacteria and archaea located two meters beneath the surface. This region, known as the driest hot desert on Earth, serves as a key analogue for Mars in astrobiology research. Previous studies detected microbes as deep as four meters, with nematodes also present in samples. These findings are crucial for understanding the potential existence of life on Mars, offering insights into how life might persist in extreme environments on other planets.

**South Korea Unveils Humanoid Robot Monk Gabi :-**

In a unique blend of tradition and technology, South Korea has introduced Gabi, the first humanoid robot monk, at Jogyesa Temple in Seoul. Developed on the Unitree G1 platform, Gabi was presented by the Jogye Order ahead of Buddha's Birthday. Standing at 130 cm tall, Gabi has received a Dharma name and follows five modified Buddhist precepts, including respecting life and energy conservation. This innovative initiative highlights the temple's efforts to integrate modern technology into spiritual practices.



Meta Ends End-to-End Encryption for Instagram Chats :-

Meta has discontinued end-to-end encryption for Instagram direct messages, a move marking a shift from its previous privacy-focused stance. The decision follows low user adoption of the feature, which ensured only the sender and receiver could read messages. Critics argue that optional privacy tools often see poor uptake, while child protection groups have welcomed the rollback, citing concerns about detecting harmful activities. Instagram will continue using standard encryption, allowing Meta to access message content when necessary.



Study Links Moderate Coffee Intake to Lower Dementia Risk :-

A long-term study suggests that consuming two to three cups of coffee daily may reduce the risk of dementia, particularly before age 75. The research highlights caffeine's potential benefits in maintaining brain health by reducing inflammation and harmful plaque build-up associated with Alzheimer's disease. This finding emphasizes the importance of moderate coffee consumption as part of a healthy lifestyle to support cognitive function in aging populations.



Rajasthan Inaugurates First Semiconductor Facility in Bhiwadi :-

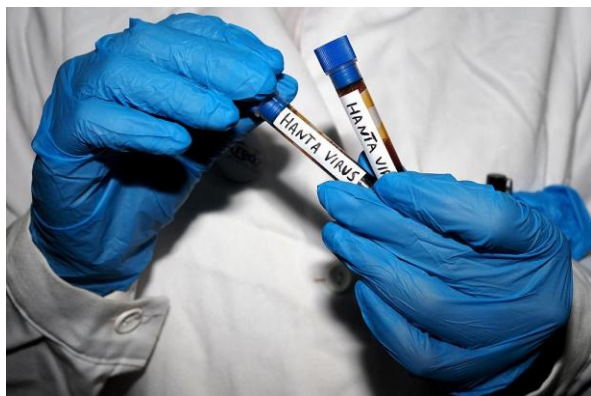
Rajasthan marked its entry into India's semiconductor ecosystem with the launch of a new semiconductor plant and Electronics Manufacturing Cluster in Bhiwadi. This development, led by Sahasra Semiconductors, represents a significant boost to the state's electronics manufacturing capabilities. The facility aims to enhance India's chip production capacity, supporting the 'Make in India' initiative. The project highlights Rajasthan's potential as a hub for high-tech manufacturing, contributing to national efforts in building a robust semiconductor supply chain.



WHO Declares Ebola Outbreak in Congo and Uganda an Emergency :-

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda as a 'public health emergency of international concern.' The outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo virus, poses risks to neighboring countries. WHO reported 80 suspected deaths and 246 suspected cases in DRC's Ituri province. The outbreak is classified as extraordinary due to the lack of approved therapeutics or vaccines for this

virus strain. WHO advises countries to activate emergency mechanisms and undertake cross-border screening to prevent further spread, emphasizing the need for immediate isolation and daily monitoring of confirmed cases.



Britain Secures Japanese Antiviral for Hantavirus Outbreak :-

Britain has received the antiviral drug favipiravir from Japan to combat a hantavirus outbreak linked to the Hondius cruise liner. Although the drug is experimental for hantavirus treatment, it bolsters UK's response amid low transmission risk. The outbreak involves the Andes virus, a strain known for human-to-human transmission. Favipiravir is not licensed in the UK, and its use is considered experimental.

India's clean energy goals and supporting the vision of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat.



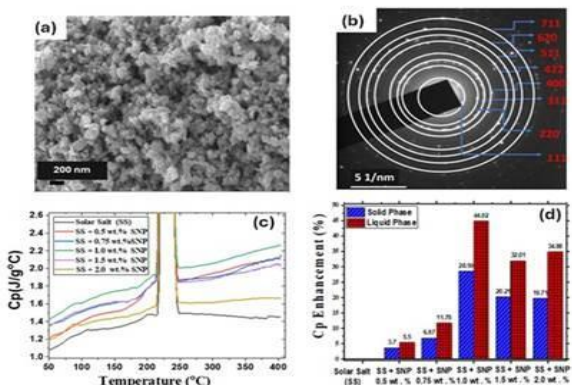
China Launches Year-Long Space Mission, Eyes Moon Landing by 2030 :-

China has sent three astronauts to its space station, with one expected to stay for a year, setting a national record. The mission aims to study long-duration human physiology in space, supporting China's goal of a crewed moon landing by 2030. The Shenzhou-23 mission reflects China's growing space capabilities amid an accelerating race with the US for lunar exploration. The mission will test new procedures for future lunar missions, including autonomous rendezvous and docking, as China aims to establish a permanent lunar base by 2035.



WHO Reports Over 900 Suspected Ebola Cases in Congo

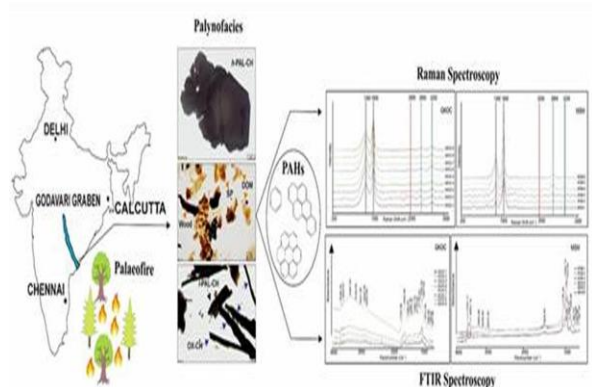
The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified over 900 suspected Ebola cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with 101 confirmed cases. The outbreak in Ituri province poses challenges due to ongoing conflict and displacement. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus emphasized the need for comprehensive healthcare services to build trust and address the crisis. The WHO declared the



Indian Researchers Develop High-Performance Thermal Battery Material :-

Researchers at ARCI have developed a cost-effective thermal energy storage material, enhancing the efficiency of thermal batteries. The innovation promises significant improvements for solar power plants and industrial waste heat recovery systems, aligning with

outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, underscoring the urgent need for international support and resources.



Ancient Wildfires in Gondwana Forests Shaped Earth's Climate :-

A study by the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences reveals evidence of massive wildfires in ancient Gondwana forests. Using advanced molecular techniques, researchers found that these wildfires played a significant role in shaping prehistoric environments. The findings provide insights into Earth's climate history and contribute to more accurate climate models.



Russia Develops Vaccine for New Ebola Strain Amid DRC Outbreak :-

Russia has announced the development of a vaccine against a new Ebola strain linked to the outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The outbreak has resulted in over 220 suspected deaths, with the World Health Organization declaring it a Public Health Emergency. The Russian vaccine may also protect against the Bundibugyo strain, which is currently spreading.

Efforts to contain the epidemic continue as health officials work to prevent further transmission.



Indian Railways to Launch First Indigenous Hydrogen-Powered Train :-

Indian Railways is set to launch its first indigenous hydrogen fuel cell-based train on the Jind-Sonapat route in Haryana. This development marks a significant step in India's clean energy transition, aligning with global trends in sustainable mobility. The hydrogen train will operate at 75 kmph, utilizing a 1200 KW hydrogen fuel cell propulsion system. This initiative places India among countries pioneering hydrogen-powered rail transport, emphasizing the nation's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and promoting green technology.



Blue Origin Rocket Explodes During Test, Impacting SpaceX Competition :-

A Blue Origin New Glenn rocket exploded during a test, marking a setback for Jeff Bezos' space venture in its competition with SpaceX. The uncrewed rocket's failure occurred during a hot-fire test, with the incident under investigation. This development challenges Blue Origin's efforts to rival SpaceX's achievements in commercial space exploration and lunar missions.



India's First SkyCast System Launched at IGI Airport :-

India's first 'SkyCast' aviation weather monitoring system was inaugurated at IGI Airport by Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh. Part of Mission Mausam, the system provides real-time weather intelligence to pilots and airlines, improving safety and reducing flight disruptions. Featuring advanced atmospheric monitoring technologies, SkyCast marks a significant milestone in India's aviation history. The system will be expanded to other airports, enhancing India's weather forecasting capabilities and supporting aviation operations during adverse conditions.

16: Sports



PV Sindhu Joins Badminton World Federation Council as Voting Member :-

Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu has been elected as the Chair of the Athletes Commission, achieving a significant milestone by becoming a full voting member of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) Council. This rare accomplishment allows her to directly influence global badminton governance. Sindhu's first appearance as a council member was at the BWF Annual General Meeting in Horsens. Her role involves policy-making, representing athletes' interests, and contributing to the sport's future development.



Alexander Zverev Joins Federer-Nadal Club with Madrid Semis Run :-

Alexander Zverev reached the Madrid Open semi-finals, joining an elite group including Federer and Nadal to achieve this feat in the first four Masters 1000 events of the season. Zverev's victory over Flavio Cobolli marked his 179th tour-level win on clay, surpassing Philipp Kohlschreiber. He will face Alexander Blockx in the semi-finals, showcasing his consistent performance at top tennis events.



Inter Milan Clinches 21st Serie A Title :-

Inter Milan has secured its 21st Serie A title following a decisive 2-0 victory over Parma. The team's consistent performance throughout the season, coupled with a strong defensive lineup and effective strike partnership, has been key to their success. Inter's dominance in the league was evident as rivals Napoli and AC Milan faced setbacks. The victory underscores Inter's strategic prowess and marks a significant achievement in Italian football, reinforcing their status as a leading club in the league.



Indian Boxers Excel at Asian Championships in Tashkent

India's young boxing talent showcased impressive performances at the Asian Boxing U15 & U17 Championships 2026 in Tashkent. U-17 boys Yadav Yash and Karuna Albertson Kom secured dominant victories, while U-15 girls Khushi Rana and Hanshika Attri displayed exceptional skill. The achievements highlight India's growing prowess in boxing, with young athletes contributing to the nation's reputation on the international stage. The event underscores the potential of nurturing future champions through structured training and support.



Wu Yize Triumphs at 2026 World Snooker Championship :-

Wu Yize has emerged victorious at the 2026 World Snooker Championship, defeating veteran Shaun Murphy in a thrilling final. This win marks a significant moment in snooker history, as Wu becomes one of the youngest champions to claim the prestigious title. His victory is seen as a 'changing of the guard' in international snooker, sparking renewed interest in the sport across Asia. Wu's remarkable performance not only solidifies his status as a rising star but also brings a fresh wave of enthusiasm and inspiration to aspiring players worldwide.



Delhi to Host 22nd Commonwealth Table Tennis Championship :-

Delhi has been chosen to host the 22nd Commonwealth Table Tennis Championship, scheduled from July 27 to August 2, 2026. The prestigious event will take place at the Thyagraj Stadium and is organized by the Delhi Government in collaboration with the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI). Over 35 nations from the Commonwealth, including England, Australia, and Canada, are expected to participate. This event not only

showcases Delhi's capability to host international sports meets but also highlights the growing popularity of table tennis in India.



FIFA to Host World Cup Opening Ceremonies in Three Countries :-

FIFA will hold separate opening ceremonies for the World Cup in Mexico, Canada, and the US, marking a historic first for the tournament. The events will feature performances by renowned artists, highlighting the cultural diversity of each host nation. This year's World Cup is co-hosted by three countries, a move aimed at showcasing the global nature of the sport. The opening ceremonies are expected to set the stage for a highly anticipated tournament, celebrating the unity and excitement of international football.



SAI Launches Campaigns for Commonwealth Games 2030 :-

The Sports Authority of India (SAI), in partnership with MyBharat, has initiated nationwide campaigns to boost youth engagement ahead of the Commonwealth Games 2030 in Ahmedabad. The campaigns include a Torch Design Contest, the CWG Reel Challenge, and a Commonwealth Games Quiz, aimed at fostering

creativity and public involvement. These initiatives are part of India's broader efforts to enhance its sporting culture and position the Commonwealth Games 2030 as a significant milestone in the country's global sporting presence.



Indian Women's Hockey Team Preps for Nations Cup with Australia Tour :-

The Indian women's national field hockey team is set to embark on a preparatory tour of Australia ahead of the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup. Scheduled from May 21 to June 3, the team will engage in a series of matches against Australia as part of their training. With a focus on enhancing their skills and strategy, the tour will also include a specialized training clinic for the team's drag-flickers, led by Dutch legend Taeke Taekema. This initiative underscores India's commitment to improving its performance on the international stage.



First Female Coach for England Men's Cricket Team :-

Sarah Taylor, former England Women's wicketkeeper, has been appointed as the fielding coach for the England men's team in their upcoming series against New Zealand. This marks a significant milestone in cricket, breaking gender barriers in coaching at the senior

national team level. Taylor, who retired from international cricket in 2019, brings her vast experience and expertise to the men's team, a move lauded by England's director of cricket, Rob Key.



PSG Clinches Fifth Consecutive Ligue 1 Title :-

Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) secured their 14th Ligue 1 title after defeating Lens 2-0, marking their fifth consecutive championship win. PSG's victory solidifies their status as France's most successful club, with key performances from Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Ibrahim Mbaye. The win also sets the stage for their upcoming Champions League final, highlighting PSG's dominance in domestic and European football.



Inter Milan Secures Coppa Italia with Victory Over Lazio :-

Inter Milan defeated Lazio 2-0 to win the Coppa Italia, achieving a domestic double after clinching the Serie A title. The win, secured by goals from an own goal by Adam Marusic and a strike by Lautaro Martinez, caps a successful season for Inter. This victory reinforces Inter Milan's dominance in Italian football and their strategic prowess on the field, maintaining their status as a formidable force in European competitions.



Tomiyasu Returns to Japan's FIFA World Cup Squad :-

Former Arsenal defender Takehiro Tomiyasu has been named in Japan's World Cup squad by coach Hajime Moriyasu after a two-year absence due to injuries. Tomiyasu, now with Ajax, joins the 26-man squad for the World Cup, where Japan will face the Netherlands, Tunisia, and Sweden in Group F. This marks Tomiyasu's comeback, having last played for Japan in 2024. His inclusion, alongside seasoned players like Wataru Endo and Yuto Nagatomo, aims to bolster Japan's defense as they seek to surpass their Round of 16 finishes in previous tournaments.



FIFA Confirms Iran's Participation in World Cup Despite Tensions :-

FIFA Secretary-General Mattias Grafstrom confirmed constructive talks with Iran's Football Association, ensuring Iran's participation in the upcoming World Cup. Despite geopolitical tensions following attacks on Iran, FIFA expressed confidence in Iran's ability to compete. Issues such as visa arrangements for Iranian players were discussed. Iran's matches are scheduled in the United States, with the team preparing for a training camp in

Turkey. FIFA aims to maintain the original schedule, rejecting Iran's request to switch matches to Mexico.



Sinner Clinches Historic Italian Open Victory :-

Jannik Sinner achieved a career milestone by defeating Casper Ruud 6-4, 6-4 to win the Italian Open. This victory allows Sinner to complete a sweep of all nine ATP Masters 1000 titles, joining Novak Djokovic as the only players to achieve a 'Golden Masters.' Sinner's win is historic for Italy, marking the first men's singles title in Rome since 1976. His victory further solidifies his status as a formidable player on the clay court, enhancing his prospects at the upcoming French Open.



Tennis: Svitolina Wins Third Italian Open Title :-

Elina Svitolina claimed her third Italian Open title by defeating world number four Coco Gauff in a thrilling final. Svitolina's victory sets her as a strong contender for the upcoming French Open. Her performance demonstrates resilience and skill on clay, enhancing her prospects for future Grand Slam success.



Neymar Returns to Brazil's World Cup Squad After Injury Recovery :-

Neymar has been included in Brazil's World Cup squad, marking a significant return after overcoming injury struggles. Manager Carlo Ancelotti emphasized Neymar's improved fitness and form as key factors for his inclusion. As Brazil's all-time leading scorer, Neymar's participation raises hopes for Brazil's pursuit of a record-extending sixth World Cup title.



Guardiola to Conclude Decade-Long Tenure at Manchester City :-

Pep Guardiola has announced his decision to leave Manchester City at the end of the season after a successful decade. Under his leadership, the club won numerous titles, including six Premier League championships. Guardiola's departure marks the end of an era for City, leaving a legacy of tactical innovation and dominance in English football.



Arsenal Wins Premier League Title After 22 Years :-

Arsenal clinched their first Premier League title in 22 years with a 2-1 victory over Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park. Goals from Gabriel Jesus and Noni Madueke secured the win. The triumph caps a remarkable season under manager Mikel Arteta, with Arsenal finishing seven points clear of Manchester City. The title celebration included a trophy presentation and a guard of honor from Palace players.



India Competes in Taipei WorldSkills Invitational Tournament :-

Union Minister Jayant Chaudhary flagged off the Indian contingent for the Taipei Capital Cup WorldSkills Invitational Tournament. The event promotes technical excellence and global skills development, with India competing in five categories. The tournament serves as a key preparatory event ahead of WorldSkills Shanghai 2026, showcasing India's commitment to skill development and international collaboration.



Norway Chess 2026: Carlsen Beats World Champion Gukesh :-

Magnus Carlsen defeated reigning world champion D Gukesh in the fourth round of the Norway Chess 2026 tournament. Playing with black pieces, Carlsen converted his advantage into a crucial victory, enhancing his standing in the tournament. The win comes as Carlsen seeks to regain momentum after a subdued start. Meanwhile, Alireza Firouzja leads the overall standings, closely followed by other contenders in both men's and women's sections.



India Retains Asia-Oceania 24-Hour Ultramarathon Championship Title :-

Team India achieved a historic victory at the IAU 24-Hour Asia Oceania Championship in Japan, setting new national records in ultrarunning. The Indian men's team swept the podium, with Amar Singh Devanda setting a new Indian record of 282.881 km. The team also achieved the highest team total by an Asian country at any IAU Championship. In the women's event, India secured bronze, with Tenzin Dolma leading the charge.

17: State



Gujarat HSC Results 2026: General Stream Achieves 92.71% Pass Rate :-

The Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board (GSHSEB) has announced the 2026 Class 12 examination results, with the General stream securing a pass rate of 92.71%. The Science stream recorded an 84.33% pass rate. State Education Minister Dr. Pradyuman Vaja declared the results in Gandhinagar. This year, over 5 lakh students took the exams, with notable performances in districts like Morbi, which achieved a pass rate of 94.85%. The results are significant for students and educational institutions as they reflect the academic standards and progression within the state.



PM Modi Celebrates BJP's Historic Victory in Bengal :-

Following the BJP's historic victory in the West Bengal assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi shared a Sanskrit Subhashitam emphasizing truth and perseverance. The BJP's success marks a significant political shift, reflecting public support for governance-

driven politics. Celebrating in traditional Bengali attire, Modi praised party workers and voter turnout, highlighting the expanding influence of BJP along the Ganga. This victory underscores the party's strategic growth and impact on India's political landscape.



UDF Secures Victory in Kerala Assembly Elections :-

The United Democratic Front (UDF) claimed a decisive victory in the Kerala Assembly elections, ending a decade of Left Democratic Front (LDF) rule. The UDF secured 102 seats, with Congress winning 63. The election outcome reflects a return to Kerala's pattern of alternating governments, signifying a shift in voter sentiment. The results highlight the dynamic political landscape of Kerala and the influence of regional alliances in shaping election outcomes.



BJP Secures Third Term in Assam with Decisive Mandate :-

The BJP-led NDA secured a third consecutive term in Assam, winning a three-fourths majority in the Assembly elections. The BJP won 82 seats, with allies BPF and AGP

securing 10 seats each. This victory, the party's highest-ever tally in Assam, underscores continued support for the NDA's governance agenda. The results reflect the BJP's strategic growth and influence in the region, shaping Assam's political landscape.



Centre Launches Second Tranche of Limestone Block Auctions in J&K :-

The Ministry of Mines has initiated the second tranche of limestone block auctions in Jammu and Kashmir, aiming to boost industrial development in the region. With 12 mineral blocks up for auction, the initiative seeks to attract investments and generate employment. The auctions are part of broader efforts to enhance transparency and ease of doing business in India's mining sector, contributing to the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.



Sacred Exposition of Buddha Relics Concludes in Ladakh :-

The Sacred Exposition of Holy Buddha Relics in Ladakh concluded with over 1.18 lakh devotees participating in the spiritual gathering. Held at the Dharma Centre in Choglamsar, the event coincided with the Monlam Chenmo festival. The exposition aimed to promote

cultural harmony and spiritual unity, attracting dignitaries and international pilgrims. This successful event underscores Ladakh's emergence as a global center for peace and spiritual awakening, drawing attention to its rich cultural heritage.



India Celebrates Sikkim's 50th Statehood Day, PM Modi Pledges Support :-

On Sikkim's 50th Statehood Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended greetings to the people of Sikkim and reaffirmed the central government's commitment to supporting the state's growth. Sikkim, which joined the Indian Union in 1975, has made significant contributions to national development. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of continued federal support for Sikkim's development trajectory, focusing on infrastructure, tourism, and sustainable agriculture. This milestone highlights Sikkim's integration into the Union and its evolving role in India's growth story.



Railways Launches ₹400 Crore Projects in Rajasthan :-

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the rapid progress of redevelopment at Alwar Railway Station, part of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. The

₹112 crore project aims to modernize the station, enhancing connectivity and passenger amenities while preserving Rajasthan's architectural heritage. The initiative is part of a larger effort involving ₹400 crore worth of railway projects across Rajasthan, which include improvements in infrastructure and services. These developments align with the vision of transforming railway stations into urban hubs, boosting regional connectivity and economic activity.



CBI Arrests Mastermind in NEET-UG 2026 Paper Leak Case :-

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested Manisha Gurunath Mandhare, a senior teacher from Pune, for her involvement in the NEET-UG 2026 biology paper leak. Mandhare, associated with the NEET process as an expert, allegedly accessed and leaked questions from the examination. The CBI has conducted extensive searches and seized incriminating evidence, including digital devices and documents. This arrest is part of a larger investigation into the paper leak, which has resulted in multiple arrests across the country.



Piyush Goyal Unveils Plan for Integrated Commerce Hub in Mumbai :-

Union Minister Piyush Goyal announced a plan to create an integrated commerce hub in Mumbai, bringing together various Ministry of Commerce and Industry offices. This initiative aims to improve efficiency and reduce administrative costs by co-locating 20 offices currently spread across the city. The hub will digitally connect stakeholders with 46 organizations, enhancing service delivery and supporting India's ambitious export targets. The move aligns with the government's vision of 'Ease of Living' and 'Ease of Doing Business.'



Ooty Flower Festival Showcases Heritage and Flora :-

Tamil Nadu's Ooty Flower Festival commenced with vibrant floral displays and heritage-themed installations, attracting thousands of tourists. Held at the Government Botanical Garden, the event features unique floral arrangements and species from around the world. The festival celebrates Tamil heritage with installations representing iconic landmarks, enhancing tourism and cultural appreciation in the Nilgiris district.



Nagaland's Coffee Mission Aims at Global Specialty Market :-

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia launched the ₹175-crore 'Coffees of Nagaland' mission, aiming to transform

Nagaland into a premium specialty coffee destination. The initiative, under PM Modi's vision for a developed Northeast, seeks to create a globally competitive coffee ecosystem in Nagaland, integrating plantation development, post-harvest processing, branding, exports, and tourism. This mission reflects a 'Whole of India' approach, involving governments, ministries, farmers, and market leaders to ensure sustainable income for coffee-growing communities.



Rajasthan Joins 'Namo Bharat' Rapid Transit Network :-

Rajasthan is set to join the 'Namo Bharat' network, connecting Alwar with New Delhi through the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS). The Delhi-Gurugram-SNB-Alwar corridor will enhance connectivity and boost economic growth in the National Capital Region, benefiting industrial hubs like Bhiwadi and Neemrana. Designed as an interoperable network, the RRTS will feature high-speed trains and state-of-the-art infrastructure, integrating with major transport modes to provide seamless travel.



Assam Poised to Become Power Surplus State by 2035

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced significant strides towards making Assam a power

surplus state by 2035. With an energy infrastructure vision worth ₹14,202 crore, the state is already implementing projects valued at ₹6,235 crore. These initiatives aim to boost power generation, enhance transmission networks, and modernize distribution systems, addressing the rising electricity demand due to urbanization and industrial expansion. The focus includes renewable energy projects, like solar, alongside upgrades in hydropower and thermal power efficiency.



Centre Allocates ₹527 Crore for Health Initiatives in West Bengal :-

Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda announced the release of ₹527 crore to West Bengal under the National Health Mission. The funds aim to enhance healthcare infrastructure and implement flagship programs like Ayushman Bharat. The Centre's support focuses on improving maternal and child healthcare, disease prevention, and immunization. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to strengthening public health systems and ensuring accessible healthcare for all citizens.



PM Modi Hails BJP Victory in West Bengal's Falta Bypoll

Prime Minister Narendra Modi celebrated the BJP's victory in the Falta Assembly bypoll in West Bengal, calling it a triumph of democracy over intimidation. The BJP candidate, Debangshu Panda, won by a record margin, reflecting growing support for the party in the state. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari also praised the result as a mandate for development and a rejection of the ruling Trinamool Congress's governance model. The victory signifies a shift in political dynamics in West Bengal.



Ganga Dussehra Celebrations in Varanasi Highlight River's Significance :-

The auspicious occasion of Ganga Dussehra saw thousands of devotees gather at Varanasi's ghats for prayers and holy dips. Special aarti and rituals were performed at Kashi Vishwanath Temple, with BJP MLA Neelkanth Tiwari emphasizing the importance of schemes like Namami Gange for the river's rejuvenation. The festival, marked by spiritual significance, underscores the cultural and religious importance of the Ganga, considered a purifier and liberator by devotees.



Kolkata to Host Main International Day of Yoga 2026 Celebrations :-

The main celebration for the International Day of Yoga 2026 will take place in Kolkata on June 21, focusing on the theme 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing'. The event highlights yoga's role in promoting physical and mental well-being, especially among the elderly. The Ministry of Ayush is leading efforts to expand yoga's reach across communities. The celebration in Kolkata, a city renowned for its cultural heritage, underscores the growing global recognition of yoga as a tool for holistic health.



Indian Coast Guard and ATS Gujarat Seize 115 kg Cocaine Off Mundra Coast :-

The Indian Coast Guard and Anti-Terrorism Squad Gujarat conducted a joint operation, seizing 115 kg of cocaine worth Rs 1,150 crore off the Mundra coast. The intelligence-based operation targeted suspected maritime smuggling activities. This successful seizure highlights ongoing efforts to combat drug trafficking and reinforce maritime security. The operation aligns with the government's vision of a 'Nasha Mukh Bharat', reflecting a zero-tolerance policy towards illegal narcotics trade.



CM Siddaramaiah Resigns Amid Karnataka Political Developments :-

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has resigned, ending his tenure as the state's longest-serving Chief Minister. His resignation follows instructions from the party high command and marks a shift in Karnataka's political landscape. Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar is set to succeed Siddaramaiah as the next Chief Minister. Siddaramaiah's leadership has been characterized by significant policy initiatives and governance reforms, leaving a lasting impact on the state.



New Special Economic Zones Approved in Puducherry :-

The Indian government has approved two new Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Puducherry, aiming to boost industrial growth and exports. One IT/ITES SEZ, developed by Oulgaret Municipality, marks the first municipal-led SEZ in India. The other, a Multi-Sector SEZ

by PIPDIC, promises significant investment and employment opportunities. These projects reflect a broader strategy to enhance India's industrial ecosystem and self-reliance, contributing to regional economic development in the Tamil Nadu, Andaman, and Puducherry region.



National Yoga Conclave 'YOGOTSAV 2026' Celebrates Diversity :-

YOGOTSAV 2026, the 6th National Conclave of the Indian Yoga Association, commenced at Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute in Maharashtra, focusing on 'Celebrating Diversity in Yoga'. The event brings together yoga acharyas, researchers, and policymakers to discuss Yoga's future globally. Union Minister Prataprao Jadhav highlighted Yoga's role in promoting harmony and well-being. The conclave includes demonstrations by leading yoga institutions, reflecting India's inclusive yogic heritage.

18: Summits & Conferences



PM Modi Stresses Strategic Partnerships at Heads of Missions Conference :-

Prime Minister Modi emphasized strengthening India's global engagement through trade, technology, and strategic partnerships at the 11th Heads of Missions Conference. The event, attended by Indian ambassadors and high commissioners, focused on aligning diplomatic priorities to enhance economic ties and leverage emerging technologies. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar highlighted the expansion of India's international engagement in recent years.



India Hosts BRICS Women's Working Group Meet :-

India convened the first virtual BRICS Women's Working Group meeting under its BRICS Presidency, focusing on women-led development. The discussions covered governance, financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, and women's roles in climate action. The meeting emphasized India's commitment to promoting women as key drivers of economic growth and social transformation. Representatives from BRICS nations, along with UN Women and FICCI, participated, reflecting a shared commitment to cooperation and mutual learning.



India to Host International Day of Yoga Event at UN :-

The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations announced the 2026 International Day of Yoga celebration at the UN headquarters on June 18. Yoga, recognized as a holistic practice promoting balance in life, is celebrated globally following efforts by PM Narendra Modi. The UN resolution highlights yoga's role in enhancing physical and mental well-being. This event underscores India's commitment to promoting yoga as a means of fostering health and unity worldwide.



WAVES Doc Bazaar 2026 to Boost India's Film Industry :-

The WAVES Doc Bazaar 2026 is set to take place in Mumbai from June 16-18, alongside the Mumbai International Film Festival. This event will serve as a platform for documentary, animation, and short filmmakers, fostering global collaboration and visibility. The Bazaar will feature a Viewing Room for showcasing films and a Work-in-Progress Lab for unfinished projects. New this year is an Immersive Market focusing on emerging technologies like VR and AR. This initiative is expected to enhance India's audiovisual industry and encourage international distribution partnerships.



Vietnamese President To Lam Receives Ceremonial Welcome in India :-

Vietnamese President To Lam was ceremonially welcomed in India, marking his first state visit since taking office. Hosted by President Droupadi Murmu and PM Narendra Modi, the visit aims to strengthen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and Vietnam. Discussions are expected to cover bilateral, regional, and global issues of mutual interest. This visit is significant as it coincides with the 10th anniversary of the

India-Vietnam partnership, highlighting the robust relations and strategic cooperation between the two nations.



ASEAN Summit Focuses on Energy Crisis Amid Middle East Conflict :-

The ASEAN summit in the Philippines is addressing the energy crisis exacerbated by the ongoing Middle East conflict. With the region heavily reliant on fuel imports, ASEAN leaders are prioritizing energy and food security. Discussions include the potential ratification of an oil-sharing framework to mitigate disruptions. The summit also addresses regional issues such as Myanmar's crisis and the South China Sea disputes. The energy supply shock is testing ASEAN's ability to coordinate a unified response, highlighting the need for strengthened crisis coordination and institutional readiness in the face of external challenges.



India and Algeria Forge Stronger Defence Relations :-

The inaugural India-Algeria Joint Commission meeting, held in New Delhi, marked a significant step in bilateral defense relations. Co-chaired by Shri Amitabh Prasad and Major General Kaid Nour Eddine, the meeting focused on expanding cooperation in military exercises,

training, and defense industries. Both countries signed the Rules of Procedure to guide future security collaborations. This initiative follows a 2024 Memorandum of Understanding, reflecting India's strategic interests in North Africa and its commitment to strengthening defense ties through medical services and research-driven defense production.



Amit Shah Emphasizes 'Zero Casualty Disaster Management' in India :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired a high-level meeting to review India's preparedness for climate-related disasters, advocating for 'Zero Casualty Disaster Management.' Shah directed the formation of Flood Crisis Management Teams and emphasized improving early warning systems for high-risk regions. The meeting highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to disaster management, integrating efforts across government levels to enhance resilience against floods, heatwaves, and other climate impacts.



India-Costa Rica Strengthen Bilateral Ties in Ministerial Talks :-

India's Minister of State for External Affairs, Pabitra Margherita, met with Costa Rican Foreign Minister

Manuel Tovar, reaffirming India's commitment to enhancing cooperation with Costa Rica. The discussions emphasized shared values of democracy and multilateralism, aiming to expand engagement across various sectors. Margherita also inaugurated the 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' Wall, highlighting India's philosophy of universal brotherhood and reinforcing bilateral cultural and environmental initiatives.



India Hosts Kimberley Process Meeting in Mumbai :-

India has inaugurated the Kimberley Process Inter-Sessional Meeting 2026 in Mumbai, focusing on ethical diamond trade. Under India's Chairship, the meeting aims to strengthen the monitoring and compliance mechanisms of the global diamond industry. Participants will discuss key aspects of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, with an emphasis on enhancing consumer confidence in ethically sourced diamonds. This initiative underscores India's commitment to promoting responsible and sustainable practices in the diamond trade.



PM Modi Announces Five-Nation Diplomatic Tour :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to embark on a diplomatic tour to the UAE, Netherlands, Sweden,

Norway, and Italy from May 15 to 20. The visit aims to strengthen trade, investment, and strategic cooperation with Europe and the Gulf region. Key discussions will focus on energy, technology, and people-to-people ties, highlighting India's commitment to enhancing its global partnerships and addressing mutual interests with these nations.



India Hosts BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting under 2026 Chairship :-

India is set to host the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting on May 14-15, under its 2026 chairship. The meeting will focus on global and regional issues, with a session dedicated to 'BRICS@20: Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability'. Discussions will also address reforms in global governance and multilateral systems, emphasizing the need for greater representation of emerging economies. This meeting marks a significant step in strengthening BRICS cooperation and addressing contemporary global challenges.



India to Host Bharat Innovates 2026 in France, Invites Global Participation :-

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has announced Bharat Innovates 2026, a global innovation platform to be held in Nice, France. The event aims to showcase India's transformation from a technology market to a developer and global partner. With a focus on innovation for inclusion, the platform seeks to foster international collaboration and promote scalable solutions for the Global South.



Modi Meets Italian PM Meloni to Strengthen Strategic Partnership :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has met Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni in Rome to discuss enhancing the India-Italy strategic partnership. The leaders are expected to focus on boosting bilateral ties, especially in areas like trade and economic cooperation. Modi's visit to Italy is part of a broader diplomatic effort to strengthen India's relationships with European countries. The discussions are anticipated to pave the way for deeper collaboration and mutual benefits between the two nations.



India and France Strengthen Maritime Security in Indo-Pacific :-

India and France held their 8th Maritime Cooperation Dialogue in Paris, underscoring their commitment to

maritime security in the Indo-Pacific. Co-chaired by Indian and French officials, the dialogue focused on countering illicit maritime activities like piracy and terrorism, and enhancing operational cooperation. The discussions reflected shared strategic interests and a vision for a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. This engagement follows previous high-level meetings and aims to reinforce coordination in maritime security, reflecting the strong strategic partnership between the two nations.



India to Host Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi :-

India will host the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting on May 26 in New Delhi, bringing together top diplomats from Australia, Japan, and the United States. The meeting aims to discuss regional and global issues, strengthening cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The discussions will build on previous meetings, focusing on advancing Quad initiatives and addressing mutual concerns. This gathering underscores India's central role in promoting a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.



India and Egypt Reaffirm Commitment Against Terrorism :-

India and Egypt held their 5th Joint Working Group Meeting on Counter Terrorism in New Delhi, emphasizing zero tolerance for terrorism. Co-chaired by senior officials, the meeting condemned terrorism in all forms and stressed global action against it. Both nations reiterated support for international frameworks like the UN to combat terrorism and discussed strengthening cooperation in areas like cyber security and intelligence sharing. This partnership reflects their shared commitment to global peace and security.



US Secretary of State Rubio Visits India for QUAD Meeting :-

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio commenced his first official visit to India in Kolkata, focusing on strengthening bilateral cooperation in trade, defense, and technology. The visit precedes the QUAD foreign ministers' meeting in New Delhi on May 26, where strategic issues, including the Indo-Pacific strategy, will be discussed. Rubio emphasized the importance of India as a 'great partner' amid global geopolitical uncertainties.



EAM Jaishankar and US Secretary Rubio Discuss Strategic Partnership :-

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in New Delhi to discuss deepening the India-US strategic partnership. Highlighting the comprehensive cooperation across trade, technology, and energy sectors, Jaishankar emphasized the global impact of this relationship. Rubio described the US-India partnership as one of the most crucial globally, focusing on enhancing bilateral ties beyond regional confines.



Piyush Goyal to Visit Canada for CEPA Talks and Business Meetings :-

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal will visit Canada to advance negotiations on the India-Canada Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. The visit aims to strengthen bilateral trade and investment ties, with a focus on sectors like energy, technology, and pharmaceuticals. Goyal will meet Canadian trade officials and business leaders, emphasizing India's commitment to enhancing economic cooperation with Canada.



BRICS Nations Reaffirm Anti-Terror Cooperation at New Delhi Meeting :-

India hosted the 11th Annual BRICS Counter Terrorism Working Group Plenary in New Delhi, where member nations emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation against terrorism. The meeting marked the 10th anniversary of the BRICS Counter Terrorism Working Group and saw participation from senior officials across BRICS countries. Discussions focused on emerging security challenges and strategies to strengthen counter-terrorism efforts, reflecting BRICS' commitment to global peace and security.

**Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting Hosted in New Delhi :-**

India hosts the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi, focusing on regional and global issues in the Indo-Pacific. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar invited top diplomats from Australia, Japan, and the US to discuss advancing Quad cooperation and reviewing ongoing initiatives. The meeting underscores the commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

**Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong Engages with PM Modi on Strategic Ties :-**

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Their discussions focused on cooperation in defense, trade, and technology, with an emphasis on ensuring supply chain resilience. Wong also participated in the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting, highlighting initiatives in energy security and maritime domain awareness. The meeting underscores the growing collaboration between India and Australia in promoting regional security and prosperity.

**India and U.S. to Discuss Bilateral Trade Agreement in New Delhi :-**

India and the United States will hold discussions in New Delhi from June 1-4 to advance the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). The talks aim to finalize an interim trade pact while progressing towards a broader economic partnership. Key areas of focus include market access, customs, and investment promotion. The BTA is seen as pivotal for strengthening India-U.S. economic ties, following the joint framework agreement announced earlier this year. Both nations are committed to reciprocal and beneficial trade relations.

SECTION 2

Practice Questions with Answers



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1) Which Indian state recently witnessed a 'clean sweep' by BJP in local body elections, as hailed by PM Modi?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Gujarat
- C) Uttar Pradesh
- D) Madhya Pradesh

2) What is the main theme for the 2026 World Intellectual Property Day event announced by Piyush Goyal?

- A) IP and Environment
- B) IP and Sports: Ready, Set, Innovate!
- C) IP and Digital India
- D) IP for Rural Development

3) Which two institutions signed an MoU to boost innovation and entrepreneurship in Ayurveda in April 2026?

- A) AIIMS and Banaras Hindu University
- B) AIIA-iCAINE and Rajasthan Ayurved University
- C) ICMR and Gujarat Ayurved University
- D) NIMHANS and Kerala Ayurveda College

4) What record did India achieve in its power sector in April 2026?

- A) Peak demand of 245.4 GW with shortage
- B) Peak demand of 250 GW with shortage
- C) Peak demand of 256.1 GW without shortage
- D) Peak demand of 220 GW with shortage

5) Which Indian city is set to become 'AI Patnam' with a \$15-billion AI Hub project?

- A) Hyderabad
- B) Bengaluru
- C) Visakhapatnam
- D) Chennai

6) What is the main goal of India's Export Promotion Mission (EPM) as reviewed by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal recently?

- A) Achieve \$5 trillion GDP by 2030
- B) Reduce agricultural imports by 50%
- C) Reach \$2 trillion in exports by 2030-31

D) Double FDI inflows by 2027

7) Which state recently recorded its highest-ever voter turnout since Independence, with over 91% polling in Assembly elections?

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) West Bengal
- C) Tamil Nadu
- D) Bihar

8) Which two countries conducted the IN-SLN DIVEX 2026, a bilateral diving exercise to enhance maritime cooperation?

- A) India and Maldives
- B) India and Indonesia
- C) India and Sri Lanka
- D) India and Bangladesh

9) The government of India has announced plans to add how many new vessels to boost Atmanirbhar shipping in FY 2026-27?

- A) 30
- B) 62
- C) 100
- D) 15

10) Which Indian city recently received the sacred Piprahwa relics of Lord Buddha for public veneration?

- A) Varanasi
- B) Bodh Gaya
- C) Leh
- D) Sarnath

11) Which platform recently became the world's largest real-time payments system, handling nearly half of global instant payment transactions?

- A) RuPay
- B) Unified Payments Interface (UPI)
- C) NEFT
- D) SWIFT

12) What new technology is the Election Commission of India implementing to enhance security at counting centres during elections?

- A) Biometric ID cards
- B) QR code-based Photo Identity Cards
- C) Facial recognition software
- D) Electronic voting machines

13) What is the primary purpose of the nationwide mobile-based disaster alert system launched by Amit Shah and Jyotiraditya Scindia?

- A) Weather forecasting
- B) Police communication
- C) Dissemination of emergency alerts to citizens
- D) Internet connectivity

14) Which country recently signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India focusing on Ayush and wellness systems?

- A) Australia
- B) United Kingdom
- C) New Zealand
- D) Canada

15) Which Indian government initiative recently approved 58 companies for building domestic recycling capacity for critical minerals?

- A) Make in India
- B) National Critical Mineral Mission
- C) Atal Innovation Mission
- D) Swachh Bharat Mission

16) Which district in Odisha recently saw the launch of PMGSY-IV projects aimed at rural connectivity worth nearly Rs 1,700 crore?

- A) Ganjam
- B) Rayagada
- C) Cuttack
- D) Koraput

17) Which city is set to house India's first Google Cloud AI hub, with an estimated investment of ₹15 billion?

- A) Pune
- B) Hyderabad
- C) Visakhapatnam
- D) Bengaluru

18) Who recently took charge as the Secretary (Defence Finance) in the Ministry of Defence?

- A) Rajesh Agrawal
- B) Bharat Khera
- C) Vishvajit Sahay
- D) Paramesh Sivamani

19) Which Indian state has prioritised foreign language skills for youth, signing MoUs with the English and Foreign Languages University and the National Skill Development Corporation?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Rajasthan
- C) Kerala
- D) Karnataka

20) As of FY 2025–26, India's bilateral trade with Tanzania crossed which milestone figure, reflecting growing economic partnership?

- A) \$5 billion
- B) \$7 billion
- C) \$9 billion
- D) \$11 billion

21) Who was recently appointed as the Chairman of Prasar Bharati, India's public service broadcaster?

- A) Ashwini Vaishnaw
- B) Prasoon Joshi
- C) Rajesh Kumar Singh
- D) Kailash Kher

22) Who were recently appointed as full-time members of NITI Aayog, as congratulated by PM Modi?

- A) Dr. R. Balasubramaniam and Dr. Joram Aniya
- B) Rajesh Kumar Singh and Rekha Gupta
- C) Ashwini Vaishnaw and Prataprao Jadhav
- D) Dinesh K Tripathi and Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha

23) Which event set an Asia record for the largest group performing Bhujangasana together in 2026?

- A) Delhi Yoga Utsav
- B) Kanha Shanti Vanam Yoga Mahotsav
- C) Khajuraho Yoga Summit

D) Mumbai Yogathon

24) What is the main goal of India's newly launched 'Cell Broadcast Alert System'?

- A) Mobile banking alerts
- B) Election notifications
- C) Real-time disaster warnings
- D) Online learning updates

25) Which Indian Navy official visited Myanmar to boost maritime cooperation in May 2026?

- A) Admiral Htein Win
- B) Dinesh K Tripathi
- C) General Ye Win Oo
- D) Admiral A.P. Singh

26) Which satellite, launched by Indian startup GalaxEye in May 2026, is the world's first to integrate Electro-Optical and SAR sensors into a single operational platform?

- A) RISAT-2BR1
- B) Cartosat-3
- C) Drishti
- D) Astra

27) What major clarification did the Indian government issue in May 2026 regarding Aadhaar cards?

- A) Aadhaar will be discontinued
- B) Aadhaar to include driving license details
- C) No change in Aadhaar card format is planned
- D) Aadhaar to be replaced with a new ID

28) What is the main purpose of the nationwide Fire Safety Week observed from May 4 to 10, 2026, in India's healthcare facilities?

- A) Promote digital health records
- B) Create awareness on pollution
- C) Strengthen fire safety and emergency preparedness
- D) Launch vaccination drives

29) What was the key focus of the Indian Army's CINBAX-II exercise with Cambodia in May 2026?

- A) Mountain warfare
- B) Humanitarian rescue operations
- C) Counter-terrorism operations under UN mandate

D) Naval blockade exercises

30) What financial milestone did global mobile money transactions surpass in 2025, according to a GSMA report released in 2026?

- A) \$1 trillion
- B) \$1.5 trillion
- C) \$2 trillion
- D) \$3 trillion

31) Which alliance won a decisive majority in the 2026 Assam Assembly elections, securing a third consecutive term?

- A) United Democratic Front (UDF)
- B) Left Democratic Front (LDF)
- C) National Democratic Alliance (NDA)
- D) Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Alliance

32) Which party emerged as the single-largest in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, marking a major debut?

- A) Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)
- B) All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)
- C) Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK)
- D) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

33) Who lost the Kolathur Assembly seat in Tamil Nadu in a major upset during the 2026 elections?

- A) V. S. Babu
- B) M. K. Stalin
- C) Inigo Irudayaraj
- D) Edappadi K. Palaniswami

34) Which party ended the Left Democratic Front's decade-long rule in Kerala in 2026?

- A) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
- B) United Democratic Front (UDF)
- C) All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)
- D) National Democratic Alliance (NDA)

35) In the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections, which party broke the Trinamool Congress's (TMC) stronghold?

- A) Indian National Congress
- B) Left Front

- C) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
- D) Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

36) What is the main objective of the ₹3,936 crore semiconductor projects recently approved for Gujarat under the India Semiconductor Mission?

- A) Boost automobile exports
- B) Strengthen chip manufacturing ecosystem
- C) Promote textile exports
- D) Enhance coal mining capacity

37) By how much will the Supreme Court judge strength increase as per the recent Cabinet decision?

- A) From 30 to 35
- B) From 33 to 37
- C) From 25 to 31
- D) From 28 to 34

38) Which Indian initiative was launched with a ₹5,659 crore outlay to benefit 32 lakh farmers and boost cotton productivity?

- A) Mission for Oilseeds
- B) Mission for Cotton Productivity
- C) Kasturi Cotton Bharat
- D) PM Fasal Bima Yojana

39) What is the approved Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) for sugarcane for the 2026–27 season?

- A) ₹365 per quintal
- B) ₹400 per quintal
- C) ₹338 per quintal
- D) ₹182 per quintal

40) Which facility is being developed at Vadinar, Gujarat, with a ₹1,570 crore investment to boost India's maritime sector?

- A) Ship Repair Facility
- B) Container Terminal
- C) Fishing Harbor
- D) Oil Refinery

41) Which country did President Droupadi Murmu host at Rashtrapati Bhavan in May 2026 to strengthen strategic ties?

- A) Japan

- B) Vietnam
- C) France
- D) Sudan

42) What is the primary goal of the School Management Committee (SMC) Guidelines 2026 launched by the Education Minister?

- A) Enhance infrastructure only
- B) Strengthen community participation in school governance
- C) Increase teacher salaries
- D) Reduce curriculum content

43) Which summit is India set to host for the first time in June 2026 to promote big cat conservation?

- A) Global Tiger Forum
- B) International Big Cat Alliance Summit
- C) World Wildlife Congress
- D) Panthera Conservation Summit

44) What was the main focus of the second BRICS Employment Working Group Meeting chaired by India in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala?

- A) Climate change negotiations
- B) Expansion of social protection and youth employability
- C) Space technology cooperation
- D) Arms reduction

45) Which country did India sign 13 agreements with in May 2026, setting a \$25 billion trade target by 2030?

- A) Japan
- B) Vietnam
- C) Russia
- D) Indonesia

46) What is the primary significance of the proposed India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)?

- A) It will eliminate all tariffs on goods
- B) It will cover nearly one-third of global trade
- C) It focuses solely on agricultural exports
- D) It is limited to digital services

47) Which recent Indian military operation marked its first anniversary in May 2026, highlighting India's resolve against terrorism?

- A) Operation Blue Star
- B) Operation Vijay
- C) Operation Sindoor
- D) Operation Parakram

48) According to the May 2026 FICCI-KPMG report, what is India's real estate sector projected to reach by 2047?

- A) USD 1 Trillion
- B) USD 2.5 Trillion
- C) USD 5.8 Trillion
- D) USD 650 Billion

49) Which city will host the inaugural World Yogasana Championship in June 2026?

- A) New Delhi
- B) Bhopal
- C) Ahmedabad
- D) Bengaluru

50) What new digital healthcare platform, launched in May 2026, aims to unify maternal and child health services in India?

- A) Ayushman Bharat Portal
- B) JANANI
- C) eSanjeevani
- D) NIPUN Bharat

51) Who has been appointed as the first BJP Chief Minister of West Bengal after the 2026 Assembly elections?

- A) Dilip Ghosh
- B) Tapas Roy
- C) Suwendu Adhikari
- D) Nisith Pramanik

52) Which organization was lauded by the Defence Minister for a decade of high-altitude rescue service in India?

- A) National Disaster Response Force
- B) Indo-Tibetan Border Police
- C) Tiranga Mountain Rescue
- D) Border Roads Organisation

53) What major reform did the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announce regarding banks' capital adequacy norms in May 2026?

- A) Included NPA provisioning condition
- B) Removed NPA provisioning condition
- C) Reduced CRAR threshold
- D) Banned inclusion of quarterly profits

54) Which Indian leader received the Governor's nod to form the government in Tamil Nadu after the 2026 Assembly elections?

- A) M.K. Stalin
- B) Edappadi K. Palaniswami
- C) Vijay
- D) Anbumani Ramadoss

55) What was the main reason for the recent formation of a special expert task force by the Agriculture Ministry regarding litchi crops in Bihar?

- A) Flood damage
- B) Litchi stink bug infestation
- C) Drought conditions
- D) Market price fall

56) Who has been appointed as the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of India, taking charge after May 30, 2026?

- A) Lt Gen Anil Chauhan
- B) Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani
- C) Lt Gen Bipin Rawat
- D) Lt Gen Manoj Pande

57) What major step did DRDO recently achieve in hypersonic missile technology?

- A) First flight test of Agni-6
- B) Successful ground test of scramjet combustor
- C) Deployment of BrahMos II
- D) Test of anti-satellite weapon

58) Which social security schemes recently completed 11 years, reaching a cumulative enrolment of 94.5 crore?

- A) Jan Dhan Yojana
- B) Jan Suraksha Schemes

- C) Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
- D) Ayushman Bharat

59) Who has been appointed as the next Chief of Naval Staff of India, succeeding Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi?

- A) Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan
- B) Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh
- C) Vice Admiral SN Ghormade
- D) Vice Admiral Karambir Singh

60) Meta recently discontinued which privacy feature on Instagram globally?

- A) Two-factor authentication
- B) End-to-end encrypted messages
- C) Vanishing photos
- D) Live video sharing

61) Which Indian state recently witnessed the inauguration of the country's first functional PM MITRA Park for textiles?

- A) Tamil Nadu
- B) Telangana
- C) Gujarat
- D) Maharashtra

62) Who was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in May 2026, marking a major political shift in the state?

- A) M.K. Stalin
- B) Edappadi K. Palaniswami
- C) C. Joseph Vijay
- D) O. Panneerselvam

63) Which new health facility was inaugurated by PM Modi in Hyderabad in May 2026?

- A) NIMS Hospital
- B) Sindhu Hospital
- C) AIIMS Hyderabad
- D) Apollo Cancer Centre

64) According to recent CII data, by how much did India's private capital expenditure increase in September 2025 compared to the previous year?

- A) 25%
- B) 40%

- C) 67%
- D) 90%

65) Which Indian minister distributed 'Maternal Nutrition Kits' in Mumbai on Mother's Day 2026?

- A) Smriti Irani
- B) Piyush Goyal
- C) Nirmala Sitharaman
- D) Mansukh Mandaviya

66) What is the primary goal of the newly launched SEHAT programme by the Indian government?

- A) Boosting agricultural exports
- B) Linking agriculture with nutrition and health
- C) Increasing farm mechanization
- D) Promoting organic farming only

67) Which new tolling technology was recently launched by the Indian government to reduce congestion and pollution on highways?

- A) Automatic Toll Booths
- B) RFID Gate Pass
- C) Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) system
- D) Smart Card Tolling

68) What major step did the Indian Coast Guard take under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative in May 2026?

- A) Inducted foreign patrol boats
- B) Launched indigenous Air Cushion Vehicles
- C) Signed deal for imported helicopters
- D) Started a joint maritime exercise

69) Which two countries held their second Economic Security Dialogue in May 2026, focusing on resilient supply chains and critical technologies?

- A) India and South Korea
- B) India and Japan
- C) India and Germany
- D) India and Australia

70) What new rail service was launched to boost connectivity in the Purvanchal region of Uttar Pradesh in May 2026?

- A) Dohrighat-Aunrihar passenger train
- B) Gorakhpur-Delhi express

- C) Varanasi-Patna superfast
- D) Lucknow-Kolkata Duronto

71) What is the main objective of the newly launched \$1.5 billion Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMIP)?

- A) To provide low-interest loans to Indian shipbuilders
- B) To cover maritime insurance risks for Indian-linked vessels
- C) To buy foreign ships for Indian trade companies
- D) To subsidize fuel costs for Indian shipping lines

72) Which states were recently felicitated by the Centre for their integration of DigiLocker with state government services?

- A) Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat
- B) Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Nagaland, Rajasthan
- C) Kerala, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha
- D) Goa, Haryana, Delhi, Sikkim, Telangana

73) Which Indian institution has climbed 40 places in the QS World Rankings over the past two years, reaching 105th position globally?

- A) IIT Bombay
- B) IISc Bangalore
- C) AIIMS New Delhi
- D) JNU Delhi

74) What is the main focus of the new eight-year India-IFAD Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) for 2026–2033?

- A) Promoting urban industrialization
- B) Strengthening rural incomes and resilience
- C) Subsidizing chemical fertilizers
- D) Boosting IT exports

75) Which city held the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting under India's chairship in May 2026?

- A) Mumbai
- B) Bangalore
- C) New Delhi
- D) Chennai

76) Which state is set to benefit from the newly launched ₹189.79-crore Ginger Mission aimed at boosting global exports of pharma-grade ginger?

- A) Assam
- B) Mizoram
- C) Sikkim
- D) Nagaland

77) What is the main objective of the Centre's approval of ₹2,432 crore for Andhra Pradesh under the BharatNet Programme?

- A) Improving agricultural productivity
- B) Expanding rural broadband connectivity
- C) Developing new highways
- D) Modernising airports

78) Which Indian city will see its airport modernised under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model as recently approved by the Union Cabinet?

- A) Varanasi
- B) Nagpur
- C) Ahmedabad
- D) Lucknow

79) Which Indian IT initiative recently signed an MoU with Karya to develop inclusive and representative AI datasets?

- A) Digital India
- B) IndiaAI Mission
- C) Startup India
- D) AI for Bharat

80) What is the estimated cost of Indian Railways' first semi high-speed project between Ahmedabad and Dholera approved in May 2026?

- A) Rs 5,000 crore
- B) Rs 10,500 crore
- C) Rs 20,667 crore
- D) Rs 30,000 crore

81) Which country did the European Union recently include in its revised draft list for continued export of aquaculture products beyond September 2026?

- A) Vietnam
- B) Thailand
- C) India
- D) Bangladesh

82) The Ministry of Ayush recently signed an MoU with which Digital India initiative to improve multilingual healthcare access?

- A) BHASHINI
- B) DigiLocker
- C) UMANG
- D) eSanjeevani

83) Who launched the Grih Pravesh of five lakh PMAY-G houses in Maharashtra on May 15, 2026?

- A) Narendra Modi
- B) Devendra Fadnavis
- C) Shivraj Singh Chouhan
- D) Sunetra Ajit Pawar

84) India has been nominated as the Chair of which global IT security standards body for April 2026–April 2028?

- A) ISO
- B) CCDB
- C) ICANN
- D) ITU

85) Which two countries recently condemned terrorism and agreed to deepen counter-terror cooperation during a Joint Working Group meeting?

- A) India and Japan
- B) India and Australia
- C) India and the Philippines
- D) India and Indonesia

86) Which state recently inaugurated its first semiconductor packaging facility, marking its entry into India's semiconductor ecosystem?

- A) Gujarat
- B) Karnataka
- C) Rajasthan
- D) Maharashtra

87) Which Indian state became the first to complete all deregulation priority areas under both Phase I and Phase II of the national Compliance Reduction initiative?

- A) Kerala
- B) Tripura
- C) Goa
- D) Telangana

88) Which major national entrance exam will shift to Computer-Based Test (CBT) mode from 2027 as part of government reforms?

- A) JEE-Advanced
- B) NEET-UG
- C) CAT
- D) CLAT

89) Which country committed USD 5 billion investment in India, including significant funding for banking and infrastructure, during PM Modi's recent visit?

- A) Japan
- B) UAE
- C) Saudi Arabia
- D) United Kingdom

90) Which state received ₹8,368.5 crore in central assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) for rural housing in 2026-27?

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) Bihar
- C) Maharashtra
- D) West Bengal

91) Which banned synthetic stimulant, often called the 'Jihadi Drug', was seized for the first time in India under Operation Ragepill in May 2026?

- A) Fentanyl
- B) Captagon
- C) Methamphetamine
- D) Amphetamine

92) Which Indian city will host Tata Electronics' new semiconductor facility in partnership with ASML, as per the MoU signed in May 2026?

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Bhiwadi
- C) Dholera
- D) Pune

93) The 11th Century Chola Copper Plates, soon to be repatriated to India, were preserved in which country's university since the 19th century?

- A) United Kingdom
- B) France
- C) Netherlands
- D) Germany

94) Who was sworn in as the new Prime Minister of Iraq in May 2026, earning congratulations from India?

- A) Nizar Amedi
- B) Ali Falih Kadhim al-Zaidi
- C) Bassim Mohammed Khudair
- D) Fuad Hussein

95) Which major Indian entrance exam faced a paper leak in 2026, leading to a CBI investigation and multiple arrests?

- A) JEE-Advanced
- B) UPSC CSE
- C) NEET-UG
- D) CAT

96) Who among the following recently received Sweden's Royal Order of the Polar Star Commander Grand Cross?

- A) Narendra Modi
- B) Manmohan Singh
- C) Amit Shah
- D) S. Jaishankar

97) What is the main objective of the newly inaugurated 'Million Minds Tech Park' in Ahmedabad?

- A) Agricultural research
- B) Promotion of tourism
- C) Fostering technology, AI, and skilled jobs
- D) Textile manufacturing

98) Which international health body declared the 2026 Ebola outbreak in Congo and Uganda a Public Health Emergency of International Concern?

- A) UNICEF
- B) UNDP
- C) World Health Organization
- D) Doctors Without Borders

99) Who was arrested by the CBI as the mastermind behind the NEET-UG 2026 biology paper leak?

- A) Manisha Gurunath Mandhare
- B) Harsh Sanghavi
- C) Manisha Wagmare
- D) Rajesh Agrawal

100) Which country did PM Modi visit as the third leg of his Europe tour in May 2026, escorted by Swedish Gripen jets?

- A) Norway
- B) Germany
- C) Sweden
- D) Italy

101) Which country recently elevated its bilateral relationship with India to a 'Green Strategic Partnership'?

- A) Denmark
- B) Sweden
- C) Norway
- D) Finland

102) Prime Minister Narendra Modi was recently conferred with which of the following honours in Norway?

- A) Order of the Rising Sun
- B) Royal Order of the Polar Star
- C) Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit
- D) Order of St. George

103) Which Indian region was recently declared 'Naxal-free' by Union Home Minister Amit Shah?

- A) Jharkhand
- B) Bastar

- C) Sundarbans
- D) Western Ghats

104) What is the main objective of the newly launched SHE-MARTs initiative by the Ministry of Rural Development?

- A) Promoting organic farming
- B) Boosting women-led rural marketing ecosystems
- C) Providing microcredit to artisans
- D) Supporting rural electrification

105) Which two iconic Indian fabrics are being blended to create a new premium handloom product for global markets?

- A) Chanderi and Pashmina
- B) Kota Doria and Eri Silk
- C) Banarasi and Mulberry Silk
- D) Kanchipuram and Tussar Silk

106) Which country did Prime Minister Narendra Modi visit in May 2026, marking the first visit by an Indian PM there in over 40 years?

- A) Norway
- B) Italy
- C) Sweden
- D) Denmark

107) What is the main focus of the newly launched Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership between India and the Nordic countries?

- A) Military cooperation
- B) Sustainability and clean energy
- C) Tourism promotion
- D) Space exploration

108) Which Indian state's Bastar region was declared Naxalism-free ahead of the March 31, 2026 deadline?

- A) Jharkhand
- B) Odisha
- C) Chhattisgarh
- D) Bihar

109) What is the key feature of the NEET-UG re-exam scheduled for June 21, 2026, as announced by the education minister?

- A) It will be conducted in online CBT mode
- B) It will have reduced syllabus
- C) It will be held only in urban centres
- D) It will use OMR sheets

110) Which strategic trade agreement is expected to usher in a 'new golden era' in India-Nordic relations according to PM Modi?

- A) Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
- B) India-EFTA TEPA
- C) South Asian Free Trade Area
- D) BRICS Trade Accord

111) Who was awarded the 2026 Agricola Medal by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for advancing food security and sustainable agriculture?

- A) Piyush Goyal
- B) Rajnath Singh
- C) Narendra Modi
- D) Helen Clark

112) Which country did India elevate its bilateral relationship to a 'Special Strategic Partnership' with in May 2026?

- A) France
- B) Sweden
- C) Italy
- D) United Arab Emirates

113) The IOS SAGAR mission, marking India's regional maritime outreach, concluded with which Indian Navy ship returning to Kochi?

- A) INS Vikrant
- B) INS Sunayna
- C) INS Arihant
- D) INS Kolkata

114) In May 2026, which two countries jointly announced that 2027 would be celebrated as the 'Year of Culture and Tourism'?

- A) India and France

- B) India and UAE
- C) India and Italy
- D) India and Sweden

115) What is the new trade target set for India and Italy to achieve by 2029 as per their May 2026 agreement?

- A) €10 billion
- B) €15 billion
- C) €20 billion
- D) €25 billion

116) Which city recently recorded the highest temperature in India, reaching 48.2°C for three consecutive days in May 2026?

- A) Lucknow
- B) Banda
- C) Nagpur
- D) Jaipur

117) Which luxury train has IRCTC unveiled for the 2026-27 season with upgraded amenities and safety features?

- A) Palace on Wheels
- B) Deccan Odyssey
- C) Golden Chariot
- D) Maharajas' Express

118) Which institutions signed an MoU in May 2026 to collaborate on ESG, corporate governance, and capital markets?

- A) NISM and IICA
- B) SEBI and RBI
- C) NITI Aayog and SBI
- D) ICAI and NSE

119) Which country's President, Nikos Christodoulides, was given a ceremonial welcome in Delhi in May 2026?

- A) Greece
- B) Cyprus
- C) Spain
- D) Italy

120) Which Indian government agency recently busted a major illegal e-cigarette smuggling racket worth Rs 120 crore?

- A) NIA
- B) CBI
- C) DRI
- D) ED

121) Which two countries recently elevated their relationship to a Strategic Partnership after signing key agreements in New Delhi?

- A) India and France
- B) India and Cyprus
- C) India and Australia
- D) India and Israel

122) What was the main reason United World Wrestling (UWW) postponed the 2026 World Championships originally scheduled in Bahrain?

- A) Technical issues with the venue
- B) Low athlete participation
- C) Geopolitical concerns in the region
- D) Financial constraints

123) Which Indian ballistic missile was successfully test-fired from Chandipur, Odisha, in May 2026?

- A) Agni-5
- B) Prithvi-2
- C) Agni-1
- D) Shourya

124) What milestone did India's Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) achieve recently?

- A) Launched health insurance for all citizens
- B) Crossed 100 crore ABHA-linked health records
- C) Introduced a new digital hospital app
- D) Started telemedicine in rural areas

125) Which new regulatory measure did the Union Health Ministry introduce for Pregabalin in May 2026?

- A) Made it available over-the-counter
- B) Banned its use in India
- C) Brought it under Schedule H1 rules
- D) Allowed online sales freely

126) Who led the Indian delegation to Canada in May 2026 to advance negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)?

- A) Nirmala Sitharaman
- B) Piyush Goyal
- C) Subrahmanyam Jaishankar
- D) Narendra Modi

127) What is the main aim of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) discussed during the Cyprus President's visit in May 2026?

- A) To build oil pipelines to Europe
- B) To reshape global trade and connectivity
- C) To create a free trade area in Asia
- D) To implement a digital currency

128) Which Indian leader distributed over 51,000 appointment letters under the Rozgar Mela in May 2026?

- A) Nitin Nabin
- B) Narendra Modi
- C) Shivraj Singh Chouhan
- D) JP Nadda

129) Which state received Rs 527 crore as the first tranche under the National Health Mission in May 2026?

- A) Tamil Nadu
- B) Uttar Pradesh
- C) West Bengal
- D) Maharashtra

130) Which country did Indian students visit under the Sakura Science Programme in May 2026?

- A) South Korea
- B) Germany
- C) Japan
- D) France

131) Who won the Falta Assembly repoll in West Bengal held on May 21, 2026, by a record margin?

- A) Sambhunath Kurmi
- B) Abdur Razzak
- C) Debangshu Panda

D) Jahangir Khan

132) Who inaugurated India's first 300-km Universal Rocket Launching System 'Suryastra' in Shirdi?

- A) Amit Shah
- B) Rajnath Singh
- C) Narendra Modi
- D) Devendra Fadnavis

133) Which international sports body approved Iran's request to shift its World Cup base camp to Mexico for 2026?

- A) AFC
- B) IOC
- C) FIFA
- D) UEFA

134) What advice did the Government of India issue to citizens regarding travel to DRC, Uganda, and South Sudan in May 2026?

- A) Promote tourism
- B) Avail special discounts
- C) Avoid non-essential travel
- D) Support local businesses

135) What milestone did the Fit India Sundays on Cycle initiative achieve on Commonwealth Games Day 2026?

- A) 100th edition
- B) 50th edition
- C) 75th edition
- D) 25th edition

136) Which two countries recently discussed expanding cooperation in astrophysics and emerging technologies during a high-level meeting in New Delhi?

- A) India and France
- B) India and Japan
- C) India and Spain
- D) India and Germany

137) In FY 2025–26, India Post achieved a record revenue of approximately how much?

- A) ₹11,500 crore

- B) ₹10,000 crore
- C) ₹15,373 crore
- D) ₹7,500 crore

138) Who was recently honoured with the Padma Shri for leading India's women's cricket team to their first ODI World Cup title?

- A) Smriti Mandhana
- B) Mithali Raj
- C) Harmanpreet Kaur
- D) Rohit Sharma

139) Which Indian state introduced a Uniform Civil Code Bill mandating registration of marriages and live-in relationships?

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) Assam
- C) Gujarat
- D) Maharashtra

140) India recorded its highest-ever mineral block auctions in FY 2025-26. How many critical and strategic mineral blocks were awarded?

- A) 36
- B) 22
- C) 108
- D) 58

141) Who has been appointed as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions in May 2026?

- A) Medha Kulkarni
- B) Raghav Chadha
- C) Smita Uday Wagh
- D) C.P. Radhakrishnan

142) Which Indian fort's wall was recently recognized as the world's second longest continuous intact wall?

- A) Chittorgarh Fort
- B) Gwalior Fort
- C) Kumbhalgarh Fort
- D) Red Fort

143) What is the range of India's newly launched indigenous Universal Rocket Launching System 'Suryastra'?

- A) 100 km
- B) 200 km
- C) 300 km
- D) 500 km

144) Dev Meena and Kuldeep Kumar set a new men's national record in which athletics event in May 2026?

- A) Javelin Throw
- B) High Jump
- C) Pole Vault
- D) Long Jump

145) Who became the second footballer to cross \$1 billion in net worth, according to Bloomberg in May 2026?

- A) Neymar
- B) Kylian Mbappé
- C) Lionel Messi
- D) Zlatan Ibrahimović

146) Which state government recently announced a cash reward scheme of up to Rs 1 lakh for exceptional contributions to forest fire prevention and control?

- A) Himachal Pradesh
- B) Uttarakhand
- C) Madhya Pradesh
- D) Assam

147) What milestone was achieved by women in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) 2024 batch?

- A) 25% representation
- B) 33% representation
- C) 41% representation
- D) 50% representation

148) Which city will host the main International Day of Yoga 2026 celebrations?

- A) Varanasi
- B) Delhi
- C) Kolkata

D) Bengaluru

149) What is the name of the new umbrella scheme approved by the Cabinet to modernise the Public Distribution System (PDS)?

- A) SMART-PDS
- B) SARTHAK-PDS
- C) SAMPADA
- D) ANNA-PDS

150) Which state is set to launch India's first indigenous hydrogen-powered train, and on which route?

- A) Gujarat; Ahmedabad–Vadodara
- B) Maharashtra; Mumbai–Pune
- C) Haryana; Jind–Sonipat
- D) West Bengal; Howrah–Bandel

ANSWERS

1) Correct Answer: B

BJP achieved a clean sweep in Gujarat local body polls in April 2026. The victory covered all 15 municipal corporations and multiple local bodies across the state. PM Modi attributed the mandate to good governance and development.

2) Correct Answer: B

The 2026 World Intellectual Property Day, celebrated in New Delhi, focused on 'IP and Sports: Ready, Set, Innovate!'. The event promoted sports innovation and IP awareness. The government announced a three-year fee waiver for sports IP registrations.

3) Correct Answer: B

AIIA-iCAINE and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Rajasthan Ayurved University signed the MoU on April 27, 2026. The agreement aims to foster research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in Ayurveda. It includes mentorship, training, and startup support.

4) Correct Answer: C

On April 25, 2026, India met a record peak power demand of 256.1 GW without shortage. The achievement was managed through planning, grid coordination, and capacity addition. It demonstrates India's improved energy infrastructure and resilience.

5) Correct Answer: C

Visakhapatnam is being developed as 'AI Patnam' with a \$15 billion Google Cloud India AI Hub. The project includes a 1 GW hyperscale data centre and major digital infrastructure. It is a partnership with Adani and Airtel.

6) Correct Answer: C

India's EPM aims for \$2 trillion in exports by 2030-31. This was highlighted by Minister Goyal in a high-level

meeting. The target includes \$1 trillion each from merchandise and services. Achieving this is crucial for India's global trade position and economic growth.

7) Correct Answer: B

West Bengal saw 91.66% turnout in Phase 2 of its Assembly elections. This historic record was reported by the Election Commission. The high participation reflects strong democratic engagement. Such turnout sets a benchmark for electoral participation in India.

8) Correct Answer: C

IN–SLN DIVEX 2026 was held between India and Sri Lanka in Colombo in April 2026. The exercise improved underwater search, rescue, and disaster response cooperation. It strengthens regional security and aligns with India's MAHASAGAR vision.

9) Correct Answer: B

India plans to add 62 vessels in FY 2026–27, as stated by Minister Sarbananda Sonowal. The investment is over ₹51,000 crore. This move is vital for supply chain resilience and maritime self-reliance. Strengthening shipping boosts India's trade and economic security.

10) Correct Answer: C

Leh, in Ladakh, welcomed the sacred Piprahwa relics. This marks the first time the relics are displayed in India outside their original site. The event draws national and international attention, strengthening India's spiritual heritage and Buddhist ties.

11) Correct Answer: B

UPI, launched on April 11, 2016, has evolved into the world's largest real-time payments platform. It powers almost 49% of global instant payment transactions as of

FY 2025-26. UPI processed over 24,162 crore transactions in FY 2025-26.

12) Correct Answer: B

The Election Commission is introducing QR code-based Photo Identity Cards for secure access at counting centres from May 2026. This is part of reforms to prevent unauthorized entry during vote counting. The QR code system will be mandatory for all authorized personnel.

13) Correct Answer: C

The disaster alert system, launched on May 2, 2026, delivers emergency alerts to citizens during natural disasters. It uses SMS and Cell Broadcast technology for real-time, geo-targeted warnings. Developed by DoT and NDMA, it covers all states and UTs.

14) Correct Answer: C

India and New Zealand signed an FTA featuring a Health and Traditional Medicine Annex in late April 2026. This is the first such provision between the countries, promoting Ayush systems globally. The agreement includes mobility pathways for Indian wellness professionals.

15) Correct Answer: B

The Ministry of Mines approved 58 companies under the National Critical Mineral Mission in April 2026. The scheme supports recycling of minerals like lithium from batteries and e-waste. It aims to reduce import dependence and support clean energy sectors.

16) Correct Answer: B

Rayagada district in Odisha was the site of PMGSY-IV launches worth Rs 1,700 crore. The projects target building 827 new roads spanning 1,702 km to boost connectivity. Enhanced rural infrastructure aims to improve livelihoods and access to essential services.

17) Correct Answer: C

Visakhapatnam will host the Google Cloud India AI Hub, with a ₹15 billion investment announced. The hub will feature a 1 GW hyperscale AI data centre, boosting innovation across sectors. This makes Visakhapatnam a key player in India's AI and digital economy ambitions.

18) Correct Answer: C

Vishvajit Sahay assumed the role of Defence Finance Secretary. He is a 1990-batch IDAS officer with over three

decades of experience in defence finance and public administration. His appointment is expected to enhance financial management and strategic decision-making in India's defence sector.

19) Correct Answer: B

Rajasthan has prioritised foreign language skills, as highlighted in a May 2026 event with MoUs signed with EFLU and NSDC. This aims to boost employability and global job opportunities for youth. The initiative aligns with the National Education Policy 2020's emphasis on multilingual education.

20) Correct Answer: C

India-Tanzania trade crossed \$9 billion in FY 2025-26, as reported in May 2026. The partnership covers sectors like pharmaceuticals, mining, agriculture, and digital infrastructure. This milestone reflects expanding cooperation and mutual benefits for both economies.

21) Correct Answer: B

Prasoon Joshi, noted lyricist and communications expert, was appointed Chairman of Prasar Bharati. He brings decades of experience in media and the arts. His leadership is expected to energize India's public broadcaster amidst rapid technological change.

22) Correct Answer: A

Dr. R. Balasubramaniam and Dr. Joram Aniya were appointed as full-time members of NITI Aayog and congratulated by PM Modi on May 3, 2026. Their expertise is expected to strengthen India's policymaking. Their roles are central to shaping India's future development agenda.

23) Correct Answer: B

The Yoga Mahotsav at Kanha Shanti Vanam, Hyderabad set an Asia record with over 6,000 people performing Bhujangasana. This event marked the 50-day countdown to International Day of Yoga. It showcased India's leadership in global wellness and yoga promotion.

24) Correct Answer: C

The 'Cell Broadcast Alert System' was launched on May 2, 2026, for real-time disaster and emergency alerts to citizens' mobile phones. Developed with NDMA's support, it enables rapid information dissemination

during crises. Its nationwide rollout strengthens disaster preparedness and public safety.

25) Correct Answer: B

Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff, visited Myanmar from May 2-5, 2026, to strengthen maritime ties. His engagements aimed to enhance defense collaboration, training, and regional stability. Such visits are vital for India's Act East policy and Indian Ocean security.

26) Correct Answer: C

Drishhti, launched by GalaxEye in May 2026, is the world's first OptoSAR satellite. It integrates Electro-Optical and Synthetic Aperture Radar sensors for all-weather, day-night imaging. This marks a milestone in Earth observation technology.

27) Correct Answer: C

The government clarified in May 2026 that no changes or simplifications to the Aadhaar card format are planned. This response addressed widespread rumors and social media claims. The clarification helps reduce misinformation and underscores reliance on official sources.

28) Correct Answer: C

Fire Safety Week, observed from May 4–10, 2026, aims to boost awareness and preparedness against fire hazards in healthcare institutions. Activities include mock drills and capacity-building exercises. This initiative reflects the Ministry of Health's commitment to patient and facility safety.

29) Correct Answer: C

CINBAX-II, held in Cambodia in May 2026, focused on counter-terrorism operations under the United Nations mandate. The exercise involved tactical drills and drone operations. It strengthens bilateral military ties and enhances India's role in international peacekeeping.

30) Correct Answer: C

Global mobile money transactions crossed \$2 trillion in 2025, as reported by GSMA in 2026. This milestone marks rapid growth in digital financial services worldwide. The trend is driven by increased adoption and deeper usage beyond basic payments.

31) Correct Answer: C

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) secured a three-fourths majority in Assam in 2026. This marks the NDA's third straight term in the state, with BJP alone winning 82 out of 126 seats. The victory reflects strong public support for NDA's development agenda, consolidating its dominance in the Northeast.

32) Correct Answer: C

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), led by actor Vijay, emerged as the single-largest party in Tamil Nadu in 2026. TVK's strong debut disrupted the dominance of traditional Dravidian parties. Their performance signals a significant shift in the state's political landscape, especially among youth and urban voters.

33) Correct Answer: B

M. K. Stalin, the DMK supremo and incumbent Chief Minister, lost the Kolathur seat in 2026 to TVK's V. S. Babu. This was historically significant as Stalin had held the seat since 2008. The loss reflects a broader shift and the rise of new political contenders in Tamil Nadu.

34) Correct Answer: B

The United Democratic Front (UDF), led by the Congress, won a decisive victory in Kerala in 2026. UDF secured 102 out of 140 seats, ending the LDF's decade-long rule. This marks a return to Kerala's trend of alternating governments and signals a political shift in the state.

35) Correct Answer: C

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) breached the TMC's bastion in West Bengal in 2026. The BJP led in 172 and won 33 seats as of 6:00 pm, marking a major shift in state politics. This breakthrough highlights the BJP's expanding influence in Eastern India.

36) Correct Answer: B

The Cabinet approved two new semiconductor projects in Gujarat to strengthen India's advanced chip manufacturing ecosystem. The projects include India's first Mini/Micro-LED display unit and an OSAT facility. This initiative is crucial for building domestic capabilities in semiconductors, a key sector for India's technological self-reliance and digital economy.

37) Correct Answer: B

The Cabinet approved increasing the number of Supreme Court judges from 33 to 37 (excluding the Chief Justice).

This step addresses the rising case pendency and aims to ensure faster disposal of cases. The expansion of judicial strength reflects efforts to improve access to justice and judicial efficiency in India.

38) Correct Answer: B

The 'Mission for Cotton Productivity' was approved with a ₹5,659 crore outlay to enhance yields, fiber quality, and competitiveness. Covering 32 lakh farmers, it aims to modernize the cotton value chain and boost India's textile sector. This supports farmer incomes and positions India as a global leader in cotton.

39) Correct Answer: A

The Cabinet fixed the FRP for sugarcane at ₹365 per quintal for the 2026–27 season. This price is set for a 10.25% recovery rate and is over 100% higher than the estimated production cost. The move benefits nearly 5 crore farmers and supports rural livelihoods.

40) Correct Answer: A

A state-of-the-art ship repair facility is being set up at Vadinar, Gujarat, with a ₹1,570 crore investment. The facility will enable repair of large vessels domestically, reducing reliance on foreign shipyards. It aligns with Maritime India Vision 2030 and boosts India's maritime competitiveness.

41) Correct Answer: B

President Murmu hosted Vietnamese President To Lam at Rashtrapati Bhavan in May 2026. The visit marked the first state visit of To Lam and underscored the growing India-Vietnam strategic partnership. Key areas included rare earth minerals, digital technology, and defence cooperation.

42) Correct Answer: B

The SMC Guidelines 2026 were launched to strengthen community participation in school governance. They aim to bridge students, teachers, parents, and communities for holistic child development. The guidelines align with the National Education Policy 2020.

43) Correct Answer: B

India will host the inaugural International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit in June 2026. This summit aims to bring together global leaders and experts to protect the

world's seven big cat species. The event will adopt the 'Delhi Declaration' for global big cat conservation.

44) Correct Answer: B

The BRICS Employment Working Group Meeting focused on expanding social protection, women's workforce participation, and youth employability. These efforts align with changing global labour markets. Such forums are vital for shaping inclusive employment policies in emerging economies.

45) Correct Answer: B

India and Vietnam signed 13 agreements in May 2026 and set a \$25 billion trade target by 2030. The agreements covered rare earths, digital payments, culture, healthcare, and academic exchanges. This reflects a deepening strategic and economic partnership.

46) Correct Answer: B

The India-EU FTA is expected to cover nearly one-third of global trade. This agreement, discussed in May 2026, is among the largest globally by economic scale and people impacted. It includes trade in goods, services, digital, and regulatory cooperation.

47) Correct Answer: C

Operation Sindoor's first anniversary was marked in May 2026. Launched on May 7, 2025, in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, it targeted terror infrastructure in Pakistan and PoJK. Over 100 terrorists and several launchpads were destroyed.

48) Correct Answer: C

The FICCI-KPMG report projects India's real estate sector will reach USD 5.8 trillion by 2047. In 2025, the sector stood at USD 650 billion, showing rapid growth. The surge is driven by digital transformation, AI adoption, and government reforms.

49) Correct Answer: C

Ahmedabad will host the first World Yogasana Championship from June 4-8, 2026. Over 40 countries will participate, marking a global push to promote Yogasana as a competitive sport. The event reflects India's leadership in yoga and efforts to gain Olympic recognition.

50) Correct Answer: B

JANANI was launched by the Ministry of Health in May 2026 to digitize maternal and child healthcare. It builds on the RCH portal, tracking pregnancy and newborn care. Over 1.34 crore registrations highlight its reach. The platform aims for integrated, data-driven healthcare delivery nationwide.

51) Correct Answer: C

Suvendu Adhikari was elected as the BJP Legislature Party leader and appointed as the first BJP Chief Minister of West Bengal on May 8, 2026. He defeated Mamata Banerjee and led the party to victory with 207 seats. This marks a significant political shift after 15 years of TMC rule.

52) Correct Answer: C

Tiranga Mountain Rescue (TMR) completed 10 years of service, recognized on May 8, 2026. TMR specializes in high-altitude rescue operations in disaster-hit areas. Their work supports both armed forces and mountain communities. The organization's efforts enhance national resilience and border stability.

53) Correct Answer: B

RBI revised guidelines to remove the earlier condition linking inclusion of quarterly profits in capital adequacy calculations to NPA provisioning. This simplifies the capital computation process. The move streamlines regulatory compliance for banks.

54) Correct Answer: C

Actor-turned-politician Vijay, chief of Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK), was invited by the Governor to form the government. TVK secured majority support with allies after a fractured mandate. This marked a historic shift, ending decades of DMK-AIADMK rivalry.

55) Correct Answer: B

The Union Agriculture Minister ordered a special task force to tackle litchi stink bug attacks in Bihar. The pest caused significant crop losses, alarming farmers. The expert panel will recommend immediate and long-term solutions. This response is vital for protecting Bihar's litchi farmers and crop yields.

56) Correct Answer: B

Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani (Retd) was appointed as the next Chief of Defence Staff and will take charge after May

30, 2026. He brings over 40 years of military experience and has held key command and staff positions. His appointment comes at a pivotal time for tri-service integration.

57) Correct Answer: B

On May 9, 2026, DRDO successfully conducted a long-duration ground test of an actively cooled full-scale scramjet combustor. This achievement strengthens India's hypersonic missile development program. The scramjet test ran for over 1,200 seconds, marking India's progress among leading nations in advanced aerospace technology.

58) Correct Answer: B

The three Jan Suraksha Schemes—PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, and Atal Pension Yojana—completed 11 years in May 2026. Their cumulative enrolments reached 94.5 crore, providing social security to millions. Their impact is significant for vulnerable groups.

59) Correct Answer: A

Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan was appointed as the next Chief of Naval Staff. He will take over from Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi after May 31, 2026. Swaminathan is a decorated officer with over 38 years of service. His leadership is crucial as the Navy focuses on modernisation and maritime security.

60) Correct Answer: B

Meta officially switched off end-to-end encrypted direct messages on Instagram. This reverses earlier plans for privacy-focused messaging. The move affects global users and has raised debate about online safety. It impacts user privacy and digital rights worldwide.

61) Correct Answer: B

The first PM MITRA Park was inaugurated in Warangal, Telangana. This milestone project aims to accelerate India's textile revolution and create large-scale employment, especially for women. The park boasts state-of-the-art infrastructure and sustainable features.

62) Correct Answer: C

Actor-turned-politician C. Joseph Vijay was sworn in as Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister on May 10, 2026. His swearing-in ended six decades of DMK and AIADMK

alternating rule. The TVK-led alliance secured the majority in the Assembly, ushering in a new political era.

63) Correct Answer: B

Sindhu Hospital, a cancer-focused multi-specialty hospital, was inaugurated by PM Modi in Hyderabad. The hospital integrates advanced technology and offers comprehensive cancer care. It has 1,500 beds and state-of-the-art facilities.

64) Correct Answer: C

India's private capital expenditure jumped by 67% to Rs 7.7 lakh crore in September 2025. This figure, released by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), indicates a strong revival in the investment cycle. The growth was led by manufacturing and services sectors.

65) Correct Answer: B

Piyush Goyal, Union Commerce and Industry Minister, distributed maternal nutrition kits in Mumbai on Mother's Day. The kits address nutritional needs of pregnant women and newborns. This initiative aims to improve maternal and child health.

66) Correct Answer: B

SEHAT (Science Excellence for Health through Agricultural Transformation) aims to integrate agriculture, nutrition, and public health. It is a joint initiative by ICMR and ICAR launched in May 2026. The mission's focus is to improve nutritional outcomes and address non-communicable diseases through agriculture.

67) Correct Answer: C

The Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) system was launched in May 2026 by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. It uses automatic number plate recognition and FASTag for seamless toll collection. MLFF is expected to save fuel, reduce carbon emissions, and cut costs, especially benefiting the Delhi-NCR region.

68) Correct Answer: B

The Indian Coast Guard recently held a girder laying ceremony for indigenous Air Cushion Vehicles in Goa. These ACVs are built with 50% indigenous content. Their deployment will improve maritime patrolling and rescue, supporting India's self-reliance in defense manufacturing.

69) Correct Answer: B

India and Japan held their second Economic Security Dialogue in New Delhi in May 2026. Key areas included semiconductors, clean energy, critical minerals, and pharmaceuticals. The dialogue aims to boost collaboration and secure supply chains, vital for India's economic and strategic interests.

70) Correct Answer: A

The Dohrihat-Aunrihar passenger train was flagged off by Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in May 2026. This new service improves daily transport for Purvanchal residents and will be extended to Varanasi, supporting economic growth and accessibility in eastern UP.

71) Correct Answer: B

The Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMIP) was launched in May 2026 to ensure uninterrupted insurance coverage for Indian-flagged or India-linked vessels. Its context lies in global maritime risks and withdrawal of foreign reinsurers. With a sovereign guarantee of \$1.4 billion, BMIP covers war, hull, cargo, and P&I risks.

72) Correct Answer: B

The Centre recognized Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Nagaland, and Rajasthan for their DigiLocker integration. This initiative simplifies document access and improves digital governance. Vast citizen numbers benefited, such as over 2.7 crore users in Karnataka.

73) Correct Answer: C

AIIMS New Delhi achieved the 105th rank in the QS World Rankings, improving by 40 places in two years as announced in May 2026. It continues to provide affordable treatment while excelling academically. This highlights India's growing influence in global healthcare standards.

74) Correct Answer: B

Launched in May 2026, the new India-IFAD COSOP aims to strengthen rural incomes, improve resilience, and expand sustainable livelihoods. It will focus on climate resilience, women's empowerment, and knowledge systems. This is significant for rural development and India's role as a knowledge leader globally.

75) Correct Answer: C

India organized the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi on May 14–15, 2026. As chair, India led discussions on global and regional issues, reforms in global governance, and multilateralism. This gathering underscores India's increasing diplomatic leadership among emerging economies.

76) Correct Answer: B

The ₹189.79-crore Mizoram Ginger Mission was launched to transform Mizoram's GI-certified pharma-grade ginger into a globally recognized product. This initiative is significant for boosting farmer incomes and integrating the North East into global agricultural markets.

77) Correct Answer: B

The Centre approved ₹2,432 crore for Andhra Pradesh to expand broadband connectivity in rural areas under the Amended BharatNet Programme. The programme will cover over 13,000 Gram Panchayats and aims to improve access to digital services.

78) Correct Answer: B

The Union Cabinet approved the upgradation of Nagpur International Airport under the PPP model. The project involves a 30-year concession to GMR Nagpur International Airport Limited. This modernization is part of the MIHAN project to boost passenger and cargo handling.

79) Correct Answer: B

IndiaAI Mission, under the Ministry of Electronics and IT, signed an MoU with Karya to create high-quality, diverse AI datasets. The partnership focuses on building AI systems reflective of India's linguistic and demographic diversity.

80) Correct Answer: C

The Ahmedabad-Dholera semi high-speed rail project was approved at an estimated cost of Rs 20,667 crore. It is Indian Railways' first such project, aimed at improving regional connectivity with indigenously developed technology. The 134-km corridor is scheduled for completion by 2030-31.

81) Correct Answer: C

India was included in the EU's revised draft list for continued aquaculture exports beyond September 2026.

This follows compliance with EU regulations on antimicrobial use. The EU is India's third-largest seafood export market, accounting for nearly 19% of export value.

82) Correct Answer: A

The Ministry of Ayush signed an MoU with Digital India BHASHINI Division to integrate AI-powered language technologies. This partnership aims to make Ayush services accessible in all 22 scheduled Indian languages. It will enhance inclusive healthcare delivery across linguistic regions.

83) Correct Answer: C

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the Grih Pravesh for five lakh PMAY-G houses in Maharashtra on May 15, 2026. This marks a major milestone in rural housing under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin. Over 3.03 crore houses have been completed nationwide.

84) Correct Answer: B

India has been nominated as Chair of the Common Criteria Development Board (CCDB) from April 2026 to 2028. The CCDB manages international standards for IT security evaluations. This leadership role reflects India's growing influence in global cybersecurity.

85) Correct Answer: C

India and the Philippines condemned terrorism and discussed deeper cooperation at their Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism. The meeting was held in Manila on May 13–14, 2026. Both countries agreed on intelligence sharing and joint efforts against terror financing.

86) Correct Answer: C

Rajasthan inaugurated its first semiconductor plant and Electronics Manufacturing Cluster in Bhiwadi. This facility by Sahasra Semiconductors is India's first SME-led chip packaging unit. The move aligns with India's Make in India and Digital India initiatives.

87) Correct Answer: B

Tripura has completed all 51 Priority Areas under Deregulation Phase-I and Phase-II as of May 2026. The reforms include simplifying land, industrial, and social sector regulations. This achievement positions Tripura as

a leader in regulatory reforms and investor-friendly governance.

88) Correct Answer: B

NEET-UG will transition to Computer-Based Test mode from next year, as announced by Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. This reform aims to improve exam transparency and prevent malpractices. NEET-UG is crucial for medical admissions in India.

89) Correct Answer: B

The United Arab Emirates announced a USD 5 billion investment in India during PM Modi's high-level visit to Abu Dhabi. The investment includes \$3 billion in RBL Bank and \$1 billion each in infrastructure and capital ventures. This strengthens the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, enhancing economic ties and cooperation.

90) Correct Answer: C

Maharashtra was allocated ₹8,368.5 crore under PMAY-G for 2026–27, as announced during a ceremony. This funding aims to accelerate rural housing construction and eliminate homelessness. The assistance reflects the Centre's commitment to rural welfare and infrastructure.

91) Correct Answer: B

Captagon, a banned synthetic stimulant, was seized by Indian authorities for the first time in May 2026. The operation, valued at ₹182 crore, reflects India's intensified anti-narcotics campaign. Captagon is linked to crime networks and conflict zones in West Asia. Its seizure marks a significant milestone in India's fight against drug trafficking.

92) Correct Answer: C

Tata Electronics and ASML signed an MoU to develop a semiconductor facility in Dholera, Gujarat, in May 2026. The collaboration aims to boost India's semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem. Dholera is being positioned as a key hub for electronics and technology investments.

93) Correct Answer: C

The 11th Century Chola Copper Plates were preserved at Leiden University in the Netherlands since the mid-19th century. Their return was announced by PM Modi during

his May 2026 visit. The plates highlight the maritime strength of the Chola dynasty.

94) Correct Answer: B

Ali Falih Kadhim al-Zaidi was sworn in as Iraq's Prime Minister in May 2026. India reaffirmed its commitment to strong bilateral ties during this occasion. His appointment followed parliamentary approval of part of his Cabinet. This strengthens India's engagement with West Asian countries and supports regional stability.

95) Correct Answer: C

The 2026 NEET-UG exam experienced a Biology paper leak, prompting a CBI probe. Several people, including a Pune-based teacher, were arrested in May 2026. The case highlighted vulnerabilities in exam security. Ensuring fair and transparent examinations is critical for India's education system and meritocracy.

96) Correct Answer: A

Narendra Modi was conferred Sweden's Royal Order of the Polar Star Commander Grand Cross. The award is among Sweden's highest for foreign dignitaries and honors contributions to international diplomacy. This recognition highlights Modi's expanding diplomatic outreach.

97) Correct Answer: C

The Million Minds Tech Park, inaugurated in May 2026, aims to promote technology, artificial intelligence, and create high-skilled jobs. Spread across 65 acres, it is expected to generate over 70,000 employment opportunities. It marks a leap in India's digital and knowledge economy.

98) Correct Answer: C

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Ebola outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. The outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo virus, affected Congo and Uganda. The classification underscores the risk of international spread.

99) Correct Answer: A

Manisha Gurunath Mandhare, a senior teacher from Pune, was arrested by the CBI in May 2026 for masterminding the NEET-UG 2026 biology paper leak. She allegedly leaked Botany and Zoology questions to

students. The arrest followed extensive investigation and multiple searches.

100) Correct Answer: C

PM Modi visited Sweden as part of his European tour in May 2026, with Swedish Gripen jets escorting his aircraft. The visit aimed to strengthen trade, technology, and green transition ties. The gesture underscores the deepening India-Sweden strategic partnership.

101) Correct Answer: C

Norway and India elevated their ties to a Green Strategic Partnership. This was formalized during PM Modi's visit to Oslo, marking a milestone for cooperation in clean energy and sustainable development. It is significant for India's green transition and global climate goals.

102) Correct Answer: C

PM Modi received the Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit. This is Norway's highest honour for foreign heads of government. The award recognizes exceptional service in the interest of Norway and humanity. Such recognitions strengthen India's diplomatic profile globally.

103) Correct Answer: B

Bastar in Chhattisgarh was declared Naxal-free by HM Amit Shah. The announcement followed years of security operations and development measures. Bastar was a traditional stronghold of Naxalism in India. Its transformation is a major internal security achievement for the country.

104) Correct Answer: B

SHE-MARTs, launched by the Ministry of Rural Development in May 2026, aim to create women-led rural marketing ecosystems. The initiative supports self-help groups and women entrepreneurs in accessing broader markets. It is designed to boost rural incomes and empower women.

105) Correct Answer: B

The blend of Kota Doria (Rajasthan) and Eri Silk (Northeast) was initiated in May 2026. This collaboration aims to produce a premium, globally competitive fabric. The initiative will benefit weavers and artisans in both regions. It supports the '5F Vision' to strengthen India's textile value chain.

106) Correct Answer: A

PM Modi visited Norway in May 2026, the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister since 1983. The visit coincided with the 3rd India-Nordic Summit, strengthening diplomatic and economic ties. This was a significant move for enhancing India's cooperation with Nordic nations.

107) Correct Answer: B

The Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership focuses on sustainability and clean energy. Launched during the India-Nordic Summit in Oslo in May 2026, it aims to combine Nordic expertise with India's skills. It is crucial for India's climate and green growth agenda.

108) Correct Answer: C

Chhattisgarh's Bastar region was declared Naxalism-free before the March 31, 2026 target. Union Home Minister Amit Shah credited security forces for this achievement. The eradication of Naxalism in Bastar marks a turning point for peace and development.

109) Correct Answer: A

The NEET-UG re-exam will be conducted in Computer-Based Test (CBT) mode. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan announced strict security protocols for the June 21, 2026 exam. This change comes after a paper leak in the earlier exam.

110) Correct Answer: B

The India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) was highlighted by PM Modi. Signed with EFTA countries including Norway and Iceland, TEPA is seen as crucial for deepening trade ties. It supports increased trade, investment, and technological collaboration.

111) Correct Answer: C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the 2026 Agricola Medal at the FAO headquarters in Rome. The award recognized his leadership in food security and sustainable agriculture. Modi highlighted India's science-driven approach and technological innovation in agriculture.

112) Correct Answer: C

India and Italy elevated their relationship to a 'Special Strategic Partnership' in May 2026. This step expands

cooperation in trade, defence, technology, and global governance. The partnership includes a target to boost trade to €20 billion by 2029. It marks a significant deepening of India's ties with a key European country.

113) Correct Answer: B

INS Sunayna returned to Kochi after successfully completing the IOS SAGAR mission in May 2026. The mission involved 16 partner nations and focused on maritime security and cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region. This strengthens India's role as a preferred security partner.

114) Correct Answer: C

India and Italy announced that 2027 would be the 'Year of Culture and Tourism.' The initiative aims to promote cultural exchanges and deepen ties between the ancient civilizations. It highlights the growing strategic and cultural partnership between India and Italy.

115) Correct Answer: C

India and Italy set a bilateral trade target of €20 billion by 2029. This commitment was made during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Italy in May 2026. The target reflects both nations' ambitions to expand economic cooperation. Achieving this will boost industrial and supply chain integration across key sectors.

116) Correct Answer: B

Banda in Uttar Pradesh recorded 48.2°C for three days according to the IMD in May 2026. The extreme heat was attributed to deforestation and illegal mining. Hospitals set up special wards for heatstroke patients. This highlights urgent environmental and public health challenges in India.

117) Correct Answer: C

The Golden Chariot luxury train was relaunched by IRCTC for the 2026-27 tourist season. It features modern interiors, smart TVs, Wi-Fi, and improved safety systems. The train offers curated routes across South India. This supports India's tourism and heritage promotion.

118) Correct Answer: A

NISM (set up by SEBI) and IICA (under Ministry of Corporate Affairs) signed an MoU. Their partnership focuses on ESG practices and governance capacity

building. This aims to strengthen India's regulatory ecosystem and sustainable business practices.

119) Correct Answer: B

Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides visited India from May 20-23, 2026. His visit aimed to enhance political, economic, and technological cooperation. Cyprus currently holds the EU Council Presidency. Strengthened ties reflect India's growing international engagement.

120) Correct Answer: C

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized e-cigarettes worth over Rs 120 crore in May 2026. E-cigarette imports are banned under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2019. This reflects India's crackdown on illegal nicotine product trafficking.

121) Correct Answer: B

India and Cyprus elevated their ties to a Strategic Partnership after talks in New Delhi. The meeting resulted in multiple agreements on defence, cybersecurity, education, and trade. This partnership aims to deepen cooperation in security, innovation, and infrastructure.

122) Correct Answer: C

UWW postponed the Bahrain World Championships citing prevailing geopolitical instability in the Gulf region. The decision prioritizes the safety and experience of athletes and delegations. This move highlights the impact of regional conflicts on international sports events and athlete security.

123) Correct Answer: C

India successfully test-fired the Agni-1 short-range ballistic missile from Chandipur. The test validated all operational parameters of the missile system. Agni-1 forms a vital element of India's strategic deterrence capability. Such tests reinforce India's defense preparedness and technological advancement in missile systems.

124) Correct Answer: B

ABDM crossed 100 crore ABHA-linked health records, doubling from 50 crore in just 15 months. ABHA provides citizens a unique digital health identity for secure access to records. This milestone reflects rapid adoption of

digital healthcare and supports integrated, patient-centric health services.

125) Correct Answer: C

Pregabalin was brought under the stricter Schedule H1 of the Drugs Rules, 1945. This requires prescription-only sales and stricter record-keeping by chemists. The move addresses rising misuse and abuse of Pregabalin, especially among youth. It strengthens drug control and safeguards public health in India.

126) Correct Answer: B

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal visited Canada for CEPA talks. The visit aimed to strengthen trade and investment ties between India and Canada. Over 100 Indian business representatives accompanied him. This engagement is significant for boosting bilateral trade, which both nations target to expand to USD 50 billion by 2030.

127) Correct Answer: B

The IMEC aims to reshape global trade and connectivity by linking India, the Middle East, and Europe. During the Cyprus President's May 2026 visit, both nations reaffirmed the corridor's transformative potential. IMEC includes rail, road, and maritime links.

128) Correct Answer: B

Prime Minister Narendra Modi distributed over 51,000 appointment letters during the 19th Rozgar Mela in May 2026. The initiative aims to empower youth with government jobs in sectors like railways, banking, and defense. This reflects the government's commitment to employment generation.

129) Correct Answer: C

West Bengal received Rs 527 crore as the first installment under the National Health Mission in May 2026. The release supports strengthening healthcare infrastructure and schemes like Ayushman Bharat. The Centre and state aim to enhance quality healthcare access.

130) Correct Answer: C

A delegation of Indian students visited Japan under the Sakura Science Programme in May 2026. The initiative, run by the Japan Science and Technology Agency, fosters scientific learning and exchange. Selected students explore Japan's technology and culture.

131) Correct Answer: C

Debangshu Panda of the BJP won the Falta Assembly repoll on May 21, 2026. His victory by over 1,09,000 votes marked a landslide and was notable as TMC's candidate finished fourth for the first time since the party's founding. This result is significant as it shifted the political dynamics in West Bengal, increasing BJP's presence in the Assembly.

132) Correct Answer: B

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the Suryastra rocket system in Shirdi on May 24, 2026. This marks a major step in indigenous defense manufacturing. The development enhances India's long-range strike capabilities and supports the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.

133) Correct Answer: C

FIFA approved Iran's request to relocate its World Cup base camp to Mexico for the 2026 tournament. The move was made due to logistical and visa concerns in the US. Such decisions reflect how geopolitics can influence global sporting events.

134) Correct Answer: C

India advised citizens to avoid non-essential travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, and South Sudan after WHO declared an Ebola outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in May 2026. This highlights India's commitment to public health and global disease surveillance.

135) Correct Answer: C

The Fit India Sundays on Cycle initiative celebrated its 75th edition on Commonwealth Games Day 2026. This event promotes fitness and healthy living and aligns with India's increased focus on sports and youth engagement.

136) Correct Answer: C

The latest high-level meeting between India and Spain focused on deepening cooperation in astrophysics and emerging technologies. Held on May 25, 2026, the discussions emphasized areas like AI, biotechnology, and space sciences. This engagement reflects the growing momentum in India-Spain scientific collaboration.

137) Correct Answer: C

India Post reported a revenue rise to ₹15,373 crore in FY 2025–26, its highest in 170 years. This achievement was driven by digital transformation and logistics expansion. Key reforms included OTP deliveries and UPI payments. The financial turnaround boosts India's postal modernization and rural financial inclusion.

138) Correct Answer: C

Harmanpreet Kaur received the Padma Shri in May 2026 for her leadership in Indian cricket, including leading India to its maiden Women's ODI World Cup win in 2025. This recognition highlights her significant contributions to sport. Such honours inspire women in sports and celebrate India's growing achievements in international cricket.

139) Correct Answer: B

Assam tabled the Uniform Civil Code Bill in May 2026, proposing uniform laws for marriage, divorce, and succession. The bill mandates registration of marriages and live-in relationships, aiming for gender equality. Scheduled Tribes are exempted to protect their customs.

140) Correct Answer: B

In FY 2025-26, India auctioned 22 critical and strategic mineral blocks out of a record 212 total. This strengthens India's mineral security and supports clean energy initiatives. The auction marks a milestone in resource management and aligns with Aatmanirbhar Bharat goals.

141) Correct Answer: B

Raghav Chadha was appointed as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions in May 2026. The committee examines legislative petitions and public grievances. Chadha's role will strengthen parliamentary accountability. This appointment enhances citizen engagement in India's legislative process.

142) Correct Answer: C

Kumbhalgarh Fort's wall in Rajasthan was declared the world's second longest after the Great Wall of China by a UNESCO survey in May 2026. Built by Rana Kumbha, it stretches 36 km through the Aravalli hills. The fort is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

143) Correct Answer: C

Suryastra, launched in May 2026, is India's first indigenous rocket system with a 300-km range. It was

inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The system enhances precision strike capabilities and artillery modernization. Its development strengthens India's defence self-reliance.

144) Correct Answer: C

Dev Meena and Kuldeep Kumar set a joint national pole vault record of 5.45m in May 2026. The event took place at the Federation Cup in Ranchi. This performance meets Asian and Commonwealth Games standards. It marks a milestone in Indian athletics.

145) Correct Answer: C

Lionel Messi became the second footballer after Cristiano Ronaldo to surpass \$1 billion in net worth as per Bloomberg in May 2026. His earnings include salaries, endorsements, and investments. Messi's achievement reflects the financial power of modern athletes.

146) Correct Answer: B

Uttarakhand plans to introduce a reward scheme of up to Rs 1 lakh to strengthen forest fire prevention and control. This comes amid an increase in wildfires across the state in 2026. The scheme is part of broader efforts involving technology, community participation, and awareness.

147) Correct Answer: C

Women's representation in the IAS reached a record 41% in the 2024 batch. This milestone was highlighted by Union Minister Jitendra Singh as a sign of democratization of opportunity. The trend reflects growing gender diversity in India's top civil services.

148) Correct Answer: C

Kolkata has been announced as the host for the International Day of Yoga 2026 main event. This was revealed by Union Minister Prataprao Jadhav in May 2026. The theme is 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing', emphasizing yoga's role in holistic wellness. Kolkata's selection highlights its cultural and spiritual significance.

149) Correct Answer: B

The Cabinet approved the SARTHAK-PDS scheme in May 2026, integrating two existing food distribution initiatives. With a budget of Rs 25,530 crore, it aims to modernise PDS operations using digital technologies.

The scheme seeks to enhance transparency and food security for over 81 crore beneficiaries.

150) Correct Answer: C

Indian Railways will deploy the first indigenous hydrogen-powered train on the Jind–Sonipat route in

Haryana. Announced in May 2026, this green initiative uses hydrogen fuel cells for clean traction. It positions India among global leaders in sustainable rail technology.

SECTION 3

Detailed Analysis of Important Events



Economics

RBI's New Bad Loan Norms (ECL Framework)



Why in the News?

The Reserve Bank of India has introduced a new provisioning framework based on the **Expected Credit Loss (ECL)** approach for banks and financial institutions. The move aims to strengthen India's banking system by ensuring earlier recognition of stress in loans and improving financial stability.

The new norms are expected to increase provisioning requirements in the short term, which may temporarily affect bank profitability and capital ratios.

What is Expected Credit Loss (ECL)?

The **Expected Credit Loss (ECL)** model is a **forward-looking method** used by banks to estimate potential losses from loans.

Unlike the earlier incurred-loss model, which recognised losses only after a default occurred, ECL estimates losses in advance by considering the probability of future defaults.

Main Features of ECL

- Estimates likely future loan losses
- Considers changing economic and financial conditions
- Encourages early recognition of stressed assets
- Improves transparency and risk management in banks

The framework broadly aligns with the international accounting standard **IFRS 9 (International Financial Reporting Standard 9)** followed globally.

Three-Stage Classification of Loans

Under the new framework, loans will be classified into three stages based on credit risk.

Stage 1 – Standard Assets with Low Risk

Loans where credit risk has not increased significantly since origination.

- Provisioning based on **12-month ECL**
- Reflects expected losses over the next one year

Stage 2 – Significant Increase in Credit Risk

Loans where repayment risk has increased substantially, though not yet defaulted.

- Provisioning based on **lifetime ECL**
- Banks must estimate losses over the entire loan period

Stage 3 – Credit-Impaired or Defaulted Assets

Loans already classified as stressed or defaulted.

- Provisioning based on **lifetime ECL**
- Higher provisioning due to elevated risk

Important Changes Introduced

Borrower-Level NPA Classification

A major change is the adoption of borrower-level classification.

If one loan account of a borrower becomes an NPA, all loan accounts of that borrower may also be classified as NPAs.

This prevents borrowers from hiding stress through multiple loan accounts.

NPA Definition

A loan will continue to be classified as a **Non-Performing Asset (NPA)** if repayment remains overdue for more than 90 days.

Upgrade Rule

To regain standard asset status, the borrower must clear all overdue amounts and regularise the account completely.

Partial repayment alone will not restore the asset classification.

Impact on Banks

Higher Provisioning Requirements

Banks may need to set aside larger amounts as provisions because ECL recognises potential future stress earlier.

Short-Term Profit Impact

Higher provisioning could reduce short-term profits, especially for banks with large risky loan portfolios.

Impact on Capital Ratios

The framework may affect banks' **Common Equity Tier 1 (CET 1)** capital ratios because increased provisioning reduces retained earnings.

Sectors Likely to Face Greater Impact

The impact may be higher in:

- Microfinance lending
- Unsecured retail loans
- Consumer credit segments
- Small borrower portfolios with higher default risk

Significance of the New Framework

The ECL framework is considered an important reform because it:

- Improves early detection of financial stress
- Strengthens bank balance sheets
- Enhances transparency in asset quality
- Aligns India's banking regulations with global standards
- Reduces the risk of delayed recognition of bad loans

Over the long term, the framework is expected to make the Indian banking system more resilient and better prepared to absorb economic shocks.

Key Terms**Non-Performing Asset (NPA)**

A loan in which repayment of interest or principal remains overdue for more than 90 days.

Provisioning

The process by which banks set aside funds to cover potential losses from bad loans.

CET 1 (Common Equity Tier 1)

The highest quality core capital of a bank used to absorb losses and maintain financial stability.

India's Power Demand, Solar Push and Coal Use amid El Niño

**Why in the News?**

India is preparing to tackle rising summer electricity demand in 2026 while also facing the possibility of El Niño conditions that may intensify heatwaves and weaken the monsoon. To ensure uninterrupted power supply, the country is relying on a combination of rapidly expanding solar energy capacity and continued dependence on coal-based thermal power plants.

Key Highlights

- India's peak electricity demand touched nearly **256 GW in April 2026**, reflecting rising cooling needs during extreme summer temperatures.
- Coal-based thermal power continues to dominate the energy mix with a share of around **66.9 percent** in total electricity generation.
- Solar energy contribution has increased significantly to around **21.5 percent** during daytime peak supply periods.
- India added a record **44.61 GW of solar capacity in 2025–26**, marking one of the fastest annual expansions in renewable energy.

Role of Solar Energy

India's solar energy sector has witnessed rapid growth due to strong policy support, falling solar panel costs, and increasing investment in renewable infrastructure.

Rising Share in Electricity Generation

The contribution of solar power to India's electricity generation has steadily increased:

- Around **5.6 percent in 2022**
- Around **9 percent in 2025**
- Further growth expected in 2026 with large-scale solar park expansion

The government has accelerated solar deployment through initiatives such as:

- PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana
- Ultra Mega Solar Parks
- Rooftop solar programmes
- Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs)

Importance During Summer

Solar generation becomes especially important during summer afternoons when electricity demand from cooling appliances such as air conditioners and fans rises sharply. Since peak sunlight coincides with high daytime demand, solar energy helps reduce stress on the grid and lowers coal consumption during daytime hours.

Limitations of Solar Energy

Despite rapid expansion, solar power still faces several structural challenges:

Intermittent Nature

Solar generation depends on sunlight availability and declines sharply during evenings, cloudy weather, and monsoon periods.

Lack of Adequate Battery Storage

India currently lacks sufficient grid-scale battery storage systems to store excess daytime solar power for night-time use.

Grid Stability Issues

Large-scale integration of variable renewable energy can create frequency fluctuations and transmission challenges if not supported by flexible grid infrastructure.

Because of these limitations, solar energy alone cannot yet ensure round-the-clock electricity supply.

Role of Coal-Based Thermal Power

Coal-based thermal plants remain the backbone of India's power sector and continue to play a critical role in ensuring energy security.

Dominant Source of Electricity

Thermal power contributes nearly two-thirds of India's electricity generation and provides reliable base-load power that can operate continuously regardless of weather conditions.

Supporting Peak Demand

During periods of extremely high demand or low renewable generation, coal plants provide stable supply and prevent power shortages.

Strong Coal Availability

India currently has coal stocks of nearly **200 million tonnes**, considered sufficient for more than **80 days** of operation at existing consumption levels. This has improved preparedness compared to previous years when coal shortages triggered concerns over blackouts.

Strategic Importance

Coal power remains crucial because:

- Renewable energy is still intermittent
- Industrial demand requires uninterrupted supply
- Storage technology remains expensive
- Grid flexibility is still developing

Therefore, India is following a dual strategy of expanding renewables while maintaining adequate thermal generation capacity.

What is El Niño?

El Niño is a climate pattern caused by the warming of surface waters in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. It forms part of the broader El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle and influences weather patterns across the world.

Impact on India

El Niño conditions are often associated with:

- Weaker southwest monsoon rainfall
- Longer dry spells
- Higher summer temperatures
- Increased frequency of heatwaves
- Reduced agricultural productivity in some regions

Impact on Power Demand

Hotter temperatures during El Niño years increase electricity demand due to:

- Higher air-conditioning use
- Increased irrigation demand
- Greater cooling requirements in industries and urban areas

This makes reliable electricity generation critically important during summer months.

India's Energy Strategy

India's current approach focuses on balancing:

- Rapid renewable energy expansion
- Energy security through thermal power
- Grid modernisation
- Storage development
- Long-term decarbonisation goals

While solar energy is emerging as a major contributor to India's electricity transition, coal-based thermal power continues to remain indispensable for ensuring stable and uninterrupted supply during periods of peak demand and climatic uncertainty.

Electronic Gold Receipts (EGRs)



Why in the News?

The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) has introduced Electronic Gold Receipts (EGRs) to modernise and digitise gold trading in India. The initiative aims to bring greater transparency, efficiency, and standardisation to the country's vast gold market.

Electronic Gold Receipts are expected to create an organised ecosystem for gold trading by integrating physical gold with the securities market infrastructure. The move is considered a major reform in India's bullion market, which has traditionally been dominated by physical transactions and fragmented supply chains. The introduction of EGRs also aligns with India's broader goal of financial market digitisation and formalisation of commodity trading.

What are Electronic Gold Receipts (EGRs)?

Electronic Gold Receipts (EGRs) are digital securities that represent ownership of physical gold.

Under this system, physical gold deposited in SEBI-accredited vaults is converted into electronic units that

can be traded on stock exchanges in a manner similar to shares or other securities.

Each EGR is fully backed by actual physical gold stored securely in regulated vaults.

Thus, investors holding EGRs effectively own a specified quantity of gold without the need to physically store or handle the metal.

Key Features of Electronic Gold Receipts

Feature	Description
Nature	Digital security representing gold ownership
Backing	Fully backed by physical gold
Storage	Gold stored in SEBI-regulated vaults
Trading Platform	Stock exchanges such as NSE
Ownership	Held in demat account format
Flexibility	Can be converted into physical gold
Accessibility	Enables fractional ownership

How Do EGRs Work?

The functioning of Electronic Gold Receipts involves a structured process integrating vaulting, dematerialisation, and exchange trading.

Step 1: Deposit of Physical Gold

A depositor places physical gold in a SEBI-accredited vault.

The gold must meet prescribed quality and purity standards.

Step 2: Creation of Electronic Gold Receipts

After verification and storage, the deposited gold is converted into Electronic Gold Receipts.

These receipts are credited electronically into the investor's demat account.

For example:

- A 1000-gram gold bar can be converted into EGR units.
- Smaller denominations can also be created for wider investor participation.

Step 3: Trading on Exchanges

Investors can buy and sell EGRs on stock exchanges just like equities or other securities.

Prices are determined by market demand and supply.

Step 4: Conversion into Physical Gold

An investor holding EGRs can surrender them and obtain the corresponding quantity of physical gold from the vault.

This ensures that the electronic receipts remain fully linked to real gold assets.

Importance of EGRs in India's Gold Market

India is one of the world's largest consumers of gold, with demand driven by jewellery, investment, cultural practices, and festivals.

However, the traditional gold market often faces issues such as:

- Lack of standardisation
- Purity concerns
- Fragmented trading systems
- High storage risks
- Informal transactions
- Limited price transparency

Electronic Gold Receipts aim to address these challenges by creating a transparent and regulated trading framework.

Advantages of Electronic Gold Receipts

1. Transparency in Gold Trading

EGRs introduce a regulated exchange-based mechanism where prices are publicly visible and transactions are recorded electronically.

This reduces opacity in the bullion market.

2. Secure Storage

Investors no longer need to store physical gold at home or in private lockers.

Gold is securely stored in regulated vaults under strict safety standards.

3. Improved Liquidity

Since EGRs are tradeable on stock exchanges, investors can buy or sell gold more easily compared to traditional physical transactions.

4. Fractional Ownership

Investors can purchase smaller quantities of gold through EGR units.

This makes gold investment more accessible to retail investors.

5. Reduced Risks

EGRs minimise risks associated with:

- Theft
- Adulteration
- Counterfeit gold
- Transportation losses

6. Efficient Price Discovery

Exchange-based trading improves price discovery and reduces price discrepancies across markets.

Role of SEBI in EGR Regulation

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is the regulatory authority overseeing the Electronic Gold Receipt framework.

SEBI regulates multiple aspects of the ecosystem to ensure transparency, investor safety, and market integrity.

SEBI Regulates:

Vault Managers

Entities responsible for storing physical gold must comply with regulatory standards.

Trading Framework

SEBI supervises trading rules, exchange operations, and settlement mechanisms.

Investor Protection

The regulator ensures safeguards against fraud, market manipulation, and operational risks.

Quality Standards

Gold deposited for EGR conversion must meet specified purity and standardisation requirements.

Role of Vault Managers

Vault managers are critical participants in the EGR ecosystem.

Their responsibilities include:

- Safe storage of gold
- Verification of purity and quantity
- Issuance of vault receipts
- Maintaining inventory records
- Facilitating withdrawal of physical gold

Only SEBI-accredited vault managers are authorised to operate within the EGR framework.

Difference Between Physical Gold and EGRs

Basis	Physical Gold	Electronic Gold Receipts
Form	Physical asset	Digital security
Storage	Personal storage/lockers	Regulated vaults
Purity Assurance	May vary	Standardised and verified
Liquidity	Limited in local markets	Easily tradeable on exchanges
Risk	Theft and damage	Lower physical risk
Transaction Transparency	Often informal	Fully regulated

Economic and Market Significance

The introduction of EGRs is expected to strengthen India’s financial markets and formal bullion economy.

Key Economic Benefits

- Greater formalisation of gold trade
- Improved tax compliance
- Better integration of bullion markets with capital markets
- Enhanced investor confidence
- Development of a transparent gold ecosystem

EGRs may also help India move towards establishing a more organised bullion exchange structure.

Challenges Associated with EGRs

Despite their advantages, some challenges remain:

Limited Investor Awareness

Many retail investors are still unfamiliar with electronic gold trading mechanisms.

Infrastructure Requirements

Expansion of accredited vaulting infrastructure is necessary across the country.

Market Adoption

Traditional gold traders and jewellers may take time to fully adopt the digital framework.

Regulatory Coordination

Smooth coordination between exchanges, vault managers, depositories, and regulators is essential.

Government Ban on Sugar Exports



Why in the News?

The Government of India has prohibited sugar exports till 30 September 2026 amid growing concerns over possible disruptions in domestic sugar availability and inflationary pressures. The decision comes against the backdrop of an expected weak monsoon due to El Niño conditions, rising geopolitical tensions in West Asia, fertiliser supply uncertainties, and fears of higher food and fuel inflation. The government believes that restricting exports is necessary to maintain adequate domestic stocks and stabilise sugar prices in the domestic market.

Key Reasons Behind the Sugar Export Ban

1. El Niño Concerns and Weak Monsoon Risks

One of the major reasons for the export ban is the possibility of El Niño conditions affecting India’s monsoon.

El Niño is a climatic phenomenon characterised by the warming of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. In India, El Niño is generally associated with:

- Weak monsoon rainfall
- Higher temperatures
- Drought-like conditions in some regions
- Lower agricultural productivity

Sugarcane is a highly water-intensive crop. A weak monsoon can reduce:

- Sugarcane sowing
- Cane productivity
- Sugar recovery rates
- Overall sugar output

The government fears that poor rainfall during the current season may adversely affect the 2027-28 sugar season, creating a future supply shortage.

2. Threat to Sugarcane Production

India is one of the world's largest producers and consumers of sugar. However, sugarcane cultivation depends heavily on:

- Irrigation availability
- Fertiliser supply
- Stable climatic conditions
- Adequate power and diesel availability

Any disruption in these inputs can sharply affect production.

The government has expressed concern that rising global tensions and supply chain disruptions may affect fertiliser imports, especially phosphatic and potassic fertilisers used in sugarcane cultivation.

Lower fertiliser availability may reduce:

- Crop yield
- Cane quality
- Sugar extraction efficiency

This could place additional stress on domestic sugar supplies in the coming years.

3. Iran War and Strait of Hormuz Disruptions

Geopolitical tensions near Iran and the Strait of Hormuz have emerged as another major concern.

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most important maritime trade routes. A significant share of global crude oil and fertiliser shipments passes through this region.

Any escalation in conflict may disrupt:

- Fertiliser imports
- Energy supplies
- Shipping routes
- Freight movement
- Global commodity prices

India depends substantially on imported fertilisers and crude oil. Therefore, disruptions in the region may increase production costs across sectors, including agriculture.

Higher fuel prices also increase transportation and irrigation costs, which may eventually raise sugar prices in the domestic market.

4. Inflation Management

The government's decision is also linked to broader inflation management.

Sugar is an essential commodity used directly by households as well as by industries such as:

- Confectionery
- Soft drinks
- Processed foods
- Dairy products
- Bakery sector

A shortage of sugar or rise in prices can contribute significantly to food inflation.

The government aims to prevent:

- Rise in retail sugar prices
- Food inflation
- Fuel-linked inflationary pressures
- Excessive pressure on consumers

By restricting exports, authorities seek to ensure that domestic availability remains stable.

India's Sugar Position in 2025-26

Production and Consumption

According to government estimates for the 2025-26 sugar season:

- Sugar production: 279 lakh tonnes
- Domestic consumption: 280 lakh tonnes

This indicates that domestic demand is expected to slightly exceed production.

Declining Closing Stocks

India's expected closing sugar stock is estimated at:

42.5 lakh tonnes

This is the lowest closing stock level in nearly nine years. Closing stock refers to the quantity of sugar remaining at the end of a sugar season after accounting for domestic consumption and exports.

Low closing stocks are viewed as risky because they reduce the government's ability to:

- Stabilise prices
- Manage shortages
- Meet emergency demand

- Handle production shocks

Change in Export Policy

Earlier Policy: Restricted Category

Previously, sugar exports were placed under the “Restricted” category.

Under this system:

- Exports were allowed with government approval
- Annual export quotas were fixed
- Sugar mills could export limited quantities

The government periodically adjusted export limits depending on domestic production and stock levels.

New Policy: Prohibited Category

The latest decision shifts sugar exports to the “Prohibited” category till 30 September 2026.

This means:

- General exports are not permitted
- Sugar mills cannot freely export sugar
- Government aims to conserve domestic supplies

Exceptions to the Ban

Despite the prohibition, limited exports will still be allowed under special arrangements.

India will continue quota-based exports to:

- European Union (EU)
- United States (US)

Impact of the Export Ban

1. Impact on Domestic Consumers

The ban is expected to help stabilise domestic sugar prices by ensuring adequate availability in the local market.

Consumers may benefit through:

- Reduced risk of price spikes
- Stable retail sugar supply
- Lower inflationary pressure on food products

2. Impact on Sugar Mills

Sugar mills may face reduced export earnings because international sugar prices are often attractive during periods of global shortage.

Lower exports may affect:

- Profit margins
- Foreign exchange earnings
- Inventory management

3. Impact on Farmers

Sugarcane farmers may face indirect effects depending on:

- Cane procurement by mills
- Payment cycles
- Future production levels

If domestic stocks remain high for a prolonged period, mills may become cautious in cane purchases.

However, the government is likely to continue support measures to protect farmer interests.

4. Global Sugar Market Impact

India is among the world’s largest sugar exporters.

Any restriction on Indian sugar exports can influence:

- Global sugar prices
- Supply availability in importing countries
- International trade balances

Environment & Diversity

Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH)



Why in the News?

A recent report by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development has highlighted a **record 27% decline in snow persistence** across the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region. This sharp reduction signals **accelerating climate change impacts**, with serious implications for Asia’s water security, agriculture, and ecosystems.

Snow persistence refers to how long snow remains on the ground after snowfall. A decline indicates **earlier melting and reduced seasonal snow cover**, which directly affects river flows.

About the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH)

The Hindu Kush Himalaya is one of the largest and most complex mountain systems in the world.

- Extends over **3,500 km**
- Covers **8 countries**: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, Myanmar, and Pakistan
- Contains some of the **highest peaks on Earth**, including Mount Everest

This region is often called the **“Water Tower of Asia”** because it sustains nearly **2 billion people downstream**.

Why is HKH Called the “Third Pole”?

The HKH is referred to as the **“Third Pole”** due to its vast reserves of ice and snow, after the Arctic and Antarctic.

Key Reasons:

- Houses the **largest concentration of glaciers outside polar regions**
- Stores enormous quantities of **freshwater in frozen form**
- Plays a crucial role in **global climate regulation**

Importance:

- Regulates **monsoon patterns**
- Maintains **river flow during dry seasons**
- Influences **regional and global weather systems**

Major Rivers Originating from HKH

The HKH region is the source of several major river systems that support billions of people:

- Indus River
- Ganga River
- Brahmaputra River
- Amu Darya
- Mekong River
- Yangtze River
- Yellow River
- Irrawaddy River
- Salween River
- Tarim River

These rivers are lifelines for **drinking water, irrigation, hydropower, and livelihoods**.

Key Findings of the ICIMOD Report

- **27% decline in snow persistence** (record low)

- Faster **snowmelt timing**, leading to earlier river flows
- Increased risk of **water shortages in summer**
- Greater variability in **river discharge patterns**
- Intensification of **climate extremes** such as floods and droughts

Implications of Declining Snow Persistence

1. Water Security Risks

- Reduced snow storage means **less water availability in dry seasons**
- Affects agriculture, especially in **India, Pakistan, and Nepal**

2. Increased Flood Risks

- Faster melting can cause **sudden surges in river flow**
- Raises chances of **flash floods and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs)**

3. Impact on Agriculture

- Changes in water availability disrupt **cropping cycles**
- Threatens **food security** in South Asia

4. Hydropower Challenges

- Irregular river flow affects **electricity generation**
- Impacts energy security in mountain and downstream regions

5. Ecological Consequences

- Alters fragile mountain ecosystems
- Threatens biodiversity and wildlife habitats

Broader Climate Change Context

The HKH region is warming **faster than the global average**, making it highly vulnerable. The decline in snow persistence reflects:

- Rising global temperatures
- Changing precipitation patterns (more rain, less snow)
- Accelerated glacier retreat

If current trends continue, scientists warn that **up to one-third of glaciers in the HKH could disappear by 2100**, even under moderate emission scenarios.

Conclusion

The findings of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development serve as a critical warning. The

Hindu Kush Himalaya, often called the “Third Pole,” is undergoing rapid transformation due to climate change. The decline in snow persistence is not just an environmental issue—it is a **major socio-economic and geopolitical concern**, affecting water, food, and energy security across Asia. Urgent global and regional action on climate mitigation and adaptation is essential to safeguard this vital region.

Light Pollution Threatens the World’s Clearest Skies



Why in the News

Rising **light pollution** and proposed large-scale energy projects in the Atacama Desert have raised global concerns about the degradation of one of the world’s most pristine night skies. This region is critical for cutting-edge astronomical research, and any increase in artificial light could significantly impact observations and scientific discoveries.

What is Light Pollution

Light pollution refers to excessive, misdirected, or poorly designed artificial lighting that brightens the natural night sky. It reduces visibility of stars and celestial objects and disrupts both **astronomical research** and natural ecosystems.

It typically includes:

- **Skyglow:** Brightening of the night sky over populated areas
- **Glare:** Excessive brightness causing visual discomfort
- **Light trespass:** Unwanted light spilling into natural or dark areas

The Atacama Desert: Key Facts

- **Location:** Chile

- **Climate:** Driest place on Earth
- **Clear Nights:** Over 300 per year
- **Altitude:** Often above 3000 metres
- **Area:** Around 105,000 sq km

The unique combination of dryness, altitude, and isolation makes it one of the best places on Earth to observe the universe.

Why is Atacama Ideal for Astronomy?

The Atacama Desert offers near-perfect observational conditions:

- **Extremely Dry Atmosphere:** Minimal water vapour reduces distortion of light
- **High Altitude:** Thinner atmosphere allows clearer and sharper views
- **Low Light Pollution:** Remote location ensures dark skies
- **Stable Climate:** Very few clouds or storms

Because of these factors, astronomers can detect faint and distant cosmic objects that are not visible from most other locations.

Major Astronomical Facilities

1. European Southern Observatory (ESO)

The European Southern Observatory operates several world-class observatories in the region, making Atacama a global centre for astronomical research.

2. Paranal Observatory

- Operated by ESO
- Hosts the **Very Large Telescope (VLT)**
- One of the most advanced optical telescope facilities in the world
- Plays a key role in studying galaxies, black holes, and exoplanets

3. Extremely Large Telescope (ELT)

- Project by European Southern Observatory
- **Estimated Cost:** ~1.5 billion dollars
- **Expected Completion:** Around 2030
- **Key Feature:** 798 individual mirrors forming one giant mirror
- **Performance:**
 - ~20 times more powerful than current telescopes

- Around 15 times sharper resolution than the Hubble Space Telescope

The ELT is expected to revolutionise astronomy by enabling the study of Earth-like exoplanets and the early universe.

Concerns: Impact of Light Pollution

Increasing light pollution and infrastructure projects pose serious threats:

1. Scientific Impact

- Reduces visibility of faint celestial objects
- Interferes with precision observations
- Limits the effectiveness of expensive telescope facilities

2. Ecological Impact

- Disrupts nocturnal wildlife and ecosystems
- Alters natural biological cycles

3. Economic and Strategic Impact

- Risks undermining billions of dollars invested in observatories
- Could reduce Chile's global leadership in astronomy

Conclusion

The Atacama Desert is not just a geographical region but a **global scientific asset**. Its uniquely dark skies have enabled some of humanity's most important discoveries about the universe.

However, rising light pollution threatens to erode this advantage. Balancing development with environmental protection—through strict lighting regulations and sustainable planning—will be essential to preserve the Atacama's status as the **world's premier window to the cosmos**.

India's First Green Methanol Plant



Why in the News?

India is set to establish its first green methanol plant at Deendayal Port Authority using the invasive plant *Prosopis juliflora* as feedstock. The initiative aims to produce clean marine fuel, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and support India's transition toward sustainable and green shipping practices.

The project is significant because it combines renewable fuel production with ecological management by utilising an invasive species that has damaged local grassland ecosystems.

About *Prosopis juliflora*

Prosopis juliflora is a thorny invasive tree species native to Mexico and parts of Central and South America.

Local Names

- Vilayati Keekar (North India)
- Gando Baval (Gujarat)

Introduction in India

- Introduced during the 1920s by the British colonial administration.
- Later promoted in Gujarat in 1961 to control desertification and stabilise arid land.

Ecological Concerns

Although initially introduced for afforestation and fuelwood purposes, the species later spread aggressively across dry regions.

Major environmental problems associated with the plant include:

- Replacement of native grasses and shrubs
- Reduction in biodiversity
- Excessive groundwater consumption
- Encroachment into grazing lands

The species has particularly harmed the Banni Grasslands, one of Asia's largest natural grassland ecosystems, affecting pastoral livelihoods and native flora.

About Green Methanol

Green methanol is methanol produced using renewable biomass or other low-carbon sources instead of fossil fuels such as natural gas or coal.

Production Sources

Green methanol can be produced from:

- Agricultural residue
- Forestry waste
- Municipal biomass
- Renewable hydrogen and captured carbon dioxide

Importance

It is increasingly viewed as an alternative clean fuel for the shipping industry because:

- It emits significantly lower greenhouse gases than bunker fuel.
- It reduces sulphur oxide and particulate emissions.
- It can be used in modified marine engines with relatively lower infrastructure changes.

Methanol is emerging globally as a major transition fuel for decarbonising maritime transport.

Key Features of the Project

Location

- Deendayal Port Authority

Production Capacity

- Approximately 5 tonnes of green methanol per day

Developers

- Thermax
- Ankur Scientific Energy Technologies Pvt. Ltd.

Feedstock

The plant will primarily utilise:

- *Prosopis juliflora*
- Bagasse
- Cotton stalk
- Other agricultural biomass

Significance of the Project

Environmental Benefits

- Helps control the spread of an invasive species
- Reduces carbon emissions from shipping
- Encourages biomass-based circular economy practices

Energy Security

- Supports indigenous clean fuel production
- Reduces dependence on imported fossil fuels

Maritime Transition

The initiative aligns with India's broader goals of:

- Green ports
- Sustainable shipping
- Net-zero emission targets

It also complements the International Maritime Organization's push for cleaner marine fuels and low-carbon shipping corridors.

Broader Importance

The Kandla green methanol initiative represents a unique model where ecological restoration and clean energy production are integrated together. By converting invasive biomass into marine fuel, India is attempting to address environmental degradation while simultaneously building a low-carbon fuel ecosystem for the future maritime economy.

Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary



Why in the News?

The forest department has launched a comprehensive scientific wildlife census in the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary to assess the population status, habitat use, and movement patterns of major wildlife species.

The exercise aims to strengthen wildlife conservation planning, improve habitat management, and generate scientific data for long-term biodiversity monitoring in the Central Himalayan ecosystem.

About Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary

Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary is an important protected area located in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand in the Central Himalayas. It is well known for its dense forests, rich biodiversity, and panoramic Himalayan landscapes. The sanctuary was primarily established to conserve the shrinking broadleaf oak forests of the Himalayan region, which are ecologically significant and support diverse wildlife species.

Location

- Situated in the Almora district of Uttarakhand
- Located in the Kumaon Himalayan region
- Spread across high-altitude forested terrain overlooking peaks such as Nanda Devi, Trishul, and Kedarnath

Ecological Importance

Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary represents a vital mid-Himalayan ecosystem and serves as an important wildlife corridor in the region.

The sanctuary contains dense temperate forests dominated by:

- Oak
- Rhododendron
- Pine
- Deodar and other Himalayan broadleaf species

These forests play a crucial role in:

- Maintaining ecological balance
- Conserving mountain biodiversity
- Regulating local climate and water systems
- Preventing soil erosion in hilly terrain

Flora and Fauna

The sanctuary supports a wide variety of Himalayan wildlife and bird species.

Major Wildlife Species

- Leopard
- Himalayan black bear
- Barking deer
- Goral
- Wild boar
- Pine marten
- Langur

Bird Diversity

Binsar is also an important birding destination and hosts more than 200 species of birds, including:

- Monal
- Kalij pheasant
- Eurasian jay
- Various woodpeckers and flycatchers

The rich biodiversity makes the sanctuary ecologically significant for conservation research and wildlife monitoring.

Conservation Significance

Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary is important for:

- Conservation of Himalayan oak forests
- Protection of fragile mountain ecosystems
- Preservation of endangered and sensitive wildlife habitats
- Ecotourism and environmental education

The newly launched wildlife census is expected to provide scientific insights into:

- Species population trends
- Habitat health
- Wildlife movement and migration patterns
- Human-wildlife interaction in the region

Such studies are essential for evidence-based conservation strategies and sustainable forest management in the Himalayas.

India's First Satellite-Tagged Ganges soft-shell turtle Released in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve**Why in the News?**

India's first satellite-tagged Ganges Soft-shell Turtle was released in Kaziranga National Park on the occasion of Endangered Species Day. The initiative marks a major step in freshwater turtle conservation and scientific monitoring in India.

Key Highlights

- The turtle was released in the 1,302 sq. km Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.
- The project aims to scientifically study:
 - Seasonal movement patterns

- Home range and habitat use
- Nesting and breeding behaviour
- The research is being conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India in collaboration with:
 - Kaziranga National Park authorities
 - Assam Forest Department
- The initiative is funded by the National Geographic Society.
- Satellite telemetry technology will help conservationists track turtle movement in real time and identify critical habitats for protection.

About the Ganges Soft-shell Turtle

The Ganges Soft-shell Turtle is a large freshwater turtle species native to the Indian subcontinent.

Scientific Name

- *Nilssonia gangetica*

Habitat

It is commonly found in:

- Large rivers
- Lakes
- Reservoirs
- Slow-moving freshwater ecosystems

The species is distributed mainly across the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Indus river systems in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

Physical Features

- Recognised by distinctive arrowhead-shaped markings on the head
- Has a flattened, leathery shell typical of soft-shell turtles
- Well adapted for aquatic life with strong swimming ability

Conservation Status

IUCN Red List

- Classified as: Endangered

Legal Protection in India

Protected under:

- Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, which provides the highest degree of legal protection against hunting and trade.

Threats

Major threats to the species include:

- River pollution
- Sand mining
- Habitat destruction
- Illegal poaching and trade
- Accidental capture in fishing nets
- Declining nesting grounds due to riverbank erosion and human activities

Ecological Importance

The Ganges Soft-shell Turtle plays a vital ecological role in maintaining freshwater ecosystem health.

- Acts as a major predator and scavenger in river ecosystems
- Feeds on dead and decaying animal matter, thereby helping keep rivers clean
- Contributes to nutrient recycling and ecological balance
- Serves as an indicator species for freshwater ecosystem health

Because freshwater turtles are highly sensitive to environmental degradation, their population trends often reflect the condition of river systems.

Assam and Freshwater Turtle Conservation

Assam is considered one of India's most important regions for freshwater turtle conservation due to its extensive riverine ecosystems and wetlands.

- Out of the eight soft-shell turtle species found in India, five occur in the Kaziranga landscape.
- The Brahmaputra river basin supports rich aquatic biodiversity and several threatened turtle species.
- Conservation efforts in Assam include:
 - Habitat restoration
 - Anti-poaching measures
 - Community awareness programmes
 - Scientific monitoring and rescue operations

The satellite-tagging initiative is expected to provide crucial scientific data that can help formulate long-term conservation strategies for endangered freshwater turtles in India.

Centre Opposes New Hydel Projects in Upper Ganga Basin



Why in the News?

The Union government has informed the Supreme Court of India that no new hydroelectric projects should be permitted in the upper reaches of the Ganga basin in Uttarakhand. The decision reflects growing environmental and disaster-related concerns associated with large-scale hydropower construction in the fragile Himalayan region.

The Centre submitted a common affidavit before the Court through three ministries:

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- Ministry of Jal Shakti
- Ministry of Power

The affidavit opposed the approval of any additional hydel projects in the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi river basins, which together form the main headstreams of the Ganga.

Projects Allowed by the Centre

While opposing fresh approvals, the government allowed a limited number of projects that are already under construction or substantially completed. These include:

- Tehri Pumped Storage Project
- Tapovan Vishnugad Hydroelectric Project
- Vishnugad Pipalkoti Hydroelectric Project
- Singoli Bhatwari Hydroelectric Project
- Phata Byung Hydroelectric Project

These projects were permitted mainly because construction had already advanced significantly, and large investments had already been made.

Reasons for Restricting New Hydropower Projects

1. Seismic Fragility of the Himalayas

The Himalayan region is geologically young and highly unstable. Uttarakhand falls within a high seismic zone, making it vulnerable to earthquakes, landslides, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), and flash floods. Large-scale tunnelling, blasting, and dam construction can further destabilise mountain slopes and river systems.

Experts have repeatedly warned that excessive infrastructure development in ecologically sensitive Himalayan valleys increases disaster risks.

2. Cumulative Impact of Multiple Dams

The government also highlighted the cumulative impact of “bumper-to-bumper” dams being built along river stretches. When several hydropower projects are constructed close to one another, they disrupt:

- Natural river flow
- Sediment transport
- Aquatic biodiversity
- River ecology
- Ground stability

Continuous damming can transform free-flowing rivers into fragmented water channels, affecting both ecosystems and local communities dependent on river resources.

3. Increasing Flood Disasters

The Centre referred to major flood disasters in Uttarakhand as evidence of the ecological vulnerability of the region.

2013 Kedarnath floods

The 2013 disaster caused massive destruction across Uttarakhand, particularly in Kedarnath valley. Cloudbursts, glacial lake breaches, and heavy rainfall triggered flash floods and landslides, killing thousands of people and damaging roads, bridges, and hydropower infrastructure.

Several expert committees later observed that unregulated construction and hydropower activities aggravated the scale of destruction.

2025 Dharali flash flood

The recent Dharali flash flood again highlighted the increasing frequency of climate-related disasters in the Himalayan region. Extreme rainfall events and glacial instability have become more common due to climate change, raising concerns about the safety of additional large dams.

Background of the Case

The issue dates back to the aftermath of the 2013 Kedarnath tragedy, when petitions were filed before the Supreme Court seeking a review of hydropower expansion in Uttarakhand.

The Court subsequently directed expert bodies and environmental committees to examine:

- The environmental impact of hydropower projects
- The cumulative ecological effect of multiple dams
- Disaster vulnerability in Himalayan river basins
- The relationship between hydropower infrastructure and flood intensity

Several committees recommended stricter regulation of hydropower projects in the upper Ganga basin, especially in ecologically sensitive zones.

Importance of the Decision

The Centre's stand marks a significant shift in India's approach towards balancing energy development with ecological sustainability. The decision is important because it:

- Recognises the ecological sensitivity of the Himalayas
- Prioritises disaster risk reduction
- Protects the upper Ganga River ecosystem
- Reflects concerns over climate-induced extreme weather events
- Emphasises sustainable development over unchecked infrastructure expansion

The move may also influence future hydropower policy in other Himalayan states such as Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh, where similar environmental concerns exist.

Governance

Supreme Court on Abortion Law for Minor Rape Victims

**Why in the News?**

The Supreme Court of India has asked the Union Government to consider removing the legal time limit for abortion in cases involving minor rape survivors. The observation came while hearing a petition concerning a 15-year-old rape survivor seeking termination of a 30-week pregnancy.

The Court permitted the medical termination and stressed that forcing a minor survivor to continue an unwanted pregnancy could cause severe physical, psychological, and emotional trauma.

Background: Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 governs the legal framework for abortion in India. The law was amended in 2021 to expand access to safe abortion services.

Key Provisions

- Abortion permitted up to 20 weeks under general conditions
- Permitted up to 24 weeks for certain special categories, including:
 - Rape survivors
 - Minors
 - Women with disabilities
 - Cases involving substantial foetal abnormalities

Beyond 24 weeks, termination generally requires judicial approval and medical board recommendations.

Key Observations of the Supreme Court

The Court strongly emphasised the reproductive rights and dignity of the survivor.

Important Observations

- The State or doctors cannot impose decisions regarding continuation of pregnancy.
- The final decision should primarily rest with:
 - The survivor
 - Parents or legal guardians in case of minors
- Medical professionals should provide guidance, not coercion.
- Compelling a rape survivor to continue pregnancy may violate her dignity, bodily autonomy, and mental well-being.

The Court recognised that pregnancy resulting from sexual violence carries long-term psychological consequences, especially for minors.

Suggestions Made by the Court

The Court suggested that the government examine possible amendments to existing abortion laws.

Proposed Reforms

- Removal of the upper gestational limit in cases involving minor rape survivors
- Fast-track trial of rape cases, preferably within one week in such situations
- Compensation mechanisms for victims, including possible use of the accused person's property for rehabilitation and support

Legal and Constitutional Dimensions

Article 21 of the Constitution

The Court linked reproductive choice with the broader protections under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

Rights Recognised Under Article 21

- Right to life with dignity
- Bodily integrity
- Privacy
- Reproductive autonomy

The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that reproductive decisions are an integral part of personal liberty and privacy.

Reproductive Autonomy

Meaning

Reproductive Autonomy refers to the right of a woman to make independent decisions regarding:

- Pregnancy
- Childbirth
- Contraception
- Abortion

The Court reaffirmed that these choices are deeply personal and central to individual dignity.

Key Issues Highlighted

1. Conflict Between Foetal Rights and Survivor's Rights

The case highlights the continuing legal and ethical debate between:

- Protection of the foetus
- Rights, health, and autonomy of the survivor

The Court indicated that in cases involving sexual violence against minors, the survivor's welfare and dignity must receive primary consideration.

2. Importance of Informed Consent

The judgment underlined that consent must be informed and voluntary, especially in medical decisions related to pregnancy termination.

3. Role of Doctors

Doctors should:

- Assess medical safety
- Explain risks and options
- Respect the survivor's wishes

The Court cautioned against paternalistic approaches where medical authorities override the survivor's choice.

Important Concepts

Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP)

Medical Termination of Pregnancy refers to the legal process governing abortion services in India under the MTP Act.

Reproductive Rights

Reproductive Rights include the freedom to make decisions about one's reproductive health without discrimination, coercion, or violence.

Significance of the Case

The case is significant because it:

- Reinforces reproductive autonomy as a constitutional right

- Highlights the vulnerability of minor rape survivors
- May influence future reforms in India's abortion laws
- Strengthens the jurisprudence linking dignity, privacy, and bodily integrity under Article 21

It also reflects the evolving judicial approach towards survivor-centric interpretation of reproductive and human rights in India.

Appointment of DGP in Tamil Nadu



Why in the News?

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is set to convene an Empanelment Committee Meeting (ECM) to shortlist candidates for the post of Director General of Police (DGP) in Tamil Nadu. The process is being conducted in accordance with the police reform guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court of India.

The development has once again brought attention to the issue of police reforms, transparency in appointments, and the independence of senior police leadership in India.

What is the DGP?

The Director General of Police (DGP) is the highest-ranking police officer in a state police force.

The DGP:

- Heads the entire State Police Force
- Serves as the administrative and operational chief of the police department
- Advises the state government on matters related to law and order, internal security, and policing
- Is also referred to as the Head of Police Force (HoPF)

The DGP usually belongs to the Indian Police Service (IPS) and holds the rank of a three-star officer.

Appointment Process of DGP

The appointment of a DGP follows a structured process aimed at ensuring professionalism and impartiality.

Steps in the Appointment Process

1. The Union Public Service Commission prepares a panel of three senior IPS officers considered suitable for the post.
2. The panel is sent to the concerned State Government.
3. The State Government selects one officer from the panel and appoints them as the DGP.

The process is designed to reduce arbitrariness and political influence in the selection of the state's top police officer.

Role of UPSC

The UPSC plays an important role in ensuring transparent and merit-based appointments.

Functions of UPSC in DGP Selection

- Conducts the Empanelment Committee Meeting (ECM)
- Evaluates eligible IPS officers based on:
 - Seniority
 - Service record
 - Experience
 - Integrity
- Prepares a shortlist of suitable officers
- Ensures compliance with Supreme Court guidelines

The involvement of UPSC is intended to strengthen institutional neutrality in police appointments.

Supreme Court Guidelines on DGP Appointments

The current framework originates from the landmark judgment in:

Prakash Singh v. Union of India

In 2006, the Supreme Court of India issued several directions aimed at insulating the police from political interference and improving professionalism.

Key Guidelines

1. Minimum Fixed Tenure

The DGP should be given a minimum tenure of two years irrespective of the date of superannuation.

This is meant to ensure stability and continuity in police administration.

2. Selection Through UPSC Panel

The State Government must appoint the DGP only from among officers shortlisted by UPSC.

3. Residual Service Requirement

Only officers with a reasonable period of residual service should be considered for appointment.

4. No Last Minute Appointments

The Court discouraged appointments made immediately before retirement merely to provide short-term extensions or temporary tenure benefits.

Important Terms

Empanelment Committee Meeting (ECM)

An ECM is a meeting conducted by the UPSC to assess and shortlist eligible IPS officers for the DGP post.

The committee examines:

- Service records
- Experience
- Performance appraisal
- Vigilance status

Residual Service

Residual service refers to the remaining duration of service an officer has before retirement.

The concept is important because the Supreme Court intended the DGP to have sufficient time to function effectively and independently.

Key Issues and Debates

Delays in Appointment

Several states have faced criticism for delaying DGP appointments or appointing acting DGPs for extended periods.

Such delays may undermine administrative stability and institutional independence.

Extension Beyond Retirement

There has been debate over whether DGPs should continue in office after retirement age to complete the fixed two-year tenure.

Different states have adopted varying approaches, leading to legal and administrative controversies.

Political Interference

One of the central concerns behind the Supreme Court reforms was the frequent transfer and politically influenced appointment of senior police officers.

Ensuring an independent leadership structure remains a major challenge.

Significance of the Reform Process

The DGP appointment guidelines are significant because they:

- Strengthen police reforms and accountability
- Promote professional and merit-based leadership
- Reduce arbitrary political interference
- Improve continuity in policing and law enforcement
- Enhance public confidence in police administration

The reforms are part of broader efforts to modernize India's policing system and improve institutional autonomy.

Conclusion

The DGP appointment process reflects the larger debate over police reforms and governance in India. By mandating UPSC-led empanelment and fixed tenure, the Supreme Court sought to create a more professional, stable, and independent police leadership structure.

As states continue to implement these guidelines, the balance between administrative control and police autonomy remains a crucial issue in strengthening democratic policing and rule of law.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)



Why in the News?

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has recently introduced standards for medical assistive technologies under the National List of Essential Assistive Products (NLEAP) initiative. The move aims to improve the accessibility, quality, reliability, and safety of assistive healthcare devices used by persons with disabilities, the elderly, and individuals requiring rehabilitation support. The initiative is expected to strengthen India's healthcare ecosystem by ensuring that assistive products manufactured and sold in the country adhere to uniform national quality standards.

About the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the national standards body of India responsible for the formulation and implementation of quality standards for goods, services, and systems.

It operates under the BIS Act, 2016 and functions under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

BIS succeeded the Indian Standards Institution (ISI), which had originally been established in 1947.

Headquarter

New Delhi

Objectives of BIS

The Bureau of Indian Standards works to ensure that products and services in India meet defined quality and safety benchmarks.

Its major objectives include:

- Standardisation of products and services
- Quality certification and conformity assessment
- Protection of consumer interests
- Promotion of safe and reliable products
- Reduction in product variability
- Strengthening industrial efficiency and competitiveness

Key Functions of BIS

1. Standardisation

BIS develops Indian Standards for a wide range of sectors including:

- Healthcare
- Electronics
- Food products
- Construction materials

- Industrial goods
- Consumer products

These standards help ensure uniformity, quality control, and interoperability.

2. Certification and ISI Mark

BIS grants the well-known ISI certification mark to products that meet prescribed quality and safety standards.

The ISI mark is considered a symbol of reliability and consumer safety in India.

Mandatory BIS certification exists for several critical products such as:

- Electrical appliances
- Cement
- Steel products
- Packaged drinking water
- Medical devices

3. Testing and Quality Assurance

BIS operates testing laboratories and recognises external laboratories to evaluate product quality.

These tests ensure compliance with:

- Safety norms
- Durability standards
- Performance benchmarks
- Environmental requirements

4. Consumer Protection

BIS plays a significant role in safeguarding consumer interests by:

- Preventing substandard products from entering markets
- Minimising health and safety risks
- Encouraging transparent quality practices
- Enhancing public confidence in manufactured goods

Role of BIS in the Indian Economy

BIS contributes significantly to India's industrial and economic development.

Promotes Quality Manufacturing

Standardisation improves manufacturing efficiency and enhances product reliability.

Supports Exports

Products complying with recognised standards gain greater acceptance in international markets.

Encourages Import Substitution

By promoting domestic manufacturing standards, BIS supports the government's "Make in India" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiatives.

Enhances Global Competitiveness

Indian industries become more competitive through adherence to internationally aligned quality standards.

About the National List of Essential Assistive Products (NLEAP)

The National List of Essential Assistive Products (NLEAP) is an initiative aimed at improving access to essential assistive technologies and rehabilitation devices for individuals with disabilities, elderly citizens, and people with functional limitations.

The initiative seeks to ensure that assistive products are:

- Affordable
- Accessible
- Safe
- High quality
- Technologically reliable

NLEAP aligns with India's broader healthcare and social inclusion goals, including the rights-based framework for persons with disabilities.

What are Assistive Products?

Assistive products are devices or technologies designed to improve the functional capabilities and independence of individuals facing physical, sensory, cognitive, or mobility limitations.

Examples include:

- Wheelchairs
- Hearing aids
- Prosthetic limbs
- Walking aids
- Visual assistance devices
- Communication devices
- Orthotic supports

These products help individuals participate more effectively in education, employment, healthcare, and social life.

Significance of BIS Standards for Assistive Technologies

The introduction of BIS standards under NLEAP carries major importance for India's healthcare and disability support sectors.

1. Ensuring Safety and Reliability

Uniform standards ensure that assistive products meet minimum safety and performance benchmarks, reducing the risk of device failure or injury.

2. Improved Accessibility

Standardised products can be manufactured at scale, making assistive technologies more affordable and accessible.

3. Support for Persons with Disabilities

Quality-certified devices enhance mobility, communication, and independence for beneficiaries.

4. Boost to Domestic Manufacturing

The standards encourage Indian manufacturers to develop globally competitive assistive devices.

5. Alignment with Global Best Practices

The move helps India align with international standards related to rehabilitation and disability support technologies.

Importance in Healthcare and Social Inclusion

Assistive technologies are increasingly recognised as an essential component of universal healthcare and inclusive development.

According to global health agencies, access to assistive products significantly improves:

- Quality of life
- Social participation
- Educational outcomes
- Employment opportunities
- Independent living

India's growing elderly population and rising burden of chronic diseases further increase the need for reliable assistive healthcare devices.

Challenges in the Assistive Technology Sector

Despite growing demand, the sector faces several challenges:

- Limited affordability of advanced devices
- Lack of standardisation
- Uneven availability in rural areas
- Dependence on imports for high-end technologies
- Limited awareness among beneficiaries

The BIS standards under NLEAP are expected to address many of these gaps by creating a structured quality framework.

Ordinance Increases Supreme Court Judges to 37



Why in the News?

President Droupadi Murmu promulgated an ordinance increasing the number of judges in the Supreme Court of India to 37, excluding the Chief Justice of India (CJI). The move comes amid mounting concern over the rapidly rising pendency of cases before the apex court.

The ordinance was issued under Article 123 of the Constitution, which empowers the President to promulgate ordinances when Parliament is not in session.

Key Highlights

- Total sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court has been increased:
 - From **34 to 38 judges**
 - Including the Chief Justice of India
- The amendment increases the number of judges other than the CJI:
 - From **33 to 37**
- The ordinance amends:
 - **Section 2 of the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956**
- The change was made by replacing the word:
 - **“33” with “37”**

Purpose of the Move

The primary objective behind increasing the strength of the Supreme Court is to reduce the growing burden of pending litigation.

Rising Pendency

The Supreme Court is currently facing a massive backlog of cases:

- Pending cases exceed **93,000**
- The number continues to rise rapidly
- Pendency typically increases further before the court’s annual summer recess

The increase in judicial strength is expected to:

- Improve disposal rates
- Reduce delays in justice delivery
- Enable constitution of more benches simultaneously
- Strengthen access to timely justice

The move also reflects growing concerns over judicial vacancies and the increasing complexity of constitutional, commercial, and public interest litigation in India.

Constitutional Provisions

Article 124 of the Constitution of India

Supreme Court Strength: CJI
+ Other Judges determined by Parliament

Article 124 originally provided for:

- One **Chief Justice of India**
- Not more than **seven other judges**

However, the Constitution empowers Parliament to increase the number of judges through legislation as required over time.

This flexibility has enabled periodic expansion of the Supreme Court in response to increasing litigation and population growth.

Evolution of Supreme Court Strength

The sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court has steadily increased since independence:

Year	Number of Judges
1950	7
1956	10
1960	13
1977	17
1986	25
2009	30

Year	Number of Judges
2019	33
2026	37

This gradual expansion reflects the increasing judicial workload and the expanding role of the Supreme Court in constitutional governance.

Present Vacancy Situation

Despite the increase in sanctioned strength, the Supreme Court is also dealing with multiple vacancies.

Current vacancies include:

- Vacancy arising after the elevation and retirement of former CJI B. R. Gavai
- Vacancy following the retirement of Justice Rajesh Bindal

Further retirements expected during 2026 include:

- Justice J. K. Maheshwari
- Justice Pankaj Mithal
- Justice Sanjay Karol

These retirements may continue to affect the court's effective working strength unless appointments are made promptly.

Ordinance-Making Power Under Article 123

The ordinance was promulgated under **Article 123**, which grants the President power to issue ordinances when:

- Parliament is not in session
- Immediate legislative action is necessary

Important Features of an Ordinance

- Has the same force as a law passed by Parliament
- Temporary in nature
- Must be approved by both Houses of Parliament after reassembly
- Ceases to operate after six weeks if not approved

Thus, the ordinance increasing Supreme Court strength must receive parliamentary approval to remain in force permanently.

Significance of the Decision

The increase in the number of Supreme Court judges is significant for several reasons:

Faster Justice Delivery

More judges can help in quicker hearing and disposal of pending matters.

Better Constitutional Adjudication

The Supreme Court handles major constitutional issues, federal disputes, and public interest matters requiring multiple Constitution Benches.

Reduced Burden on Existing Judges

Higher judicial strength may reduce excessive workload and improve judicial efficiency.

Strengthening Rule of Law

Timely justice delivery is essential for maintaining public trust in the judiciary and upholding constitutional governance.

The decision marks another major step in addressing India's judicial backlog and improving the functioning of the country's apex judicial institution.

Supreme Court Flags Lack of Uniform Excise Laws Across States



Why in the News?

The Supreme Court of India has expressed serious concerns regarding the lack of uniformity in State excise laws and the absence of a standard legal definition of a liquor "bottle" across India. The Court observed that the loopholes in existing laws are allegedly allowing alcohol manufacturers to market liquor in deceptive and attractive packaging that resembles soft drinks or fruit beverages, potentially encouraging wider and underage consumption.

The matter came up during the hearing of a petition filed by the organisation Community Against Drunken Driving.

Key Observations by the Court

Justice Surya Kant, while hearing the matter, noted that several alcoholic products are being sold in packaging that resembles:

- Fruit juice containers
- Flavoured beverage bottles
- Soft drink-style pouches and cartons

The Court specifically highlighted misleading branding practices, including products marketed as “Green Apple” vodka and other fruit-flavoured alcoholic drinks that may create confusion among consumers, especially minors.

According to the Court, such marketing methods can blur the distinction between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, thereby undermining public health safeguards.

Main Issues Raised in the Petition

The petition argued that there is no standardised definition of the term “bottle” under State excise laws. As a result, States interpret packaging rules differently. Some State excise laws reportedly classify the following as permissible liquor containers:

- Sacks
- Wrappers
- Cartons
- Flexible pouches

The petitioner contended that this regulatory inconsistency allows liquor companies to adopt unconventional and attractive packaging formats that can evade stricter labelling norms.

Risks and Concerns Highlighted

The petition identified several social and public safety risks arising from such packaging practices:

Encouragement of Underage Drinking

Colourful and fruit-themed packaging may appeal to children and teenagers, making alcohol appear harmless or similar to energy drinks and juices.

Promotion of Public Consumption

Portable pouch-based liquor packaging allegedly makes it easier for individuals to consume alcohol openly in public spaces and during travel.

Rise in Smuggling and Illegal Distribution

Smaller and flexible packaging formats can reportedly facilitate easier concealment and transportation of

alcohol, increasing risks of smuggling and unauthorised sale.

Drinking While Travelling

The petition also argued that easily disposable liquor packets encourage alcohol consumption during driving or commuting, posing road safety concerns.

Environmental Hazards

Single-use plastic pouches and wrappers contribute significantly to plastic waste and environmental pollution.

Public Health Concerns

The Court acknowledged broader public health concerns linked to deceptive alcohol marketing practices:

- Attractive packaging resembling fruit drinks may reduce the perceived harmfulness of alcohol.
- Mandatory health warnings are often not prominently displayed on small or colourful containers.
- Alcohol companies may allegedly use flavouring and branding strategies to expand consumer bases, particularly among young adults.

Public health experts have repeatedly warned that such marketing tactics can normalise alcohol consumption and weaken awareness regarding addiction and health risks.

Court Action

The Supreme Court of India has issued notices to:

- The Central Government
- All State Governments

The Court has sought detailed responses regarding existing excise regulations, packaging definitions, and measures taken to prevent misleading alcohol marketing.

Constitutional and Governance Aspect

Under the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution, alcohol regulation falls under the **State List**. Therefore, individual States possess the authority to:

- Frame excise laws
- Regulate manufacture and sale of liquor
- Impose excise duties and taxes
- Define packaging and licensing norms

This constitutional arrangement has resulted in varying excise frameworks across States, creating regulatory

inconsistencies in alcohol packaging and labelling standards.

Broader Significance

The case has reopened discussions on the need for:

- Uniform national standards for liquor packaging
- Stronger consumer protection norms
- Clear health warning requirements

- Restrictions on youth-targeted alcohol marketing
- Better coordination between States on excise governance

If the Court eventually recommends standardised norms, it could lead to significant reforms in India's alcohol regulation and public health policy framework.

History

Komagata Maru Incident (1914)



Why in the News?

The Komagata Maru incident has resurfaced in public discourse following renewed references in international media and academic discussions on racial discrimination in immigration policies under colonial rule. The incident is remembered as a major example of racist exclusion laws in the British Empire and also became an important episode in India's freedom struggle against colonial oppression.

About the Komagata Maru

The Komagata Maru was a Japanese steamship chartered by Gurdit Singh in 1914 to challenge discriminatory immigration restrictions imposed by Canada on Asian migrants.

The ship was also popularly known as **Guru Nanak Jahaz** among Punjabis.

Key Details

- **Origin:** Hong Kong
- **Destination:** Vancouver
- **Passengers:** 376 Indians
- Majority were Sikhs, along with Muslim and Hindu passengers from British India.

Most passengers were Punjabis seeking better economic opportunities abroad and believed that, as subjects of the British Empire, they had the right to move freely within imperial territories.

Timeline of Events

Departure from Hong Kong

In April 1914, the Komagata Maru departed from Hong Kong carrying Indian passengers hoping to enter Canada.

Arrival at Vancouver

The ship arrived at Vancouver in May 1914. However, Canadian authorities refused to allow most passengers to disembark.

Only 24 passengers were permitted entry, while the remaining passengers were forced to stay aboard the ship for nearly two months under difficult conditions, including shortages of food and water.

Forced Return

After prolonged legal battles and protests by the local Indian community, Canadian authorities compelled the ship to leave Vancouver in July 1914 and return to India.

Reason for Denial of Entry

The passengers were denied entry under Canada's **Continuous Journey Regulation (1908)**.

Continuous Journey Regulation

The regulation required migrants to arrive in Canada through a continuous direct journey from their country of origin without intermediate stops.

Since no direct shipping route existed from India to Canada, the law effectively prevented Indian immigration while appearing legally neutral.

The regulation was specifically designed to restrict Asian immigration and reflected growing anti-Asian sentiment in Canada during the early 20th century.

Role of Racist Organisations

Groups such as the Asiatic Exclusion League strongly influenced these exclusionary policies and campaigned against Asian migration.

Events After Return to India



When the ship returned to India, it reached Budge Budge near Kolkata in September 1914.

British colonial authorities attempted to forcibly send many passengers to Punjab because they suspected links between the passengers and revolutionary nationalist movements.

Budge Budge Clash

The passengers resisted British attempts to detain and control them. This led to a confrontation between the passengers and colonial police.

British police opened fire on the crowd:

- Around 20 people were killed
- Many others were injured
- Several passengers were arrested

The Budge Budge firing intensified anti-British sentiment among Indians.

Connection with India's Freedom Movement

The Komagata Maru incident became a symbol of:

- Colonial injustice
- Racial discrimination
- Denial of equal rights to Indians within the British Empire

The episode deeply influenced revolutionary nationalist groups, especially the Ghadar Party, which used the incident to mobilise Indians against British rule.

The tragedy highlighted how Indians faced discrimination not only in India but across the British Empire despite being imperial subjects.

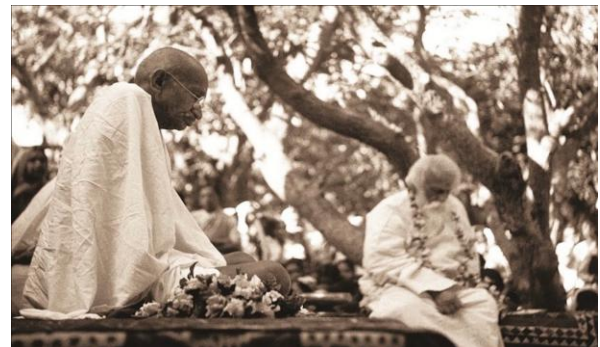
Historical Significance

The Komagata Maru incident remains historically important because it:

- Exposed racist immigration policies in colonial countries
- Strengthened anti-colonial nationalism among Indians
- Inspired revolutionary political activism
- Became an enduring symbol of the struggle for dignity, equality, and freedom

Today, the incident is commemorated in both India and Canada as a reminder of the dangers of racial exclusion and the importance of migrant rights and justice.

How the charkha came to embody Gandhi and Tagore's deepest disagreements



Why in the News?

The 165th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore has revived discussions on his intellectual disagreements with Mahatma Gandhi, especially over the symbolism of the charkha during India's freedom struggle.

The debate remains relevant because contemporary politics across the world increasingly revolves around cultural identity, civilisational nationalism, economic self-reliance, and the balance between nationalism and universal values.

Why did the Gandhi–Tagore relationship evolve into an ideological conflict?

Early Mutual Respect

Despite their later disagreements, Gandhi and Tagore shared deep mutual admiration. Tagore was among the first prominent figures to refer to Gandhi as "Mahatma," while Gandhi called Tagore the "Great Sentinel" of India's conscience. Both opposed British colonial rule and

sought moral regeneration of Indian society, yet their intellectual approaches differed sharply.

Nationalism Debate

Gandhi considered nationalism an essential instrument for mobilising Indians against colonial domination. He believed that political freedom required collective discipline, sacrifice, and participation by the masses.

Tagore, however, feared that excessive nationalism could degenerate into chauvinism and intolerance. Having witnessed aggressive nationalism in Europe before the First World War, he warned that nationalism based purely on political identity could suppress universal human values and independent thinking.

Tagore believed India's civilisation historically thrived through openness, cultural exchange, and spiritual pluralism rather than narrow political nationalism.

Different Intellectual Foundations

Gandhi's philosophy emerged from:

- Ethical politics
- Rural reconstruction
- Non-violence (Ahimsa)
- Civil disobedience
- Decentralised village economies

Tagore's worldview was shaped by:

- Cosmopolitan humanism
- Literary creativity
- Artistic freedom
- Internationalism
- Intellectual autonomy

While Gandhi prioritised political mobilisation and social discipline, Tagore emphasised creativity, freedom of thought, and global engagement.

Post-Jallianwala Bagh Context

The divide widened after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919. The massacre intensified anti-colonial sentiment across India and pushed Gandhi towards mass political action through the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Tagore strongly condemned British brutality and renounced his knighthood in protest, demonstrating moral opposition to colonial rule. However, he remained uneasy with aspects of the Non-Cooperation Movement,

particularly the rejection of Western education and institutions.

Mass Politics vs Individual Freedom

Gandhi believed collective action was necessary for national liberation. Tagore worried that mass mobilisation could sometimes discourage critical thinking and intellectual independence.

This tension between collective nationalism and individual liberty became central to their later disagreement over the charkha.

How did the charkha become the centre of their disagreement?

Political Symbolism

Gandhi transformed the charkha (spinning wheel) into a powerful symbol of:

- Swadeshi (self-reliance)
- Economic independence
- Resistance to British industrial imports
- Rural empowerment

The spinning wheel represented resistance against British textile industries that had devastated India's traditional handloom economy during colonial rule.

Congress Institutionalisation

In 1924, Gandhi proposed compulsory spinning for Congress workers and promoted the wearing of khadi as a sign of patriotic commitment. Congress members were encouraged to spin yarn regularly as part of constructive nationalist work.

Economic Resistance

British industrial textiles had undermined Indian artisans and rural producers. Gandhi believed hand-spinning could:

- Generate village employment
- Reduce dependence on imported goods
- Restore dignity to manual labour
- Promote economic decentralisation

For Gandhi, the charkha was both an economic tool and a political weapon against colonial exploitation.

Moral Discipline

Gandhi associated spinning with:

- Simplicity
- Self-restraint

- Equality
- Ethical citizenship
- Social responsibility

He believed participation in spinning united Indians across caste, class, religion, and gender divisions.

Tagore's Critique

Tagore did not oppose swadeshi itself, but he objected to elevating the charkha into the defining symbol of nationalism. He feared excessive emphasis on spinning could narrow the broader intellectual and cultural goals of freedom.

Why did Tagore oppose the centrality of the charkha?

Intellectual Freedom

Tagore rejected the idea that patriotism should be measured through participation in a single activity such as spinning. He believed nationalism must allow space for diversity of contribution, creativity, and independent thought.

Critique of Mechanical Uniformity

Tagore argued that compulsory spinning promoted conformity rather than intellectual development. He worried that excessive focus on repetitive manual labour might suppress artistic imagination and scientific progress.

"The Cult of the Charkha"

In his famous essay *The Cult of the Charkha*, Tagore criticised what he viewed as the near-religious glorification of spinning. He warned against transforming a practical economic activity into an unquestionable political ritual.

According to Tagore:

- National regeneration required intellectual awakening
- Creativity was as important as economic resistance
- Freedom should not become mechanically uniform

Fear of Isolationism

Tagore believed India should engage with modern science, technology, and global knowledge systems. He feared rejection of industrial modernity could isolate India economically and intellectually.

Unlike Gandhi, Tagore did not view industrial civilisation itself as inherently immoral. Instead, he supported selective adaptation of modernity while preserving India's cultural values.

Universal Humanism

Tagore's philosophy rested on universal humanism rather than exclusive nationalism. He believed India's future depended on balancing national identity with openness to international cooperation and cultural exchange.

How did Gandhi defend the charkha?

Mass Employment

Gandhi argued that India's villages suffered from extreme poverty and unemployment. Spinning provided supplementary income to millions of rural households. He believed critics underestimated the scale of rural distress under colonial rule.

Symbol of Equality

The charkha allowed participation from:

- Women
- Rural peasants
- Urban elites
- Different caste groups

By spinning together, Indians could symbolically overcome social hierarchies.

Ethical Economics

Gandhi criticised industrial capitalism for:

- Exploitation
- Concentration of wealth
- Labour alienation
- Environmental degradation

He advocated decentralised village industries as morally superior alternatives.

"The Poet and the Charkha" (1925)

Gandhi responded directly to Tagore through his essay *The Poet and the Charkha*. He argued that Tagore failed to appreciate the realities of village poverty and hunger. For Gandhi:

- Political freedom without economic justice was incomplete
- Spinning represented practical resistance
- Constructive labour built national discipline

Constructive Programme

The charkha formed part of Gandhi's broader constructive programme, which included:

- Village upliftment
- Removal of untouchability
- Promotion of khadi
- Rural sanitation
- Basic education

He viewed spinning as an instrument for rebuilding Indian society from below.

Larger Philosophical Differences**View of Modernity****Gandhi**

- Criticised industrial modernity
- Viewed large-scale industrialism as exploitative
- Favoured decentralised economies
- Emphasised sustainability and self-restraint

Tagore

- Accepted modern science and technology
- Supported international intellectual exchange
- Favoured balanced industrial development
- Encouraged cultural openness

Why does the Gandhi–Tagore debate remain relevant today?**Civilisational Politics**

Modern political debates about cultural nationalism and civilisational identity resemble earlier tensions between nationalism and universal humanism discussed by Gandhi and Tagore.

Self-Reliance and Economic Nationalism

Contemporary policies promoting self-reliance and indigenous production revive questions similar to those raised during the swadeshi movement:

- How much economic protectionism is desirable?
- Can self-reliance coexist with globalisation?
- What balance should exist between local economies and industrial growth?

Democratic Dissent

The Gandhi–Tagore relationship demonstrates that disagreement within a shared national cause can strengthen democracy rather than weaken it. Their

exchanges reflected mutual respect despite ideological differences.

Development Debate

The conflict between:

- Industrial growth and sustainability
- Centralisation and decentralisation
- Economic efficiency and ethical production

continues to shape public policy debates worldwide.

Ethics of Nationalism

The debate highlights an enduring challenge:

How can nations preserve cultural identity and patriotism without undermining pluralism, openness, and constitutional values?

Their intellectual engagement remains one of the richest examples of democratic dialogue in modern political thought.

Somnath Gates Controversy**Why in the News?**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited Somnath Temple to mark 75 years of its post-Independence restoration. The visit revived historical debate surrounding the so-called “Somnath Gates” brought from Afghanistan by the British in 1842 and the colonial narrative attached to them.

About Somnath Temple

Somnath Temple is located at Prabhas Patan near Veraval on the western coast of Gujarat. It is one of the 12 sacred Jyotirlingas dedicated to Lord Shiva and is regarded as one of the holiest pilgrimage centres in Hinduism.

The temple has immense historical, religious, and cultural significance and is often described as a symbol of resilience because it was repeatedly attacked, destroyed, and rebuilt across centuries.

Historical Background

- The temple finds mention in ancient Hindu texts and traditions.
- It prospered as a major pilgrimage and trade centre due to its coastal location.
- In 1026 CE, Mahmud of Ghazni invaded Somnath, looted its wealth, and destroyed parts of the temple.
- The temple was reconstructed multiple times by different Hindu rulers over the centuries.
- After Independence, the temple was rebuilt under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and K. M. Munshi, becoming a symbol of cultural restoration.

British Claim Regarding the “Somnath Gates” (1842)

During the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–1842), British forces captured the city of Ghazni in Afghanistan.

Governor-General Lord Ellenborough announced that the British had recovered the “original gates” of Somnath Temple from the tomb of Mahmud of Ghazni. He issued a proclamation claiming that Britain had avenged the historical humiliation suffered by Hindus centuries earlier.

The gates were ceremonially transported to India with great publicity. The British portrayed the act as a restoration of national honour and attempted to gain

political support among Indians through religious symbolism.

Reality Behind the Gates

Subsequent historical and archaeological investigations disproved the British claims.

Researchers found that:

- The gates were made of cheap pinewood rather than sandalwood traditionally associated with Somnath.
- Their artistic style was Afghan and Islamic rather than Indian.
- There was no historical evidence linking them to the original Somnath Temple.

As a result, historians concluded that the so-called “Somnath Gates” were not authentic temple gates.

Today, these gates are preserved in Agra Fort.

Political and Historical Importance

The Somnath Gates episode is considered an important example of British colonial political strategy in India.

Divide and Rule Policy

The British attempted to use religious sentiments to strengthen colonial legitimacy and portray themselves as protectors of Indian traditions. By presenting themselves as avengers of a historical “insult” to Hindus, they sought to create political divisions and cultivate support among certain sections of society.

Use of Symbolism

The episode demonstrated how colonial rulers used historical narratives and symbolic gestures for political purposes rather than genuine cultural restoration.

International Relations

India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA)



Why in the News?

India has signed a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** with New Zealand in 2025. The deal is notable for being **one of the fastest negotiated FTAs by India** and is expected to be implemented after ratification by the New Zealand Parliament.

It reflects India’s broader strategy of **expanding global trade partnerships, diversifying supply chains, and boosting exports.**

What is a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)?

A **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** is a pact between two or more countries to **reduce or eliminate tariffs, quotas, and other trade barriers.**

Key Objectives:

- Promote **trade in goods and services**
- Encourage **foreign investment**
- Improve **market access**
- Strengthen **economic cooperation**

Key Features of the India–New Zealand FTA

- New Zealand will **eliminate tariffs on 100% of goods** imported from India
- India will **remove or reduce tariffs on ~95% of imports** from New Zealand
- Agreement signed by Piyush Goyal and his New Zealand counterpart
- Focus on **balanced trade liberalisation while protecting sensitive sectors**

Tariff Structure Under the Agreement

1. Immediate Tariff Elimination

- Wood
- Wool
- Raw leather hides

2. Phased Tariff Elimination

- Petroleum oils
- Vegetable oils
- Electrical machinery

3. Tariff Reduction (Not Full Elimination)

- Wine
- Pharmaceuticals
- Iron, steel, and aluminium products

This tiered structure ensures a **gradual opening of markets**, allowing domestic industries time to adjust.

Sensitive Sector Exclusions (India)

India has carefully **excluded key sectors** to protect farmers and domestic industries:

Agriculture & Dairy

- Milk, cheese, yoghurt
- Onion, pulses, corn, almonds
- Sugar and artificial honey

Industrial & Animal Products

- Copper and aluminium products
- Most animal products (except sheep meat)

These exclusions reflect India's **defensive trade strategy in vulnerable sectors.**

Trade and Investment Outlook

Current Trade (2024–25)

- India's exports to New Zealand: **\$711.1 million**
- Imports from New Zealand: **\$587.1 million**

Investment Commitment

- New Zealand has committed **\$20 billion investment in India over 15 years**

This signals a shift from just trade to **long-term economic partnership and capital flow.**

Additional Provisions

1. Mobility & Talent Exchange

- Easier movement for **students and skilled professionals**
- Boost to knowledge economy collaboration

2. Services Sector Growth

- IT services
- Education
- Healthcare
- Engineering

3. Domestic Sector Support

- Benefits for **MSMEs, farmers, and manufacturers**
- Integration into **global value chains**

Strategic Significance

For India:

- Expands presence in the **Asia-Pacific region**
- Diversifies trade away from traditional partners
- Strengthens **export competitiveness**

For New Zealand:

- Access to a **large and growing consumer market**
- Increased opportunities in **investment and services**

Conclusion

The India–New Zealand FTA marks a **major milestone in India's trade diplomacy.** By combining **market access with strategic safeguards**, the agreement balances liberalisation with domestic protection.

It is expected to enhance **trade volumes, investment flows, and people-to-people ties**, making it a key pillar of India's evolving global economic strategy.

UAE Exits OPEC



Why in the News

The United Arab Emirates has announced its exit from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), effective **May 1, 2026**. This is a major development as the UAE was one of OPEC's largest oil producers, and its withdrawal is expected to weaken the cartel's control over global oil markets.

About OPEC

- **Established:** 1960
- **Headquarters:** Vienna
- **Nature:** Intergovernmental oil cartel

Objectives

- Coordinate petroleum policies among member countries
- Stabilize global oil markets
- Ensure **fair prices for producers** and **steady supply for consumers**

Membership (Post UAE Exit – 11 Members)

- Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon
- Iran, Iraq, Kuwait
- Libya, Nigeria
- Saudi Arabia, Venezuela

OPEC+ (Non-OPEC Partners)

- Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia
- Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan, Sudan

Key Facts About UAE's Exit

- **Joined OPEC:** 1967 (via Abu Dhabi)
- **Third-largest producer** in OPEC
- **Production:** ~3.4 million barrels/day
- **Capacity:** Up to 5 million barrels/day
- Also exited the **OPEC+ grouping**

- Decision taken unilaterally, without consulting other members

Reasons for Exit

1. Disagreement Over Production Quotas

- OPEC limits production to control prices
- UAE wanted to **increase output** after expanding capacity
- Quotas were seen as restrictive

2. Strategic Economic Shift

- UAE aims for **greater autonomy in energy policy**
- Focus on maximizing oil exports and long-term revenue

3. Geopolitical Tensions

- Growing differences with Saudi Arabia (OPEC's de facto leader)
- Broader regional disagreements and competition

4. Weakening Cohesion in OPEC

- Earlier example: Qatar exited OPEC in 2019
- Increasing divergence among member states

Global Context

- Ongoing conflict involving Iran has disrupted oil supply
- Closure of the Strait of Hormuz (handles ~20–25% of global oil trade)
- Brent crude prices have crossed **\$110–125 per barrel**
- United States is now producing more oil than any OPEC country

Impact of UAE Exit

1. Weakening of OPEC

- Loss of a major producer reduces **spare capacity**
- Undermines cartel's ability to regulate supply and prices

2. Increased Market Volatility

- Less coordination → more unpredictable oil prices
- Greater influence of geopolitical events

3. Rise of Non-OPEC Producers

- Countries like the US and Brazil gain influence
- Shift toward a **multipolar oil market**

4. Possible Price Effects

- In the long term, higher UAE production may **increase supply**
- Could lead to **lower or more competitive oil prices**

Significance for India

India is highly sensitive to global oil changes because:

- Imports ~85% of its crude oil needs
- UAE is among India's key suppliers

Implications

- **Inflation:** Oil price rise increases fuel and transport costs
- **Fiscal Deficit:** Higher import bills strain government finances
- **Energy Security:** Supply disruptions can affect availability

However, in the long term, if UAE increases production independently:

- India may benefit from **lower prices and diversified supply options**

Conclusion

The UAE's exit from OPEC marks a **structural shift in global energy geopolitics**. It reflects growing tensions within oil-producing blocs, rising importance of national energy strategies, and the gradual weakening of traditional cartels. For countries like India, the development brings both **risks (short-term volatility)** and **opportunities (long-term price stability)**.

Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and Lipulekh Dispute



Why in the News?

Ahead of the visit of India's Foreign Secretary to Nepal, Nepal has once again raised concerns with both India and

China regarding the use of the Lipulekh Pass route for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra. Nepal reiterated its territorial claim over the Lipulekh region, which remains a sensitive tri-junction area between India, Nepal, and China.

About Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is one of the most sacred pilgrimages for Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and followers of Bon religion.

The pilgrimage involves visits to:

- Mount Kailash
- Lake Mansarovar

Mount Kailash is regarded as the abode of Lord Shiva in Hinduism, while Lake Mansarovar is considered spiritually purifying.

The yatra is conducted by India in coordination with China.

Major Routes

India currently facilitates the pilgrimage through two principal routes:

- Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand
- Nathu La Pass in Sikkim

The Lipulekh route is considered shorter and comparatively less time-consuming.

What is Lipulekh Pass?

Lipulekh Pass is a high-altitude Himalayan mountain pass situated near the tri-junction of:

- India
- Nepal
- China

The pass has historically served as a traditional trade and pilgrimage route between India and Tibet. Since 1954, it has been officially used for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra. The region lies in difficult mountainous terrain and holds both strategic and economic significance.

Nature of the Dispute

Nepal's Position

Nepal claims that the regions of:

- Kalapani
- Lipulekh Pass
- Limpiyadhura

belong to Nepal.

Nepal bases its claim primarily on the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli signed between the Kingdom of Nepal and British India after the Anglo-Nepalese War.

According to Nepal, the Mahakali River originates from Limpiyadhura, which would place the disputed territories east of the river and therefore within Nepalese territory.

India's Position

India maintains that Nepal's claims are not supported by sufficient historical and cartographic evidence.

India considers the Kalapani area as part of Uttarakhand and has historically administered the region. India has also emphasized that boundary issues should be resolved peacefully through established diplomatic dialogue mechanisms.

India and Nepal have repeatedly agreed to address the dispute through bilateral discussions.

Key Regions Involved

The dispute mainly concerns three strategically important areas:

- Kalapani
- Lipulekh Pass
- Limpiyadhura

These regions are located near the Mahakali River along the western boundary between India and Nepal.

Strategic Importance

The disputed region is highly significant for several reasons.

1. Religious Importance

The Lipulekh route is one of the main access points for the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage, making it important for thousands of Indian pilgrims annually.

2. Trade and Connectivity

The pass is also important for India–China border trade and regional connectivity in the Himalayan region.

3. Geopolitical Sensitivity

The area is strategically sensitive because:

- It lies at a tri-junction involving India, Nepal, and China
- It has military and surveillance importance in the Himalayas
- It affects regional diplomacy and bilateral relations

The issue gained renewed attention after India inaugurated a road to Lipulekh in 2020, following which Nepal released a new political map incorporating Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura within its territory.

Conclusion

The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra remains not only a deeply spiritual pilgrimage but also a subject linked to Himalayan geopolitics and border diplomacy. The Lipulekh dispute reflects the complexities of historical treaties, differing territorial interpretations, and strategic interests in the Himalayan region.

Despite disagreements, both India and Nepal continue to emphasize dialogue and diplomatic engagement as the preferred path for resolving the issue peacefully.

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)



Why in the News?

India's Ministry of External Affairs, along with the Indian Ocean Rim Association Secretariat, organised the **10th Indian Ocean Dialogue**, highlighting the growing importance of cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

The dialogue focused on regional security, maritime cooperation, blue economy, trade connectivity, climate resilience, and sustainable development among countries bordering the Indian Ocean.

About IORA

The **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** is an intergovernmental organisation comprising countries located around the Indian Ocean. It serves as a platform for regional cooperation aimed at promoting economic growth, maritime security, and sustainable development across the Indian Ocean Region.

Establishment

- Established in **1997**
- Initially known as:
 - **Indian Ocean Rim Initiative**
 - **Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)**
- Renamed later as the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** to reflect its broader regional mandate.

Headquarters

- The IORA Secretariat is located in Ebène, Mauritius.

Objectives of IORA

IORA seeks to strengthen cooperation among member countries through the following objectives:

- Promote **sustainable and balanced regional development**
- Enhance **economic cooperation and regional integration**
- Encourage **trade and investment liberalisation**
- Improve **maritime safety and security**
- Support the **blue economy** and sustainable use of ocean resources
- Strengthen collaboration in areas such as disaster management, fisheries, tourism, and academic exchange

Membership Structure

Member States

IORA currently has **23 Member States** and **12 Dialogue Partners**.

Member Countries by Region

Asia

- India
- Bangladesh
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Oman
- Singapore
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand

- United Arab Emirates
- Yemen

Africa

- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Mozambique
- Somalia
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Comoros
- Mauritius
- Seychelles

Oceania

- Australia

Europe

- France

Dialogue Partners

The 12 Dialogue Partners of IORA are:

- China
- European Union
- Germany
- Italy
- Japan
- Russia
- Saudi Arabia
- South Korea
- Türkiye
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Egypt

Importance of IORA

Strategic Importance

The Indian Ocean is one of the world's most strategically important maritime regions, carrying a large share of global trade, energy shipments, and commercial sea routes. IORA plays a major role in ensuring stability and cooperation in this region.

Maritime Security

IORA promotes cooperation against:

- Piracy
- Illegal fishing
- Human trafficking

- Maritime terrorism
- Drug smuggling

Blue Economy

The organisation encourages sustainable use of marine resources through sectors such as:

- Fisheries
- Marine biotechnology
- Coastal tourism
- Renewable ocean energy

India's Role in IORA

India is one of the founding members and a major stakeholder in IORA. India actively promotes:

- Maritime security cooperation
- SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)
- Blue economy initiatives
- Capacity building for smaller island nations
- Regional connectivity and trade integration

India considers the Indian Ocean central to its geopolitical and economic interests, making IORA an important pillar of its regional diplomacy.

Conclusion

The organisation of the **10th Indian Ocean Dialogue** reflects the growing relevance of Indian Ocean Rim Association in addressing regional challenges and promoting cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region. As geopolitical competition and maritime security concerns increase, IORA continues to emerge as an important platform for ensuring peace, stability, sustainable development, and economic integration across the Indian Ocean.

BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting 2026



Why in the News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met several foreign ministers attending the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi during India's 2026 chairship of the grouping. The meeting focused on strengthening cooperation among emerging economies amid growing geopolitical and economic challenges.

India's 2026 BRICS Chairship

India officially assumed the BRICS chairmanship on **1 January 2026**, taking over the presidency from Brazil.

This marks India's **fourth BRICS presidency** after earlier chairships in:

- 2012
- 2016
- 2021

India's leadership comes at a time when BRICS has expanded significantly and is seeking a larger role in global governance, trade, finance, and geopolitical affairs.

About BRICS

Origin of BRICS

BRICS is a grouping of major emerging economies formed to promote cooperation in areas such as:

- Economic growth
- Trade and investment
- Global governance reforms
- Development finance
- Multilateral cooperation

The original members were:

- Brazil
- Russia
- India
- China
- South Africa

The term "BRIC" was initially coined by economist Jim O'Neill in 2001 to describe fast-growing emerging economies. South Africa joined the grouping in 2010, transforming BRIC into BRICS.

Expanded BRICS

In recent years, BRICS expanded its membership to increase representation from the Global South.

The expanded grouping now includes:

- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Saudi Arabia
- United Arab Emirates

The expansion reflects BRICS' attempt to strengthen its influence in global economic and political affairs.

Objectives of BRICS

BRICS aims to:

- Promote cooperation among emerging economies
- Reform global financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank
- Increase the voice of developing countries in international governance
- Enhance trade and investment among member states
- Strengthen South-South cooperation
- Promote multipolarity in global politics

Key Institutions of BRICS

New Development Bank (NDB)

The BRICS countries established the New Development Bank in 2014.

Purpose:

- Finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects
- Reduce dependence on Western-led financial institutions
- Support developing economies

The bank is headquartered in Shanghai.

Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)

The CRA is a financial safety mechanism created by BRICS nations to provide liquidity support during balance of payments crises and currency instability.

Significance of India's 2026 Chairship

1. Leadership in the Global South

India's chairship strengthens its position as a leading voice of the Global South and developing economies.

India is expected to focus on:

- Inclusive growth

- Development cooperation
- Climate justice
- Digital public infrastructure
- Reform of multilateral institutions

2. Expanding Economic Cooperation

India may push for:

- Greater intra-BRICS trade
- Local currency settlements
- Supply chain resilience
- Investment partnerships
- Technology cooperation

3. Strategic Importance

BRICS has become increasingly important amid:

- Global geopolitical tensions
- Trade fragmentation
- Energy security concerns
- Debates on de-dollarisation

India's leadership is likely to balance cooperation with strategic autonomy while maintaining engagement with both Western and non-Western blocs.

Challenges Before BRICS

Despite expansion, BRICS faces several challenges:

Internal Differences

- Political and strategic differences among members
- India-China border tensions
- Differing geopolitical priorities

Economic Imbalances

- China dominates the grouping economically
- Wide variations in development levels among members

Institutional Limitations

- Lack of a strong enforcement framework
- Difficulty in achieving consensus on major issues

India's Priorities During Chairship

India is expected to emphasise:

- Reform of global governance institutions
- Strengthening multilateralism
- Counter-terrorism cooperation
- Sustainable development
- Food and energy security
- Artificial Intelligence and digital innovation

- Climate resilience

India-Cyprus Relations Elevated to Strategic Partnership



Why in the News?

India and Cyprus elevated their bilateral relationship to a **Strategic Partnership** during the visit of Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides to India. The development reflects growing cooperation in defence, trade, technology, and maritime security.

Key Highlights

Strategic Partnership

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Nikos Christodoulides agreed to deepen collaboration in several strategic sectors, including:

- Defence cooperation
- Trade and investment
- Maritime security
- Cybersecurity
- Emerging and advanced technologies

The partnership marks a significant expansion in India's engagement with the Mediterranean region and the European Union.

Defence Cooperation

India and Cyprus signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between:

- Cyprus Defence and Space Industries Cluster
- Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM)

The agreement aims to strengthen collaboration in:

- Defence manufacturing
- Aerospace technologies
- Research and innovation
- Joint industrial partnerships

This aligns with India's broader objective of promoting indigenous defence production under the **Atmanirbhar Bharat** initiative.

India's Position on Cyprus

Prime Minister Modi reiterated India's consistent support for:

- Sovereignty and territorial integrity
- Democratic principles
- Rule of law
- Peaceful resolution of disputes

India has traditionally supported the unity and independence of Cyprus in international forums, including the United Nations.

Strategic Context

The joint statement is viewed as indirect diplomatic support for Cyprus amid its long-standing dispute involving **Northern Cyprus** and Türkiye.

Cyprus Dispute: Background

Cyprus has remained divided since 1974, when Türkiye intervened militarily following a coup backed by Greek nationalists seeking union with Greece.

As a result:

- The northern part declared itself the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC) in 1983.
- The TRNC is recognised only by Türkiye.
- The Republic of Cyprus controls the southern part and is internationally recognised.

The United Nations maintains a buffer zone between the two regions, and reunification talks have continued intermittently for decades.

India supports a **UN-led peaceful resolution** of the Cyprus issue.

Cyprus as a Gateway to Europe

Cyprus highlighted its strategic importance as an investment and connectivity gateway to the European Union.

Importance for India

Cyprus can serve India in:

- Accessing European markets
- Expanding fintech and shipping cooperation
- Facilitating investment flows into Europe
- Strengthening India–EU economic engagement

Cyprus is also a major global maritime and shipping hub in the Mediterranean region.

Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Cyprus currently holds the **Presidency of the Council of the European Union**, increasing its diplomatic significance within Europe.

This provides India with an opportunity to:

- Enhance dialogue with EU institutions
- Push forward India–EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations
- Strengthen cooperation in digital, green, and strategic sectors

Significance for India

The India–Cyprus Strategic Partnership is important because it:

- Expands India’s strategic presence in the Mediterranean region
- Enhances defence-industrial cooperation
- Strengthens maritime and energy security engagement
- Improves India’s connectivity with Europe
- Supports India’s broader Indo-European diplomatic outreach

The partnership also reflects India’s growing emphasis on diversified strategic relations beyond its immediate neighbourhood.

Polity

Supreme Court on Hate Speech



Why in the News?

The Supreme Court of India, in a recent judgment, underscored that hate speech and rumour-mongering pose a serious threat to the constitutional value of **fraternity**. However, the Court refrained from directing the creation of new legislation, instead emphasizing the **effective enforcement of existing legal provisions** to tackle the issue.

This observation comes amid rising concerns over the spread of divisive narratives, particularly through digital platforms, which can disrupt social harmony and public order.

Key Observations of the Court

The Court made several important conceptual and constitutional observations:

- Hate speech originates from an **“us versus them” mindset**, which deepens social divisions.

- It fosters **exclusion, discrimination, and hostility** against targeted groups.
- Such speech undermines **unity in a diverse society like India**, where coexistence is essential.
- It is inconsistent with **constitutional morality**, which promotes dignity, equality, and harmony.
- The Court linked fraternity with the civilisational idea of **“Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”**—the belief that the world is one family.

The judgment reflects a broader concern that unchecked hate speech can erode democratic values and weaken the social fabric.

Constitutional Provisions Involved

1. Freedom of Speech and Its Limits

- **Article 19(1)(a)**: Guarantees the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression.
- **Article 19(2)**: Permits reasonable restrictions on this freedom in the interest of:
 - Public order
 - Decency and morality
 - Sovereignty and integrity of India

The Court reiterated that **freedom of speech is not absolute**, and must be exercised responsibly.

2. Fraternity as a Constitutional Value

- The **Preamble** emphasizes **fraternity**, ensuring:
 - Unity among citizens
 - A sense of brotherhood

- Respect for individual dignity

The Court highlighted that hate speech directly contradicts this foundational principle.

Legal Position on Hate Speech

India currently **does not have a single comprehensive law** specifically defining hate speech. Instead, the issue is addressed through a combination of legal provisions:

Indian Penal Code (IPC)

- Sections dealing with:
 - Promoting enmity between groups
 - Public mischief
 - Incitement to violence

Information Technology (IT) Laws

- Regulate **online content**, including harmful or inflammatory speech on digital platforms.

This fragmented framework often leads to **inconsistencies in enforcement**, which the Court indirectly pointed out as a key challenge.

Court's Stand

The Supreme Court clearly delineated the **separation of powers**:

- **Judiciary's role:** Interpretation and enforcement of laws
- **Legislature & Executive's role:** Law-making and implementation

The Court stated that it **cannot direct the creation of new laws**, and instead stressed:

- Strengthening **implementation mechanisms**
- Ensuring **accountability of authorities**
- Preventing misuse or selective application of existing provisions

Key Concepts Explained

Hate Speech

Speech, expression, or communication that:

- Incites hatred or violence
- Promotes discrimination
- Targets individuals or groups based on identity (religion, caste, ethnicity, etc.)

Fraternity

A core constitutional value that:

- Promotes **unity in diversity**
- Ensures **mutual respect and dignity**

- Acts as a foundation for **social cohesion in a plural society**

Way Forward

The Court's judgment signals that the **problem lies less in legal gaps and more in enforcement deficits**. Going forward:

- Strengthening **institutional capacity** for monitoring and action
- Promoting **responsible speech**, especially on digital platforms
- Encouraging **public awareness about constitutional values**
- Ensuring **swift and impartial enforcement of laws**

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's observations reinforce that **fraternity is not just an ideal but a practical necessity** for India's unity. Hate speech, if unchecked, can weaken democratic institutions and social harmony. Rather than creating new laws, the focus must shift to **effective implementation of existing frameworks**, ensuring that constitutional values are upheld in both spirit and practice.

JANANI Platform



Why in the News?

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched the JANANI Platform to strengthen digital monitoring of maternal and child healthcare services across India. The initiative aims to improve tracking, timely intervention, and healthcare delivery for women and children through an integrated digital system.

About JANANI Platform

JANANI stands for **Journey of Antenatal, Natal and Neonatal Integrated Care.**

It is a **service-oriented digital healthcare platform** developed to improve monitoring and delivery of maternal and child health services throughout the reproductive and childcare cycle.

The platform is an upgraded and technologically advanced version of the existing:

- Reproductive and Child Health Portal (RCH Portal)

Objectives of JANANI

The primary objective of the JANANI platform is to create a **comprehensive digital tracking system** for women during their reproductive years and for newborn children.

It seeks to:

- Improve maternal healthcare outcomes
- Reduce delays in healthcare delivery
- Ensure continuity of care
- Strengthen institutional monitoring
- Enhance real-time data-driven decision-making

A major feature is the introduction of:

- **QR-enabled Mother and Child Health Cards**

These digital cards allow seamless access to health records and improve continuity of care across healthcare facilities.

Key Areas Covered

The JANANI platform provides end-to-end monitoring across multiple stages of maternal and child healthcare:

Antenatal Care

- Registration of pregnancies
- Routine health check-ups
- Nutritional monitoring
- Screening for complications

Delivery Preparedness

- Tracking expected delivery dates
- Referral support
- Institutional delivery planning

Postnatal Care

- Monitoring mother's recovery after childbirth
- Follow-up visits and counselling

Newborn Care

- Early infant care tracking
- Growth and nutrition monitoring
- Essential neonatal services

Family Planning Services

- Contraceptive counselling
- Birth spacing services
- Reproductive health support

Smart Tracking and Monitoring Features

The platform includes several technology-driven healthcare management tools:

High-Risk Pregnancy Tracking

The system identifies and flags:

- Anaemia
- Hypertension
- Gestational diabetes
- Other pregnancy complications

This allows timely medical intervention.

Due Service Alerts

Automated alerts help ensure:

- Timely antenatal visits
- Vaccinations
- Nutritional supplementation
- Follow-up care

Immunisation Scheduling

The platform digitally tracks child immunisation schedules and generates reminders to improve vaccination coverage.

Real-Time Dashboards

Health administrators can access:

- Live monitoring dashboards
- District-level performance indicators
- Service delivery gaps
- Health outcome analytics

This strengthens evidence-based policy implementation and programme supervision.

Significance of the JANANI Platform

The JANANI platform is important because it supports:

- Digital public health governance
- Reduction in maternal and infant mortality
- Better healthcare access in rural areas
- Improved continuity of maternal care

- Early identification of high-risk pregnancies

The initiative aligns with India's broader goals under:

- Digital Health Mission
- Universal Health Coverage
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially maternal and child health targets

Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)

Janani Suraksha Yojana is a safe motherhood intervention launched under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality by promoting institutional deliveries among poor pregnant women.

Features of JSY

- Centrally Sponsored Scheme
- Focuses on institutional deliveries
- Provides cash assistance to pregnant women
- Targets low-income and vulnerable households
- Encourages delivery in government or accredited health facilities

Beneficiaries

- Pregnant women belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) households
- SC/ST women
- Women in low-performing states

Grievance Redressal Assessment and Index (GRAI)



Why in the News?

According to the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), the Insurance Division under the Department of Financial Services secured the top position in the **Group A category** of the **Grievance Redressal Assessment and Index (GRAI)** rankings for March 2026. The rankings reflect the performance of

ministries and departments in resolving public grievances efficiently through the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS). The recognition highlights the growing emphasis of the Government of India on citizen-centric governance, accountability, and timely resolution of complaints in public administration.

About Grievance Redressal Assessment and Index (GRAI)

The **Grievance Redressal Assessment and Index (GRAI)** is an evaluation framework developed by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances to assess the quality and effectiveness of grievance redressal mechanisms across Central Ministries and Departments.

The framework measures how efficiently government departments address public complaints registered on the CPGRAMS platform and encourages continuous improvement in administrative responsiveness.

The **first edition, GRAI 2022**, was officially released on **21 June 2023** as part of broader governance reforms aimed at improving transparency and service delivery.

Objectives of GRAI

The major objectives of the index are:

- To evaluate the efficiency of grievance redressal systems in ministries and departments.
- To promote accountable and responsive governance.
- To ensure citizen grievances are resolved within a defined time frame.
- To improve the quality of public service delivery.
- To strengthen trust between citizens and government institutions.
- To create a performance-based administrative culture within government departments.

The framework also acts as a monitoring mechanism to identify institutional gaps and encourage reforms in grievance handling procedures.

Major Dimensions of Assessment

GRAI evaluates ministries and departments across **four key dimensions**, which are further measured through **11 performance indicators**.

1. Efficiency

Measures the speed and effectiveness of grievance disposal, including timely closure and pendency reduction.

2. Feedback

Assesses citizen satisfaction and quality of responses provided to complainants.

3. Domain

Examines department-specific grievance handling capacity and issue resolution mechanisms.

4. Organisational Commitment

Evaluates the institutional seriousness shown by ministries through monitoring systems, leadership involvement, and administrative reforms.

Significance of GRAI**Encourages Timely Disposal**

The index motivates departments to resolve grievances quickly and reduce delays in public service delivery.

Enhances Transparency

Regular rankings improve transparency by publicly evaluating departmental performance.

Improves Governance Standards

The assessment creates healthy competition among ministries to adopt better administrative practices.

Strengthens Citizen-Centric Administration

By focusing on citizen satisfaction, GRAI promotes governance that is more responsive to public needs.

Supports Administrative Reforms

The index helps identify structural weaknesses and encourages departments to modernise grievance management systems.

Builds Public Trust

Efficient grievance resolution increases confidence in government institutions and democratic governance.

Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)

The **Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)** is an online platform through which citizens can register complaints related to public services and government departments.

It serves as the primary digital grievance redressal mechanism of the Government of India.

Key Features of CPGRAMS

- Available to citizens **24x7**
- Provides a **single integrated portal** connected with Central Ministries, Departments, and State Governments
- Enables online tracking of grievance status
- Facilitates transparent communication between citizens and authorities
- Helps monitor pendency and disposal rates across departments

Nodal Ministry

CPGRAMS is developed and monitored by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

One Case One Data & Su Sahay**Why in the News?**

The Supreme Court of India has launched two major digital initiatives — **“One Case One Data”** and **“Su Sahay”** — as part of efforts to modernise judicial administration and improve citizens’ access to justice through technology-driven reforms.

The initiatives were announced under the leadership of Justice Surya Kant and reflect the judiciary’s growing emphasis on digital transformation, transparency, and efficient court management.

One Case One Data**About the Initiative**

“One Case One Data” is a nationwide judicial digital integration initiative aimed at creating a unified and standardised judicial data ecosystem across India.

The initiative seeks to connect various levels of the Indian judiciary through a common digital framework, ensuring that case-related information is integrated and accessible in a coordinated manner.

Courts Covered Under the Initiative

The system aims to digitally integrate:

- Supreme Court of India
- High Courts
- District Courts
- Taluka Courts

This integration is expected to create a seamless judicial information network across the country.

Objectives

Streamlining Case Management

The initiative seeks to simplify and standardise the management of judicial records and case data across courts.

Building a Unified Judicial Database

It aims to establish a comprehensive national-level judicial database for efficient tracking and monitoring of cases.

Improving Coordination

The platform will improve communication and coordination between different levels of courts.

Reducing Duplication and Delays

By ensuring uniform case records and integrated information systems, the initiative aims to minimise repetitive procedures and administrative delays.

Enhancing Judicial Transparency

Digitised and integrated data systems can improve transparency and accountability within the judiciary.

Significance

Faster Judicial Processes

Integrated digital records can help judges and court staff access information more efficiently, reducing procedural delays.

Better Policy Planning

A centralised database will support data-driven judicial reforms and resource allocation.

Improved Access to Justice

Litigants and lawyers may benefit from easier tracking of cases and reduced paperwork.

Strengthening E-Courts Mission

The initiative complements the broader digital judicial reforms being implemented under India's e-Courts project.

Su Sahay

About Su Sahay

"Su Sahay" is an AI-powered chatbot integrated with the website of the Supreme Court of India.

The chatbot has been designed to assist litigants, lawyers, and citizens by providing quick access to court-related information and digital services.

Developed By

The chatbot has been jointly developed by:

- National Informatics Centre
- Supreme Court Registry

Objectives of Su Sahay

Easier Access to Information

The chatbot helps users obtain information related to case status, filing procedures, court listings, and other judicial services.

Citizen-Friendly Judicial Services

It simplifies interaction with the Supreme Court's digital systems, especially for individuals unfamiliar with legal procedures.

Promoting Digital Justice

The initiative supports technology-enabled access to justice and encourages wider use of online judicial services.

Reducing Administrative Burden

Automated responses can reduce pressure on court administrative staff by handling routine queries digitally.

Importance of AI in the Judiciary

The introduction of AI-enabled systems like Su Sahay reflects the increasing role of artificial intelligence in judicial administration.

Potential benefits include:

- Faster dissemination of information
- Improved public accessibility
- Reduced paperwork
- Better efficiency in court administration
- Enhanced digital governance

However, AI tools are intended to assist administrative functions and not replace judicial decision-making.

Role of the National Informatics Centre (NIC)

The National Informatics Centre is the premier technology institution of the Government of India responsible for developing and maintaining digital governance infrastructure.

It functions under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Major Functions of NIC

E-Governance Infrastructure

NIC develops digital platforms and IT systems for government institutions.

Government Digital Services

It provides technological support for ministries, departments, and public sector projects.

Data Centres and Networks

NIC manages national data centres, cloud infrastructure, and secure government communication networks.

Digital Public Platforms

The institution has played a major role in initiatives such as:

- Digital governance portals
- e-Courts systems
- Online public service platforms
- Digital databases and citizen interfaces

Supreme Court on Workers' Right to Living Wage



Why in the News?

The Supreme Court of India observed that the State should ensure “living wages” for workers instead of treating protesting workers as “terrorists” while hearing

petitions related to detentions under the National Security Act, 1980 following the Noida workers’ protest. The Court’s remarks highlighted the constitutional obligation of the State to protect workers’ rights and uphold human dignity.

Key Observations by the Supreme Court

- Justice B. V. Nagarathna stated that workers demanding better wages and working conditions should not be viewed as terrorists.
- Justice Ujjal Bhuyan referred to the Directive Principles of State Policy relating to living wages and worker welfare.
- The Bench questioned the use of stringent preventive detention laws against labour protestors.

The observations underline the judiciary’s concern regarding the misuse of extraordinary security laws in ordinary labour disputes.

Constitutional Basis

Article 43 of the Constitution of India

Article 43 of the Constitution of India directs the State to secure for workers:

- Living wages
- Decent working conditions
- A reasonable standard of life
- Leisure and social opportunities
- Social and cultural opportunities

Meaning of Living Wage

A living wage is different from a minimum wage.

- **Minimum wage** ensures bare subsistence.
- **Living wage** aims to provide a dignified standard of living including:
 - Proper nutrition
 - Housing
 - Healthcare
 - Education
 - Social security

The concept reflects the vision of a welfare state embedded in the Indian Constitution.

Issue Before the Court

Family members of detained workers challenged arrests made under the National Security Act, 1980.

Allegations by Petitioners

The petitioners alleged:

- Multiple FIRs were registered based on the same alleged conspiracy.
- No proper preliminary enquiry was conducted.
- Protestors were labelled as “left-wing sympathisers.”
- Detainees were subjected to custodial torture.

The matter raised concerns regarding civil liberties, labour rights, and misuse of preventive detention laws.

Court Directions

The Supreme Court of India:

- Ordered the production of two detainees from Kasna jail on May 18.
- Restrained the Uttar Pradesh government from shifting them to police remand.
- Took note of allegations of custodial torture raised before the Court.

The directions were aimed at safeguarding the legal and constitutional rights of the detainees during the proceedings.

About the National Security Act (NSA), 1980

The National Security Act, 1980 is a preventive detention law enacted to empower the government to detain individuals in certain circumstances.

Key Features

- A person can be detained without formal charges.

- Detention may extend up to 12 months under specified conditions.
- The detained person may not immediately know the grounds of detention if authorities consider disclosure against public interest.
- Advisory Boards review detention orders.

Criticism of the NSA

The Act has often been criticised for:

- Possible misuse against dissenters and protestors
- Weak procedural safeguards
- Impact on personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution of India

Critics argue that preventive detention laws should be used only in exceptional situations involving genuine threats to national security.

Significance of the Supreme Court’s Remarks

The observations reinforce the constitutional commitment towards:

- Protection of labour rights
- Human dignity
- Social justice
- Welfare-oriented governance

The case also revives debate on balancing:

- National security concerns
- Fundamental rights
- Democratic right to protest
- Workers’ welfare and industrial justice

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

Google AI Data Centre Hub in Andhra**Pradesh****Why in the News**

A major Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Centre Hub is being launched by Google in Andhra Pradesh, with the foundation stone laid by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu at Tarluvada near Visakhapatnam on April 28, 2026. The project is being described as one of the largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) initiatives in India’s digital infrastructure sector, highlighting the country’s growing importance in the global AI and data economy.

Overview of the Project

The proposed AI Data Centre Hub represents a transformative step in India’s digital infrastructure expansion. With rapid growth in artificial intelligence,

cloud computing, and big data analytics, the need for large-scale, high-capacity data centres has become critical. This project aims to position India, particularly Andhra Pradesh, as a global hub for AI-driven services and data processing.

The initiative aligns with India's broader vision of becoming a **digital economy powerhouse**, supporting sectors such as fintech, e-commerce, defence technology, and smart governance.

Key Facts

- **Total Investment:** 15 billion US dollars (approximately ₹1.35 lakh crore)
- **Implementation:** Raiden Infotech in partnership with Adani Group
- **Total Land Area:** 601.4 acres

Locations

The project is strategically distributed across multiple sites to optimise infrastructure and connectivity:

- Rambilli (Anakapalli district)
- Adavivaram (Visakhapatnam district)
- Tarluvada (Visakhapatnam district)

This multi-location approach ensures scalability, redundancy, and efficient resource utilisation.

Technical Features

The data centre hub is designed to meet global standards of performance, reliability, and scalability:

- **Initial Power Capacity:** 1 Gigawatt (GW)
- **Scalability:** Expandable up to 5 Gigawatt (GW), making it one of the largest AI data infrastructures globally

Core Infrastructure Components

- **Submarine Cable Landing Stations:** Enable direct international data connectivity, reducing dependence on distant hubs
- **Dedicated Fibre Networks:** Ensure high-speed, secure, and uninterrupted data transfer
- **Low-Latency Systems:** Designed for real-time AI processing and global data exchange

These features are crucial for supporting advanced applications such as machine learning, autonomous systems, and large-scale cloud services.

Strategic Importance

1. Boost to Digital Economy

The project significantly strengthens India's digital backbone by enabling high-performance computing and large-scale data storage. It supports emerging technologies like generative AI, Internet of Things (IoT), and 5G/6G ecosystems.

2. Foreign Investment and Economic Growth

As one of the largest FDI projects in the sector, it reflects increasing global confidence in India's infrastructure, policy environment, and market potential.

3. Employment Generation

The project is expected to create:

- Direct jobs in construction, operations, and engineering
- Indirect employment in logistics, maintenance, and ancillary industries

4. Regional Development

The development of such a mega project in Visakhapatnam and surrounding areas will:

- Accelerate urbanisation
- Improve infrastructure (roads, power, connectivity)
- Attract further investments into the region

5. Global Data Connectivity Hub

With submarine cable integration, India can emerge as a **key node in global internet infrastructure**, reducing latency for international data traffic and enhancing digital sovereignty.

Challenges and Considerations

While the project is ambitious, certain challenges need attention:

- **Power Demand:** Large-scale data centres require massive and reliable electricity supply, raising concerns about sustainability
- **Environmental Impact:** Land use and energy consumption must be balanced with eco-friendly practices
- **Cybersecurity Risks:** Increased data concentration demands robust security frameworks
- **Water Usage:** Cooling requirements for data centres can strain local resources

Addressing these issues through renewable energy integration and efficient cooling technologies will be crucial.

Conclusion

The AI Data Centre Hub in Andhra Pradesh marks a milestone in India's transition towards a **data-driven and AI-powered economy**. With massive investment, advanced infrastructure, and global connectivity, the project has the potential to transform India into a leading digital infrastructure hub.

It not only strengthens India's technological capabilities but also enhances its strategic position in the global digital ecosystem, paving the way for innovation, economic growth, and future-ready infrastructure.

CAR T-Cell Therapy Breakthrough for Solid Tumours



Why in the News?

A recent study published in the journal *Science* has reported a major breakthrough in CAR T-cell therapy. Scientists have developed a **highly sensitive immune receptor** capable of detecting extremely faint tumour signals, offering new hope for treating **solid cancers** such as kidney and ovarian cancer—an area where current therapies have had limited success.

What is CAR T-Cell Therapy?

Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy is an advanced form of immunotherapy in which:

- A patient's **T-cells (immune cells)** are extracted from the body
- These cells are **genetically engineered** to recognise specific cancer-related proteins (antigens)

- The modified cells are then reintroduced into the body to **identify and destroy cancer cells**

This therapy has shown remarkable success in **blood cancers**, particularly:

- Leukemia
- Lymphoma

Existing Limitations in Solid Tumours

Despite its success in blood cancers, CAR T-cell therapy has struggled against **solid tumours** due to several biological challenges:

1. Antigen Heterogeneity

- Tumour cells within the same cancer often express **different proteins**
- Some cells may not display the target antigen at detectable levels
- This allows certain cancer cells to **escape immune attack**

2. Low Antigen Visibility

- Many tumour cells express antigens in **very small quantities**
- Conventional CAR T-cells fail to detect these weak signals

Note on Antigens

An **antigen** is any substance (e.g., proteins on cancer cells, bacteria, or viruses) that triggers an immune response, prompting the body to produce antibodies or activate immune cells.

Key Discovery: Targeting CD70

The study focused on a protein called **CD70**, which is:

- Present in **70–80% of kidney and ovarian cancers**
- Found in about **25% of pancreatic cancers**

Critical Insight

Earlier, many tumour cells were believed to lack CD70. However, the study revealed:

- These cells actually **do express CD70**, but at **extremely low levels**
- Traditional CAR T-cells were simply **not sensitive enough** to detect it

New Innovation: HIT Receptor

Researchers developed a novel receptor called the: **HIT (HLA-Independent T-cell Receptor)**

Key Features:

- **Ultra-sensitive detection** of tumour antigens, even at very low levels
- Directly links antigen detection to the **natural T-cell activation pathway**
- **Bypasses the HLA system** (Human Leukocyte Antigen), which normally restricts immune recognition

Why this Matters:

- Overcomes one of the biggest barriers in immunotherapy: **immune system compatibility and weak antigen signals**
- Enables T-cells to detect and destroy tumour cells that were previously “invisible”

Results of the Study**Conventional CAR T-Cells:**

- Failed to eliminate all tumour cells
- Residual cancer cells survived and could lead to relapse

HIT Receptor-Based T-Cells:

- Successfully detected **hidden tumour cells**
- Achieved **complete tumour elimination** in experimental models
- Demonstrated effectiveness in **solid tumour environments**

Safety Concerns: The “Goldilocks Challenge”

While increased sensitivity is beneficial, it introduces risks:

The Challenge:

- If sensitivity is **too high**, T-cells may attack **normal healthy cells**
- If too low, cancer cells escape detection

This balance is referred to as the **“Goldilocks Challenge”**—finding the level that is *just right*.

Observations from the Study:

- CD70 is largely **absent in vital organs** such as:
 - Heart
 - Lungs
 - Brain
- Some **minor effects** were observed in immune cells
- Overall, early results suggest a **manageable safety profile**, but further trials are needed

Significance of the Breakthrough

This development marks a **major milestone in cancer treatment:**

- Opens the door for CAR T-cell therapy in **solid tumours**, which account for the majority of cancers
- Enhances the **precision and sensitivity** of immunotherapy
- Reduces chances of tumour escape and relapse
- Represents a step toward **personalised and universal cancer treatment**

Conclusion

The development of HIT receptor-based CAR T-cells could redefine cancer therapy by overcoming long-standing limitations in treating solid tumours. While further clinical trials are necessary to confirm safety and effectiveness in humans, this breakthrough represents a promising leap toward **more effective, targeted, and inclusive cancer immunotherapy**.

Mission Drishti (OptoSAR Satellite)**Why in the News?**

India’s rapidly expanding private space sector achieved a major breakthrough with the successful launch of **Mission Drishti**, the country’s largest privately developed Earth observation satellite. The satellite was launched aboard **SpaceX’s Falcon 9 rocket** from **Vandenberg Space Force Base, California**.

Developed by Bengaluru-based space startup **GalaxEye**, Mission Drishti represents a significant advancement in India’s indigenous space technology capabilities and highlights the growing role of private companies in strategic space applications.

The mission has attracted global attention because it is among the first satellites in the world to integrate **Electro**

Optical (EO) imaging and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) into a unified imaging system known as OptoSAR technology.

Key Facts About Mission Drishti

Feature	Details
Satellite Name	Mission Drishti
Developer	GalaxEye (Bengaluru)
Category	Earth Observation Satellite
Weight	190 kg
Launch Vehicle	Falcon 9 (SpaceX)
Launch Site	Vandenberg, California
Unique Technology	OptoSAR
Major Capability	All-weather, day-night imaging

What is Mission Drishti?

Mission Drishti is an advanced Earth observation satellite designed to provide high-resolution imagery for multiple civilian and strategic purposes. The satellite is intended to improve India’s capabilities in monitoring terrain, infrastructure, agriculture, oceans, disasters, and national security activities.

Unlike conventional Earth observation satellites that depend only on optical imaging, Mission Drishti combines two complementary imaging systems:

- Electro Optical (EO) imaging
- Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)

This dual-mode architecture enables continuous monitoring irrespective of weather conditions, cloud cover, or darkness.

The mission demonstrates India’s growing competence in next-generation satellite technology and reflects the increasing maturity of the country’s private space ecosystem.

Understanding OptoSAR Technology

What is OptoSAR?

OptoSAR is a hybrid imaging technology that integrates:

- **Optical imaging** using visible and infrared light
- **Radar imaging** using microwave signals

By combining these systems into a single satellite payload, Mission Drishti can generate richer and more reliable Earth observation data.

This integration helps overcome the limitations of standalone optical satellites, which often fail to capture clear images during cloudy weather or nighttime conditions.

Electro Optical (EO) Imaging

Electro Optical sensors capture images using visible light and infrared wavelengths, similar to how a digital camera works.

Features of EO Sensors

- Produce high-resolution visual images
- Useful for terrain mapping and object identification
- Capture colour and thermal signatures
- Widely used in urban planning and agriculture

Limitations

EO imaging is affected by:

- Cloud cover
- Rain and fog
- Smoke or haze
- Darkness during night-time

As a result, optical satellites may not provide uninterrupted surveillance.

Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)

Synthetic Aperture Radar is a remote sensing technology that uses microwave radio waves instead of visible light.

Features of SAR

- Works in all weather conditions
- Penetrates clouds, fog, and smoke
- Functions effectively during day and night
- Detects surface movement and structural changes
- Provides reliable imaging even in adverse conditions

SAR technology is especially important for defence surveillance, maritime monitoring, and disaster response.

Advantages of Combining EO and SAR

The integration of EO and SAR into OptoSAR technology offers several advantages:

1. All-Weather Imaging

The satellite can continue collecting data even during monsoons, storms, or cloudy conditions.

2. Day-and-Night Observation

SAR allows uninterrupted imaging regardless of sunlight availability.

3. Enhanced Accuracy

Combining optical and radar data improves object detection and terrain analysis.

4. Better Disaster Monitoring

Floods, landslides, cyclones, and forest fires can be monitored more effectively.

5. Strategic Surveillance

Defence agencies can track activities in difficult terrains and border regions.

Applications of Mission Drishti

Mission Drishti is expected to support a wide range of strategic, commercial, and developmental applications.

Defence and Surveillance

- Border monitoring
- Maritime security
- Detection of unusual movement
- Strategic reconnaissance

Agriculture Monitoring

- Crop health assessment
- Soil moisture analysis
- Precision farming support
- Yield forecasting

Disaster Management

- Flood mapping
- Cyclone tracking
- Landslide assessment
- Earthquake damage analysis

Maritime Surveillance

- Monitoring shipping routes
- Detection of illegal fishing
- Coastal security operations
- Tracking maritime traffic

Infrastructure and Urban Planning

- Monitoring construction projects
- Mapping transport networks
- Smart city planning
- Environmental assessment

Institutional Support and India's Space Ecosystem

Mission Drishti has been supported by **IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center)**,

the regulatory body established to facilitate private sector participation in India's space sector.

The launch reflects the success of India's space reforms introduced in recent years, which opened the space sector to startups, private companies, and academic institutions.

Private firms are now increasingly complementing the efforts of **ISRO** in satellite manufacturing, launch services, downstream applications, and advanced space technologies.

Growing Role of India's Private Space Sector

India's private space ecosystem has witnessed rapid growth due to:

- Policy reforms
- Government support
- Increased startup funding
- Access to ISRO infrastructure
- Rising global demand for satellite services

Startups such as GalaxEye are contributing to:

- Indigenous innovation
- High-technology manufacturing
- Strategic autonomy
- Commercial space applications

The successful launch of Mission Drishti also demonstrates India's ambition to become a major global space economy.

Strategic Importance for India

Mission Drishti is strategically important because Earth observation satellites play a critical role in:

- National security
- Resource management
- Climate monitoring
- Disaster preparedness
- Economic planning

The ability to obtain real-time, all-weather imagery strengthens India's independent intelligence and monitoring capabilities.

The mission also reduces dependence on foreign satellite data providers and promotes technological self-reliance.

Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services and 'Kallakkadal' Monitoring



Why in the News?

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has installed a **second Coastal Flood Monitoring System (CFMS)** near Kollam Harbour to improve forecasting of ‘Kallakkadal’ or swell surge events along India’s southwest coast.

The initiative aims to strengthen coastal flood prediction and provide timely warnings to vulnerable fishing communities in Kerala.

What is ‘Kallakkadal’?

“Kallakkadal” is a Malayalam term meaning “sea that comes stealthily.”

It refers to:

- Sudden **high-energy swell surges**
- Coastal inundation occurring **without local storms, cyclones, or rainfall**
- Unexpected rise of sea waves that flood coastal regions

Unlike storm surges caused by nearby cyclones, Kallakkadal events are usually generated by distant oceanic disturbances, especially in the southern Indian Ocean. These swells travel long distances before striking the Kerala coast.

Features of Kallakkadal Events

Nature of the Phenomenon

- Triggered by distant storms over the ocean
- Produces unusually strong waves near the coast
- Often occurs under seemingly calm local weather conditions
- Causes sudden seawater intrusion into coastal settlements

Impacts

- Flooding of coastal villages
- Damage to fishing boats and harbour infrastructure
- Coastal erosion
- Threat to fishermen and coastal livelihoods
- Disruption of harbour activities

The southwest coast of Kerala is particularly vulnerable because of its exposure to high-energy wave systems from the Arabian Sea and southern Indian Ocean.

About Coastal Flood Monitoring System (CFMS)

The **Coastal Flood Monitoring System (CFMS)** is a scientific monitoring network developed by Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services.

It is designed for:

- Real-time monitoring of coastal wave activity
- Detection of swell surge conditions
- Issuing early warnings for coastal flooding events

The system supports India’s broader coastal disaster management and ocean observation framework.

Objectives of CFMS

Improve Coastal Forecasting

- Enhance accuracy of coastal flood predictions
- Monitor wave transformation near the shore
- Track abnormal sea conditions in real time

Early Warning Systems

- Provide timely alerts to fishermen and coastal communities
- Reduce risks to life and property
- Support disaster preparedness and evacuation planning

Scientific Research

- Study coastal wave dynamics
- Understand swell propagation and shoreline impacts
- Improve oceanographic models for India’s coastline

Components of the CFMS

The system integrates multiple scientific instruments for continuous coastal monitoring.

Key Components

Coastal Automatic Weather Station

Records:

- Wind speed and direction

- Atmospheric pressure
- Rainfall
- Temperature and humidity

High-Frequency Pressure Sensors

- Four pressure sensors installed at shallow depths
- Located at depths of approximately **3–7 metres**
- Measure wave height, wave pressure, and sea-level variations

These sensors help scientists detect abnormal swell conditions before they intensify near the coast.

Why was Kollam Selected?

Kollam Harbour was selected because:

- Kerala's southwest coast frequently experiences **Kallakkadal** events
- The region has high exposure to swell surges from the Arabian Sea
- Large fishing communities depend on coastal and harbour activities
- Coastal flooding poses significant socio-economic risks

About INCOIS

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India.

Headquarters

- Located in Hyderabad

Functions

INCOIS provides:

- Ocean information services
- Tsunami early warnings
- Marine weather forecasts
- Potential fishing zone advisories
- Coastal hazard warnings

Ebola Situation in Central Africa



Why in the News?

The Union Health Ministry has clarified that India currently has **no reported cases of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)**. However, authorities are maintaining close surveillance following the recent Ebola outbreak reported in parts of Central Africa, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

The outbreak has been linked to the **Bundibugyo strain** of the Ebola virus, a relatively less common but dangerous variant of the disease. India has stated that the overall public health risk remains minimal, though precautionary measures are actively being implemented.

Key Highlights of the Outbreak

- The current outbreak involves the **Bundibugyo virus strain** of Ebola.
- Affected regions include:
 - Democratic Republic of the Congo
 - Uganda
- The World Health Organization is closely monitoring the spread due to the possibility of cross-border transmission.

The Bundibugyo strain was first identified in Uganda in 2007 and is one of the six known species of Ebola virus. Although it has a comparatively lower fatality rate than the Zaire strain, it still poses a serious public health concern because of its rapid transmission and severe symptoms.

Measures Taken by India

India has strengthened its preparedness mechanisms to prevent any possible import of infection. The Union Health Ministry has directed multiple agencies to remain on high alert.

Major Preventive Measures

- Enhanced surveillance at airports and seaports
- Screening and monitoring of international travellers arriving from affected regions
- Preparedness for isolation and quarantine facilities
- Coordination among central ministries and public health agencies
- Strengthening laboratory surveillance systems

Health authorities have also advised state governments to ensure rapid response teams remain prepared in case of suspected infections.

Agencies Involved in Monitoring

Several national public health institutions are coordinating the preparedness response:

- **National Centre for Disease Control**

Responsible for disease surveillance, outbreak monitoring, and public health response coordination.

- **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme**

Tracks infectious disease trends and assists states in early detection and containment.

- **Indian Council of Medical Research**

Supports diagnostic capacity, laboratory testing, and research-based guidance for infectious diseases.

About Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)

Ebola Virus Disease is a **severe viral haemorrhagic fever** that affects humans and non-human primates such as monkeys and chimpanzees.

The disease is caused by viruses belonging to the *Ebolavirus* genus and is known for causing outbreaks with high fatality rates.

How Ebola Spreads

Ebola spreads primarily through:

- Direct contact with bodily fluids of infected individuals
- Contact with contaminated medical equipment or surfaces
- Handling infected animals such as bats or primates
- Exposure during burial rituals involving infected bodies

Unlike airborne diseases, Ebola generally requires close physical contact for transmission.

Symptoms of Ebola

Common symptoms include:

- High fever
- Severe weakness and fatigue
- Muscle pain

- Vomiting and diarrhoea
- Internal and external bleeding
- Organ failure in severe cases

Symptoms usually appear between **2 and 21 days** after exposure.

Treatment and Prevention

There is currently no universally approved cure for all Ebola strains, though supportive care significantly improves survival rates. Recent advances include vaccines and antibody-based treatments for certain strains.

Preventive strategies include:

- Early detection and isolation
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Safe burial practices
- Contact tracing
- Public awareness campaigns

What is PHEIC?

A **Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)** is a formal declaration made by the World Health Organization under the International Health Regulations (IHR).

It is declared when an outbreak:

- Poses a serious international public health risk
- Has the potential for cross-border spread
- Requires a coordinated global response

A PHEIC declaration enables countries to strengthen surveillance, share data rapidly, and coordinate international health measures.

Significance for India

Although the current risk to India remains low, the situation highlights the importance of:

- Strong disease surveillance systems
- International health coordination
- Rapid response preparedness
- Border health security

India's proactive monitoring reflects lessons learned from previous global health emergencies such as COVID-19 and Nipah virus outbreaks.

Security Issues

Nilgiri Class Frigate Mahendragiri



Why in the News?

The Indian Navy has inducted **INS Mahendragiri**, the sixth stealth frigate under **Project 17A**, marking another major milestone in India's naval modernisation programme and indigenous warship-building capability. The induction strengthens India's maritime combat preparedness in the Indian Ocean Region while advancing the vision of *Atmanirbhar Bharat* in defence manufacturing.

Key Facts

- **Name:** INS Mahendragiri
- **Class:** Nilgiri-class stealth frigate
- **Project:** Project 17A
- **Built by:** Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited
- **Location:** Mumbai
- **Designed by:** Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau

About Project 17A

Project 17A is an advanced frigate construction programme of the Indian Navy aimed at building next-generation stealth guided-missile frigates with enhanced combat capabilities.

The project is a follow-up to the earlier Project 17 Shivalik-class frigates but incorporates major technological upgrades in stealth, automation, survivability, and weapon systems.

A total of seven stealth frigates are being constructed under Project 17A at:

- Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited
- Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers

The ships are being built using integrated construction techniques, allowing faster assembly and reduced production time.

Features of Project 17A Frigates

Advanced Stealth Technology

The Nilgiri-class frigates are designed with advanced stealth features that reduce:

- Radar signature
- Infrared signature
- Acoustic signature

This makes the vessels harder to detect by enemy radar and submarine systems during combat operations.

Multi-Mission Capability

The frigates are designed to operate across multiple dimensions of naval warfare.

Anti-Surface Warfare

Capable of engaging enemy ships using advanced missiles and naval guns.

Anti-Air Warfare

Equipped with modern air defence systems to intercept hostile aircraft, drones, and missiles.

Anti-Submarine Warfare

Fitted with sophisticated sonar systems, torpedoes, and anti-submarine helicopters for detecting and neutralising underwater threats.

Advanced Combat Systems

The frigates are equipped with:

- Modern sensors and surveillance systems
- Integrated combat management systems
- Surface-to-air missile systems
- Advanced electronic warfare suites
- Network-centric warfare capability

These systems significantly improve situational awareness and operational effectiveness.

Propulsion System

Project 17A frigates use the **CODOG (Combined Diesel or Gas)** propulsion system.

How CODOG Works

$$P = P_{diesel} \text{ or } P_{gas \text{ turbine}}$$

Under this arrangement:

- **Diesel engines** are used for fuel-efficient cruising during routine patrols.
- **Gas turbines** are activated for high-speed combat operations and rapid manoeuvring.

Advantages

- Better fuel efficiency
- Higher operational flexibility
- Improved endurance
- Capability for rapid acceleration during missions

Indigenous Capability

Project 17A reflects India's growing self-reliance in advanced defence manufacturing.

High Indigenous Content

The frigates contain nearly **75 percent indigenous components**, including:

- Weapons systems
- Sensors
- Communication equipment
- Auxiliary machinery

MSME Participation

More than **200 MSMEs** have contributed to the project supply chain, strengthening India's domestic defence industrial ecosystem.

Employment Generation

The programme has generated substantial employment:

- Around **4,000 direct jobs**
- Around **10,000 indirect jobs**

This includes opportunities in shipbuilding, engineering, electronics, metallurgy, and ancillary manufacturing sectors.

Strategic Importance

The induction of INS Mahendragiri significantly enhances the Indian Navy's blue-water operational capability amid growing strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific region.

The ship will help India:

- Protect sea lanes of communication
- Strengthen maritime deterrence
- Enhance anti-submarine operations
- Safeguard coastal and offshore assets
- Maintain strategic presence in the Indian Ocean Region

Overall Significance

INS Mahendragiri represents a major achievement in indigenous naval construction and advanced warship design. The vessel highlights India's progress in building modern stealth warships domestically while reducing dependence on foreign defence imports.

The continued induction of Project 17A frigates is expected to substantially enhance the Indian Navy's combat readiness and maritime security architecture in the coming years.

Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA)



Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA)

Why in the News?

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), in collaboration with the Indian Air Force (IAF), successfully conducted the maiden flight trial of the Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) weapon system off the coast of Odisha on May 7, 2026.

The successful test marks a major milestone in India's efforts to strengthen indigenous precision-strike capabilities and advance self-reliance in defence technology under the broader vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

The trial demonstrated the operational effectiveness of the system, validating its guidance, aerodynamic performance, and precision engagement capability.

About TARA (Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation)

The Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) is India's first indigenously developed glide weapon system designed to convert conventional unguided warheads into precision-guided stand-off weapons.

The system significantly enhances the strike capability of existing aerial munitions by improving their operational range, accuracy, and lethality without requiring the development of entirely new missile systems.

TARA represents a cost-effective force multiplier for the Indian Armed Forces, enabling aircraft to engage enemy targets from safer stand-off distances while reducing exposure to hostile air defence systems.

Developed By

The TARA weapon system has been developed by the Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, one of DRDO's premier missile and avionics laboratories.

The Indian Air Force played a key role in conducting operational evaluation and flight testing of the system.

What is a Glide Weapon System?

A glide weapon is a type of precision-guided munition that uses aerodynamic lift generated by wings or control surfaces to travel long distances after being released from an aircraft.

Unlike conventional free-fall bombs, glide weapons do not drop directly toward the target. Instead, they glide through the air using advanced guidance and navigation systems to accurately strike targets.

This capability allows combat aircraft to launch weapons from safer distances beyond enemy air defence coverage.

Key Features of TARA

Indigenous Glide Weapon System

TARA is India's first fully indigenous glide weapon system, showcasing advancements in domestic defence manufacturing and precision-guided munition technologies.

The successful development reduces dependence on imported stand-off precision weapons.

Converts Unguided Warheads into Precision Weapons

One of the most important features of TARA is its ability to convert conventional unguided warheads into precision-guided munitions.

This enables the armed forces to modernise existing stockpiles of aerial bombs at comparatively lower cost.

Aerodynamic Glide Capability

The system uses aerodynamic lift generated by specially designed wings and control surfaces.

After launch from an aircraft, the weapon glides toward the designated target instead of falling directly under gravity.

This increases strike range and operational flexibility.

Enhanced Accuracy

TARA is equipped with advanced navigation and guidance systems that improve targeting precision.

Greater accuracy reduces collateral damage and enhances mission effectiveness against strategic and tactical targets.

Improved Operational Range

The glide capability significantly extends the effective range of conventional aerial munitions.

This allows aircraft to launch attacks while remaining outside heavily defended enemy zones.

Increased Lethality

The precision guidance and improved strike capability enhance the lethality of the weapon system against fortified installations, military infrastructure, and high-value targets.

Low-Cost Advanced Technology

The system has been designed using state-of-the-art low-cost technologies.

By upgrading existing warheads instead of developing completely new missiles, TARA offers a highly economical precision-strike solution.

Strategic Importance of TARA

Strengthening India's Precision Strike Capability

The development of TARA significantly enhances India's capability to conduct precision strikes against enemy targets with greater operational safety and effectiveness.

Precision-guided glide weapons are increasingly important in modern warfare because they improve mission success while minimising resource expenditure.

Enhancing Stand-Off Attack Capability

Stand-off weapons allow combat aircraft to attack targets from long distances without entering high-risk enemy air defence zones.

This improves pilot safety and increases operational flexibility during conflict situations.

Promoting Atmanirbhar Bharat in Defence

The indigenous development of TARA reflects India's growing technological capabilities in advanced defence systems.

It supports the government's push for self-reliance in defence production and reduced dependence on foreign suppliers.

Cost-Effective Force Multiplier

By converting existing unguided bombs into smart precision weapons, TARA provides a cost-efficient alternative to expensive missile systems.

This allows the armed forces to improve operational capability without massive additional procurement costs.

Importance of Precision-Guided Weapons in Modern Warfare

Modern military operations increasingly rely on precision-guided munitions due to their ability to:

- Minimise collateral damage
- Improve strike accuracy
- Reduce ammunition wastage
- Increase operational efficiency
- Engage high-value targets effectively
- Support network-centric warfare operations

Glide weapons have become particularly important because they combine extended range with comparatively lower costs compared to advanced cruise missiles.

Role of DRDO in Indigenous Defence Development

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is India's premier defence research agency responsible for developing advanced military technologies for the armed forces.

Over the years, DRDO has developed several indigenous systems in areas such as:

- Missiles
- Radars
- Electronic warfare
- Aircraft systems
- Naval technologies

- Artificial intelligence-based defence systems

The successful development of TARA further strengthens India's indigenous defence technology ecosystem.

U.S. Clears Apache and Howitzer Support Deals for India



Why in the News?

The United States has approved two major defence support agreements for India involving the AH-64E Apache attack helicopters and M777A2 Ultra-Light Howitzers. The proposed deals are aimed at enhancing operational readiness, maintenance capability, and long-term sustainment of critical military platforms used by the Indian Armed Forces.

The move reflects the growing strategic and defence partnership between India and the United States, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

Apache Helicopter Support Deal

The proposed Apache sustainment package is estimated at approximately **\$198.2 million**.

Key Components of the Deal

The agreement includes:

- Engineering and technical support
- Logistics and supply-chain assistance
- Technical documentation and publications
- Training support for personnel
- Aircraft maintenance and repair assistance
- Spare parts and equipment support

The package is intended to improve the operational availability and combat readiness of India's Apache helicopter fleet operated by the Indian Air Force and the Indian Army.

About the AH-64E Apache

The AH-64E Apache is one of the world's most advanced multi-role attack helicopters developed by Boeing. It is designed for high-intensity battlefield operations and is equipped with advanced avionics, sensors, and weapons systems.

Major Features

- Precision strike capability against ground targets
- Anti-armour warfare operations
- Battlefield reconnaissance and surveillance
- Night-fighting capability
- Integration with radar-guided and laser-guided weapons
- Ability to operate in difficult terrain and adverse weather conditions

India inducted Apache helicopters to strengthen its offensive air combat and close air support capability, especially along sensitive border regions.

M777A2 Ultra-Light Howitzer Support Deal

The second proposed agreement relates to support for the M777A2 Ultra-Light Howitzer system and is estimated at around **\$230 million**.

Key Components

The package includes:

- Supply of spare parts
- Repair and overhaul support
- Technical and engineering assistance
- Field service support
- Maintenance and sustainment services

This support is expected to ensure the long-term operational effectiveness of India's M777 artillery systems.

About the M777A2 Ultra-Light Howitzer

The M777A2 Ultra-Light Howitzer is a lightweight 155 mm artillery gun widely recognised for its mobility and rapid deployment capability.

Manufactured using titanium and aluminium alloys, the system is significantly lighter than conventional artillery guns.

Key Features

- Lightweight design for easier transport
- Can be airlifted by helicopters and transport aircraft

- Effective in mountainous and high-altitude regions
- Long-range precision artillery capability
- Compatible with advanced precision-guided ammunition

The M777 howitzer has become particularly important for India due to its deployment in border areas and difficult mountainous terrain.

Strategic Significance of the Deals

The approval of these defence support packages highlights the deepening military cooperation between India and the United States.

Broader Importance

- Strengthens India's defence preparedness
- Enhances operational readiness of key military assets
- Improves interoperability between Indian and U.S. armed forces
- Supports India's capability development in critical sectors
- Reinforces strategic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region

The agreements also demonstrate the increasing importance of India-U.S. defence ties under broader strategic frameworks such as technology cooperation, defence logistics, and joint military exercises.

Suryastra Rocket System



Why in the News?

India successfully tested the indigenous **Suryastra rocket system** at Chandipur, Odisha, marking a major milestone in the country's push for self-reliance in advanced

defence technology and long-range precision strike capability.

About the Suryastra Rocket System

The **Suryastra** is India's first indigenous **universal multi-calibre rocket launcher system**, designed to deliver highly precise strikes against enemy targets across varying operational ranges.

The system has been developed by NIBE Limited in collaboration with Elbit Systems. It is based on the advanced **PULS (Precise & Universal Launching System)** technology, known for its modularity and battlefield flexibility.

The successful trial demonstrates India's growing capability in indigenous rocket artillery systems under the broader vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat** in defence manufacturing.

Key Specifications

Range

- Maximum strike range: **300 km**

This long operational range enables the system to strike deep inside enemy territory while remaining outside the reach of many frontline threats.

Platform

- Mounted on a highly mobile **6x6 Tatra truck**

The mobile platform ensures rapid deployment, shoot-and-scoot capability, and enhanced survivability during combat operations.

Purpose and Strategic Role

The Suryastra system is designed for precision attacks on high-value military targets, including:

- Enemy troop concentrations
- Command and control centres
- Radar and air-defence installations
- Ammunition depots
- Logistics hubs and supply lines

Its deployment is expected to significantly strengthen India's long-range artillery and battlefield deterrence capabilities.

One of the most important aspects of Suryastra is its universal launcher design, which allows it to fire different

types of rockets and missiles from the same platform. This provides operational flexibility and reduces logistical complexity.

Precision Strike Capability

The system reportedly achieves a **Circular Error Probable (CEP)** of less than **5 metres**, making it highly accurate even at long distances.

This level of precision helps minimise collateral damage while ensuring effective destruction of strategic targets.

Multi-Target Engagement

The launcher can engage **multiple targets simultaneously** at different ranges, increasing battlefield effectiveness during high-intensity conflicts.

High Mobility

The 6x6 mobile launcher allows:

- Faster repositioning
- Improved tactical flexibility
- Reduced vulnerability to enemy counter-attacks

Strategic Importance for India

The induction and testing of indigenous long-range rocket systems like Suryastra are strategically important because they:

- Reduce dependence on foreign weapon systems
- Strengthen indigenous defence manufacturing
- Enhance India's long-range precision warfare capability
- Improve deterrence along sensitive borders
- Support rapid-response operations in modern warfare scenarios

The system is also expected to complement existing Indian rocket artillery platforms such as the Pinaka Multiple Rocket Launcher.

Overall Significance

The successful testing of the Suryastra rocket system represents another important advancement in India's indigenous defence ecosystem. It showcases the country's progress in developing advanced precision-guided artillery systems capable of meeting modern battlefield requirements while reinforcing India's goal of becoming self-reliant in critical defence technologies.

Trivia

Revenue Deficit and Fiscal Stress in States



Why in the News?

The Ministry of Finance, in its Monthly Economic Review for April 2026, warned that several Indian States with persistent revenue deficits and high debt burdens could face significant fiscal stress, particularly during periods of economic slowdown or external shocks.

The report highlighted concerns over rising interest liabilities, declining fiscal flexibility, and reduced capacity of States to undertake productive expenditure.

What is Revenue Deficit?

A Revenue Deficit occurs when a government's revenue expenditure exceeds its revenue receipts.

Formula

"Revenue Deficit = Revenue Expenditure - Revenue Receipts"

A revenue deficit indicates that the government's current income is insufficient to meet its routine expenditure obligations.

Components of Revenue Expenditure

Revenue expenditure refers to recurring or operational expenses that do not create assets.

Major Components

- Salaries and wages
- Pensions
- Subsidies
- Interest payments
- Administrative expenditure

These expenditures are necessary for day-to-day governance but generally do not generate future income or assets.

Components of Revenue Receipts

Revenue receipts are regular earnings of the government that do not create liabilities.

Major Sources

- Tax revenue
 - GST
 - State excise duty
 - Stamp duty
 - VAT on petroleum products
- Non-tax revenue
 - Fees
 - Fines
 - Dividends
 - Royalties

Key Findings of the Report

The Ministry analysed the fiscal position of 18 major States.

Fiscal Position of States

- 9 States projected to record revenue deficit
- 7 States projected to record revenue surplus
- 1 State projected to remain in revenue balance

This reflects widening differences in fiscal management and debt sustainability among States.

States with Revenue Deficit

The following States were identified as having revenue deficits:

- Himachal Pradesh
- Punjab
- Kerala
- Andhra Pradesh
- Rajasthan
- Haryana
- Karnataka
- Maharashtra
- Chhattisgarh

Punjab's Fiscal Stress

Punjab recorded the highest interest burden among the States analysed.

Interest Burden

Interest Payments = 22.8% of Revenue Receipts

A high share of revenue being used for interest payments reduces the State's ability to spend on development and welfare programmes.

States with Revenue Surplus

The following States were projected to maintain revenue surplus:

- Odisha
- Jharkhand
- Uttar Pradesh
- Goa
- Gujarat
- Uttarakhand
- Telangana
- Bihar

Revenue surplus indicates that current revenues are sufficient to meet operational expenses, allowing more fiscal space for capital investment.

Golden Rule of Fiscal Policy

The report reiterated the importance of the Golden Rule of Fiscal Policy.

Principle

Governments should borrow only for capital expenditure and not for routine consumption expenditure.

Ideal Fiscal Situation

Borrowing for capital projects such as infrastructure creates long-term economic returns, whereas borrowing to meet salaries or subsidies increases debt without asset creation.

Fiscal Concerns Highlighted

1. Rising Interest Payments

High debt servicing obligations reduce the flexibility of States to allocate resources for development.

2. Reduced Capital Expenditure

Revenue deficit States may reduce productive expenditure such as:

- Infrastructure projects
- Health investment
- Education spending
- Rural development

This can adversely affect long-term economic growth.

3. Dependence on Central Transfers

States with weak fiscal positions may increasingly depend on:

- Finance Commission transfers
- GST compensation
- Centrally sponsored schemes

4. Weak Shock Absorption Capacity

High debt and persistent deficits reduce the ability of States to respond effectively during:

- Economic recessions
- Natural disasters
- Public health emergencies
- Commodity price shocks

Broader Significance

The report highlights the growing importance of fiscal discipline and sustainable public finance management at the State level.

Persistent revenue deficits can:

- Increase debt vulnerability
- Reduce developmental spending
- Affect investor confidence
- Create long-term macroeconomic instability

The findings also underline the need for:

- Better tax mobilisation
- Rationalisation of subsidies
- Improved expenditure efficiency
- Greater focus on capital creation over consumption expenditure

A fiscally healthy State economy is considered essential for maintaining India's overall macroeconomic stability and long-term growth trajectory.

FDI Inflows in India



Why in the News?

India's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows are expected to cross 90 billion dollars in FY 2025–26, according to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). The rise in inflows reflects growing global investor confidence in India's economic stability, manufacturing expansion, and long-term growth potential.

Key Facts

- FDI inflows during April–February FY 2025–26: approximately 88 billion dollars
- Expected total FDI inflows for FY 2025–26: more than 90 billion dollars
- Reflects strong foreign investor confidence in India's economy and policy environment

What is Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)?

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) refers to investment made by a foreign company, institution, or individual in the business operations or productive assets of another country.

Unlike portfolio investment, FDI involves:

- Long-term interest
- Significant degree of ownership or control
- Participation in management and business decisions

FDI may include:

- Setting up factories
- Acquiring companies
- Expanding production facilities
- Investing in infrastructure or services

Types of FDI

1. Greenfield Investment

A foreign company establishes entirely new business operations in another country.

Examples include:

- Setting up new factories
- Establishing manufacturing plants
- Creating new offices or industrial facilities

Features

- Generates new employment opportunities
- Creates fresh infrastructure and production capacity
- Contributes directly to industrial growth

2. Brownfield Investment

Investment in or acquisition of existing companies, assets, or facilities.

Examples include:

- Mergers and acquisitions
- Purchasing stakes in Indian companies
- Expanding existing industrial units

Features

- Faster market entry
- Utilises existing infrastructure
- Often used in sectors like telecom, banking, and pharmaceuticals

Key Drivers Behind Rising FDI Inflows

Economic Reforms

The Government of India has undertaken several reforms aimed at improving the investment climate, including:

- Liberalisation of FDI limits across sectors
- Simplification of regulatory procedures
- Digital governance initiatives

Expansion of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)

India's trade agreements with various countries and regions have improved market access and increased investor confidence.

FTAs help:

- Reduce tariffs
- Enhance export opportunities
- Integrate India into global supply chains

Strong Economic Growth Prospects

India remains one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, attracting global investors seeking long-term growth opportunities.

Major attraction areas include:

- Manufacturing
- Renewable energy
- Digital economy
- Infrastructure
- Electronics and semiconductors

Improved Ease of Doing Business

Policy measures such as:

- Faster approvals
- GST implementation
- Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes

- Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) have improved India's business environment and investment attractiveness.

Role of DPIIT

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Key Responsibilities

- Formulation and implementation of FDI policy
- Promotion of industrial development
- Facilitating domestic and foreign investment
- Improving ease of doing business
- Coordinating with states and investors

DPIIT acts as the nodal agency for encouraging investment inflows into India.

Significance of FDI for India

Economic Growth

FDI increases capital availability, expands industrial production, and contributes to GDP growth.

Employment Generation

New investments create direct and indirect employment opportunities across sectors such as manufacturing, services, logistics, and technology.

Technology Transfer

Foreign companies bring:

- Advanced technology
- Modern management practices
- Innovation and research capabilities

This improves productivity and competitiveness of domestic industries.

Infrastructure and Manufacturing Development

FDI supports growth in:

- Industrial corridors
- Ports and logistics
- Electronics manufacturing
- Renewable energy infrastructure

It also strengthens the government's Make in India initiative.

Improvement in Balance of Payments

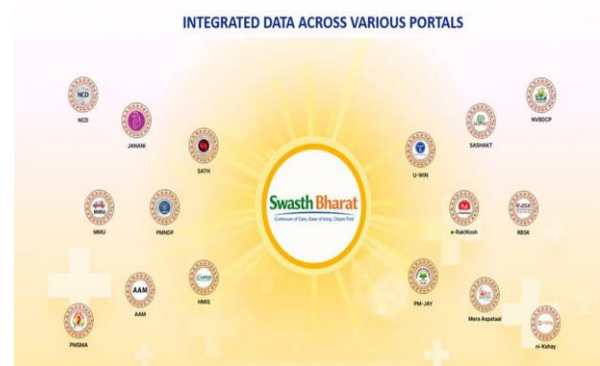
FDI inflows provide stable foreign capital and help strengthen India's external financial position by

supporting foreign exchange reserves and export capacity.

Overall Importance

The expected rise of FDI inflows beyond 90 billion dollars highlights India's emergence as a major global investment destination. Stable economic growth, policy reforms, infrastructure expansion, and manufacturing incentives continue to attract multinational companies and long-term foreign investors into the Indian economy.

Swasth Bharat Portal



Why in the News?

The Government of India has launched the Swasth Bharat Portal, a unified digital health platform aimed at integrating fragmented health programme systems across the country. The initiative is expected to strengthen coordination among various national health schemes, improve efficiency in data management, and support evidence-based public health planning.

The launch of the portal reflects India's broader push towards digital governance in the healthcare sector under the vision of Digital India and Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM).

About Swasth Bharat Portal

The Swasth Bharat Portal is a single integrated digital health platform developed to connect multiple health programme systems operating across India. At present, several public health programmes maintain separate digital platforms and reporting systems, often resulting in duplication of work, inconsistencies in data, and delays in policy implementation.

The portal seeks to create a unified ecosystem where different health systems can interact seamlessly through

API-based interoperability, enabling efficient exchange of information across departments and healthcare programmes.

The platform is designed to improve coordination between central ministries, state governments, healthcare institutions, and frontline health workers.

What are APIs (Application Programming Interfaces)?

Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) are digital communication tools that allow different software systems to exchange information with each other.

Instead of building separate and complex connections between every individual platform, APIs function like universal digital bridges or translators. They enable different systems to communicate securely and efficiently without requiring detailed knowledge of each system's internal coding structure.

In the context of the Swasth Bharat Portal, APIs allow multiple health programme databases to share and update information automatically, reducing duplication of data entry and improving the speed and accuracy of reporting.

Main Objectives of the Portal

The Swasth Bharat Portal has been developed with several key objectives aimed at improving healthcare governance and service delivery.

Eliminate Duplicate Data Entry

Health workers and programme officials often enter the same information into multiple systems. The portal aims to reduce repetitive data entry by integrating databases into a common platform.

Streamline Reporting Systems

The portal will simplify reporting mechanisms across health schemes by creating standardised digital workflows. This is expected to reduce administrative burden and improve efficiency.

Improve Evidence-Based Planning

By aggregating health data from different programmes, policymakers will be able to analyse disease trends, identify gaps in healthcare delivery, and allocate resources more effectively.

Support Faster Decision-Making

Real-time data availability will help governments and health authorities respond quickly to public health challenges, outbreaks, and emergencies.

Strengthen Public Health Monitoring

Integrated data systems will support better monitoring of national health programmes, vaccination campaigns, maternal healthcare initiatives, disease surveillance, and nutrition programmes.

Key Features of Swasth Bharat Portal

Unified Health Platform

The portal acts as a one-stop digital aggregator for multiple government health programmes. It integrates data and services from different healthcare systems into a common interface.

This unified structure is expected to improve coordination among healthcare administrators, medical institutions, and frontline workers.

Interoperability Through Federated Architecture

The platform uses a federated digital architecture, meaning that data can remain within respective programme databases while still being securely accessible through interoperable systems.

Through APIs, the portal enables seamless exchange of health information between various healthcare platforms without requiring complete centralisation of data.

This approach improves flexibility, scalability, and security while maintaining operational independence of individual health systems.

Data Visualisation and Analytics

The portal includes advanced data visualisation tools that support monitoring, trend analysis, and local-level planning.

Officials will be able to access dashboards, reports, and graphical insights for better programme implementation and evaluation.

These analytical capabilities can assist in:

- Monitoring disease outbreaks
- Tracking vaccination coverage
- Assessing healthcare infrastructure gaps
- Evaluating maternal and child health indicators
- Improving district-level healthcare planning

Real-Time Data Access

The platform is expected to facilitate near real-time access to health data, enabling quicker administrative responses and more efficient policy interventions.

Improved Coordination Between Stakeholders

The portal can improve collaboration between the Union Government, state governments, hospitals, public health agencies, and frontline healthcare workers.

Significance of the Swasth Bharat Portal**Enhancing Digital Health Governance**

The portal represents a major step towards strengthening India's digital health ecosystem. By integrating fragmented systems, the government aims to create a more coordinated and transparent healthcare administration framework.

Supporting Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)

The initiative complements the broader objectives of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, which seeks to build an integrated digital health infrastructure across India.

The Swasth Bharat Portal can support seamless sharing of health records, programme monitoring, and digital healthcare delivery.

Reducing Administrative Burden

Frontline health workers frequently face challenges associated with maintaining multiple records and reporting systems. The new platform can reduce

paperwork and repetitive data entry, allowing healthcare personnel to focus more on service delivery.

Better Public Health Response

Integrated health data systems are particularly important during disease outbreaks and emergencies. Faster access to reliable data can improve surveillance, resource allocation, and emergency response mechanisms.

Strengthening Evidence-Based Policymaking

Reliable and integrated data enables governments to formulate policies based on actual healthcare trends and field-level realities. This can improve the effectiveness of national health programmes.

Challenges and Considerations

While the portal offers significant advantages, successful implementation will depend on several factors:

- Ensuring data privacy and cybersecurity
- Maintaining interoperability across diverse systems
- Training healthcare workers in digital tools
- Ensuring internet connectivity in rural areas
- Standardising data formats across states and departments

Addressing these challenges will be essential for achieving the full benefits of the platform.



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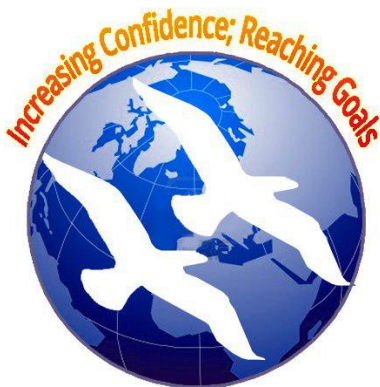
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