

# INDEX

1. National .....	2
2. International.....	15
3. Appointments.....	24
4. Sports.....	26
5. Science & Technology .....	29
6. Books & Authors .....	32
7. Important Days.....	33
8. Ranking.....	34
9. Summit's & Mou's.....	36
10. Economy.....	37



## IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS

### NATIONAL

#### Annual Review of State Laws 2024: Declining Legislative Productivity

- In 2024, **India's state legislatures** met for an average of just **20 days**, down from **28 days** in 2017, signaling a continued decline in legislative engagement.
- Only Odisha (42 days) and Kerala (38 days) exceeded this average, while large states like Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh convened for merely 16 days.
- Vacancies in Deputy Speaker positions persist in eight assemblies, notably Jharkhand, which has lacked one for over 20 years, violating Article 178.
- Although more than 500 bills were passed across states, the average was 17 per state, with 51% enacted on the same day with minimal debate.
- Noteworthy activity included Karnataka passing 49 bills, Tamil Nadu 45, and Maharashtra 32, while Delhi passed only one, raising questions on policy deliberation.

#### The Veeraswami Case Revisited: Call for Judicial Accountability

- Vice President **Jagdeep Dhankhar** criticized the **in-house inquiry** into **Justice Yashwant Varma**, insisting it lacks **legal sanctity** without a formal **FIR**.
- He argued the **1991 K. Veeraswami judgment**, which mandates **prior sanction** before prosecuting judges, has become a "**scaffolding of impunity**", and urged its **re-examination**.
- The controversy stemmed from a fire on March 14–15, after which half-burnt cash was found in Justice Varma's residence—an incident delayed in disclosure by over a week.
- A three-judge Supreme Court panel, convened by CJI Khanna, deemed the allegations credible and recommended possible impeachment.
- Dhankhar's comments sparked a broader parliamentary debate, with Opposition leaders seeking disclosure of the panel's report ahead of any impeachment motion.

#### Enrolment Drop in Government Schools & PM-POSHAN Concerns

- The UDISE+ 2023–24 report revealed a staggering 1.5 crore fall in government school enrolment compared to the 2018–19 to 2021–22 average.
- Uttar Pradesh lost 21.83 lakh, Bihar 6.14 lakh, Rajasthan 5.63 lakh, while West Bengal, Karnataka, Assam, Tamil Nadu, and Delhi each saw substantial declines.
- Leading causes include data cleansing through Aadhaar-linked student-level tracking, eliminating duplicate entries, and a shift to private schools post-COVID.
- The decline impacted PM-POSHAN, with states reporting fewer students receiving midday meals, such as 5.41 lakh fewer in UP and 8.04 lakh fewer in West Bengal.
- The Education Ministry has urged states to probe the decline, ensure data accuracy, and submit remedial plans by June 30, 2025, to safeguard scheme coverage.

#### Konkan Railway to Merge with Indian Railways

- The Maharashtra government has approved the merger of Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL) with Indian Railways, making it the last of the four shareholder states—after Karnataka, Goa, and Kerala—to agree.
- The merger aims to address financial constraints faced by KRCL, such as limited revenue and rising infrastructure demands, by enabling access to central government funding.
- Maharashtra's approval is conditional on the retention of the Konkan Railway name and the reimbursement of ₹394 crore it had contributed during KRCL's formation in 1990.
- The integration will support track doubling, modernization, and passenger facility upgrades, thereby enhancing operational efficiency and safety.



- Spanning 741 km, the Konkan Railway is a strategic rail corridor connecting the western coastal states of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, and Kerala, vital for freight and passenger transit.

### **PM Modi Inaugurates 103 Amrit Stations Across 18 States Under ₹1,100 Crore Plan**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** virtually inaugurated **103 redeveloped railway stations** across **86 districts** under the **Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS)** with a total investment of over **₹1,100 crore**.
- **ABSS**, launched in 2023, aims to revamp over 1,300 railway stations in phases with a focus on modern facilities, sustainability, and cultural heritage integration.
- The newly inaugurated stations span 18 states and UTs, with notable numbers in Uttar Pradesh (19), Gujarat (18), Maharashtra (15), and Tamil Nadu (9).
- Stations now feature climate-controlled waiting areas, escalators, digital displays, eco-friendly infrastructure, and incorporate local architectural elements.
- The scheme is expected to boost regional connectivity, support tourism and local economies, and make Indian Railways more passenger-centric and globally competitive.

### **Asiatic Lion Population Surge in Gujarat**

- In 2025, Gujarat recorded 891 Asiatic lions, reflecting a 32% increase since 2020 and a 119% growth since 2010, as per data from the 16th Asiatic Lion Census.
- Over 507 lions now reside outside traditional protected areas like Gir National Park, with sightings reported in 58 talukas across 11 districts, including new habitats like Barda Sanctuary and coastal regions.
- The population includes 196 adult males, 330 adult females, 140 sub-adults, and 225 cubs, with a rising number of adult females indicating strong reproductive potential.
- Project Lion and related initiatives focusing on habitat restoration, prey base strengthening, and conflict mitigation have driven this growth, supported by a 3,000-member survey team covering 35,000 sq km.
- Despite the success, 669 lion deaths were recorded between 2020–2024, with 57 due to unnatural causes, underscoring the need for expanded quality habitats and long-term conservation planning.

### **Tamil Nadu Records 397 Wetland and 401 Terrestrial Bird Species in 2025 Synchronised Survey**

- The March 2025 Synchronised Bird Census in Tamil Nadu documented 7.85 lakh birds from 798 species, comprising 5.52 lakh wetland birds (397 species) and 2.32 lakh terrestrial birds (401 species).
- The survey, conducted in two phases across 934 wetlands and 1,093 terrestrial sites, included diverse habitats such as urban parks, rural landscapes, and protected forest areas.
- It identified 1,13,606 migratory birds from 136 species, including notable visitors like the Greater Flamingo, Eurasian Curlew, and Pied Avocet, affirming Tamil Nadu's role along the Central Asian Flyway.
- Among resident species, common wetland birds included the Little Egret and Asian Openbill, while terrestrial zones featured species like the Indian Peafowl and Rose-ringed Parakeet.
- The Forest Department recorded 26 endangered bird species and 17 nocturnal species, and announced plans for year-round bird monitoring with community involvement to strengthen conservation and data accuracy.

### **President Murmu Confers 39 Gallantry Awards for Bravery and Valour**

- President Droupadi Murmu awarded 39 gallantry medals, including 6 Kirti Chakras and 33 Shaurya Chakras, to personnel from the Armed Forces, CAPFs, and State/UT Police at the Defence Investiture Ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The Kirti Chakra, India's second-highest peacetime gallantry award, is given for conspicuous bravery not in the face of the enemy and has been awarded to 487 individuals till 2024, of which 198 were posthumous.
- The Shaurya Chakra, the third-highest such honour, recognizes acts of gallantry under circumstances other than war, and has had 2,122 recipients till 2023, including 627 posthumous honours.

- Both awards are open to military and civilian personnel, including members of the nursing services, and come with monthly monetary allowances—₹9,000 for Kirti Chakra and ₹6,000 for Shaurya Chakra—from the central government.
- State governments, like Rajasthan, also offer cash incentives and land allotments, showcasing the nationwide recognition and support for bravery and self-sacrifice outside conventional battlefield contexts.

### Assam Introduces 'Ankita': India's First AI News Anchor in Regional Language

- **Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma** unveiled 'Ankita', India's **first AI news anchor** to deliver government updates in a **regional language—Assamese**.
- Ankita debuted by announcing Assam Cabinet decisions, including the renaming of Dibrugarh Airport after Bhupen Hazarika and a financial grant for tea garden workers.
- Equipped with lifelike expressions and fluent Assamese voice modulation, Ankita uses advanced NLP and machine learning technologies to simulate a human-like news presentation.
- The initiative has received mixed public feedback—while many praised it for its technological innovation and accessibility, others raised concerns over job displacement for human anchors.
- Ankita follows Assam's AI strategy, including the AI teacher 'Iris', and reflects a broader national shift toward AI-integrated governance for inclusive and efficient public communication.

### Supreme Court Stays ED's Investigation into Tamil Nadu's TASMAL

- The **Supreme Court of India** stayed the **Enforcement Directorate's (ED)** investigation into **TASMAL**, Tamil Nadu's state-run liquor retailer, citing concerns over **jurisdictional overreach**.
- The ED had launched a probe into an alleged ₹1,000 crore scam involving liquor license corruption and overpricing, conducting raids at TASMAL's Chennai headquarters between March 6–8, 2025
- A bench led by CJI BR Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih questioned the legality of initiating criminal proceedings without a predicate offense, especially against a state-owned corporation
- The Court warned the ED against "crossing all limits" and stated that its actions violated the federal structure, which guarantees clear demarcation of state and central authority.
- While noting that individuals may be prosecuted, the Court emphasized that penalizing a state entity like TASMAL requires clear evidence and legal basis, reinforcing safeguards against executive overreach.

### Supreme Court Recognizes CAPF as Organised Services, Ensuring Career Progression

- On **May 23, 2025**, the **Supreme Court** ruled that **Group A officers** of the **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)** must be treated as part of the **Organised Group A Services (OGAS)**, ending decades of **career stagnation**.
- The Court noted that frequent **deputation of IPS officers into CAPF senior ranks had stalled promotions, with officers waiting 25–30 years to reach posts like Commandant or DIG**.
- The bench ordered a cadre restructuring within six months and instructed the government to progressively reduce IPS deputations at the SAG and IG levels over two years.
- The ruling will benefit approximately 13,000 Group A officers, making them eligible for benefits like Non-Functional Financial Upgradation (NFFU)—providing financial parity if peers in other services are promoted.
- Though the DoPT had acknowledged OGAS status for CAPFs in July 2019, the Court clarified that full benefits must be uniformly implemented and not be applied selectively.

### National Writeshop in Delhi Launches Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0

- The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** launched **PAI 2.0** at the **National Writeshop in New Delhi**, aiming to empower **Gram Panchayats** with **data-driven tools** for governance aligned with **Localized Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs)**.
- PAI 2.0 evaluates panchayat performance across nine LSDG-aligned themes, including poverty, health, education, water sufficiency, environment, infrastructure, governance, social justice, and women's empowerment.



- Key upgrades over PAI 1.0 include streamlined indicators (147 vs. 516), automated national data portal integration, a mobile-friendly portal, anomaly detection, and a Decision Support System for resource prioritization.
- The event featured the launch of the PAI 2.0 portal, LIF booklet, and SOPs, alongside technical workshops, live demonstrations, and hands-on training for State and UT teams on using the platform for planning and monitoring.
- Participants included officials from 32 States/UTs, departments like Health, Education, WCD, and partners like NITI Aayog, NIC, UNICEF, UNFPA, and the Piramal Foundation, reflecting a multi-sectoral push for grassroots development.

### INS Tarini Completes World Voyage: A Triumph of Nari Shakti and Seamanship

- **INSV Tarini** completed the **Navika Sagar Parikrama II**, a historic **circumnavigation of the globe by an all-women crew**, covering around **25,600 nautical miles** using only wind power.
- **Lieutenant Commanders Dilna K and Roopa A** undertook the eight-month journey, with stopovers in **Australia, New Zealand, Falkland Islands, and South Africa**, navigating through challenging routes like the **Drake Passage**.
- The crew conducted **scientific research** in collaboration with the **National Institute of Oceanography and Wildlife Institute of India**, gathering data on **marine microplastics** and **large sea mammals**.
- The expedition reinforces the Indian Navy's commitment to **gender equality** and promotes India's maritime capabilities, while **symbolizing women's empowerment in defense services**.
- A ceremonial **flag-in event** took place at **Mormugao Port, Goa**, attended by **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh**, celebrating the success of India's maritime mission led by women.

### Cargo Ship Sinks Near Kerala Coast: Impact of Oil Spills and Cleanup Measures

- On **May 25, 2025**, **MSC ELSA 3**, a Liberian-flagged cargo ship carrying **hazardous materials and 451.5 tonnes of fuel**, sank **38 nautical miles off Kerala's coast**, sparking **environmental concerns**.
- The ship's cargo included 13 containers with hazardous substances like calcium carbide, raising the risk of chemical contamination, along with an imminent oil spill threat to marine ecosystems.
- Plastic pellets (nurdles) have already started washing ashore, escalating plastic pollution and posing risks to marine species and coastal biodiversity.
- The Indian Coast Guard has launched a containment effort using dispersants, booms, and satellite-based oil spill tracking, while the Kerala government initiated scientific monitoring of contamination.
- Fishing within 20 nautical miles of the incident area has been banned, and public warnings have been issued to prevent interaction with washed-ashore debris or toxic substances.

### 'Sugar Boards' in Schools

- In **May 2025**, **CBSE** mandated the installation of **'Sugar Boards'** across all affiliated schools to educate students about the **health risks of excessive sugar intake**, particularly in relation to childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes.
- These boards provide clear visual information on recommended daily sugar limits, sugar content in common foods, and suggest healthier dietary alternatives to encourage informed food choices.
- Studies show that Indian children consume 13–15% of their daily calories from sugar, far exceeding the WHO's recommended limit of 5%, highlighting the need for urgent intervention.
- CBSE has also advised schools to conduct interactive workshops and seminars to integrate sugar awareness into everyday classroom learning.
- The initiative involves parents and the school community, promoting nutritional awareness at both home and school levels for sustainable behaviour change.

### Tata-Airbus to Build India's First Private Helicopter Assembly Line in Karnataka

- **Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) and Airbus** announced a partnership to establish **India's first private helicopter final assembly line** in Kolar, Karnataka
- The facility, spanning **740,000 sq. ft.**, will focus on assembling **Airbus H125 helicopters**, with operations expected to begin in **2026** and a **production capacity of 10 units annually**, expandable as needed.
- With this, **India becomes the fourth nation** to host an H125 final assembly line, reinforcing its standing in global aerospace manufacturing under the 'Make in India' initiative.
- Karnataka was chosen due to its existing aerospace ecosystem, skilled labor pool, and state incentives such as land subsidies and production-linked incentives.
- This venture is part of a broader Tata-Airbus collaboration that includes the C295 military aircraft line in Gujarat, boosting India's defence and civilian aviation sectors.

#### **Miniratna Status Granted to MIL, AVNL & IOL: A New Milestone in India's Defence Sector**

- The Indian government granted **Miniratna Category-I** status to **Munitions India Limited (MIL), Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVNL), and India Optel Limited (IOL)**—three **Defence PSUs** formed after the **Ordnance Factory Board's corporatization in 2021**.
- MIL (Pune) specializes in ammunition and increased its sales from ₹2,571.6 crore in FY 2021–22 to ₹8,282 crore in FY 2024–25, with exports rising to ₹3,081 crore.
- AVNL (Chennai) manufactures tanks and combat vehicles, achieving 100% engine indigenization for key platforms and posting nearly ₹5,000 crore in FY 2024–25 sales
- IOL (Dehradun) focuses on opto-electronic systems, growing from ₹562 crore to ₹1,541 crore in three years, signaling strong market performance.
- The Miniratna status allows these PSUs greater financial autonomy, enabling capital investments up to ₹500 crore without prior approval, enhancing competitiveness in the defence sector.

#### **Sadhguru Conferred with 'Global Indian of the Year' Award by Canada India Foundation**

- **Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev** received the '**Global Indian of the Year**' award from the **Canada India Foundation (CIF)** in Toronto for his **global contributions** to spirituality and environmental awareness.
- CIF acknowledged his decades-long efforts in promoting consciousness and ecological sustainability, particularly through initiatives like the Conscious Planet and Cauvery Calling movements.
- The award included a CAD 50,000 prize, which Sadhguru pledged to support the revival of the Cauvery River, benefiting millions in southern India.
- CIF praised his practical, scalable solutions to soil degradation and climate change, aligning with Canada's values of sustainability and inclusivity.
- Sadhguru expressed gratitude to the Indo-Canadian community, recognizing their role in strengthening ties between India and Canada.

#### **Aizawl Becomes 4th Northeast Capital Linked to National Railway Network**

- On **May 1, 2025**, the **Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR)** completed a **trial run** on the **Bairabi-Sairang railway line**, officially linking **Aizawl** to the **national railway network**, making it the **fourth northeastern capital** to achieve such connectivity.
- The 51.38 km-long line, built at a revised cost of ₹5,021.45 crore, connects Bairabi in Kolasib district to Sairang, located 20 km from Aizawl.
- The project, which achieved 94.52% physical and 97.13% financial completion by May 2025, traverses challenging terrain with 48 tunnels, 55 major bridges, and Bridge No. 196, one of India's tallest rail bridges.
- The trial run was successfully conducted on May 1, and the official inauguration is expected after June 17, following inspection by the Commission of Railway Safety (CRS).
- This development significantly enhances connectivity and **economic integration** for **Mizoram**, promoting regional development and national unity.

## India Notifies Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Rules, 2025

- The Indian government notified the **Inter-Services Organisations Rules, 2025**, under the **Inter-Services Organisations Act, 2023**, aiming to improve **joint command and discipline** within the Armed Forces.
- The Act, passed in the 2023 Monsoon Session, came into force on May 10, 2024, and grants Commanders-in-Chief and Officers-in-Command of Inter-Services Organisations (ISOs) authority over Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel under their command.
- These rules lay down protocols for succession in command, designation of officiating officers, and emergency command appointments to maintain operational efficiency.
- By centralizing disciplinary authority, the rules aim to eliminate procedural duplication, thereby ensuring quicker resolution of disciplinary cases.
- The reform represents a major step toward achieving jointness, efficiency, and cohesion across India's tri-service military operations.

## Delhi High Court Protects Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev's Personality Rights

- The **Delhi High Court** issued an **ex-parte interim order** protecting **Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev's personality rights**, restricting misuse of his **image, name, voice, and likeness** through **AI-generated content**.
- The court acted on a petition that cited false videos, morphed images, and scam advertisements misrepresenting Sadhguru for financial fraud and misinformation.
- Justice Saurabh Banerjee issued a dynamic+ injunction and a 'John Doe' order, which apply to unknown offenders and future digital platforms.
- The court ordered the takedown and suspension of infringing YouTube channels and mandated disclosure of subscriber information of the accused entities.
- Government agencies like DoT and MeitY were directed to ensure removal of infringing content from websites and social media under digital media regulations.

## India Launches Unit-1 of Ghatampur Thermal Power Project

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi inaugurated Unit-1 (660 MW)** of the **Ghatampur Thermal Power Project in Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh**.
- The plant is a **joint venture** between **NLC India Limited (51%)** and **UPRVUNL (49%)**, totaling **1,980 MW** capacity at an estimated cost of **₹21,780.94 crore**.
- Unit-1 commenced operations in December 2024, with Units 2 and 3 scheduled for commissioning by FY 2025–26; 75.12% of power is allocated to Uttar Pradesh, and the rest to Assam.
- The plant features supercritical boilers with high thermal efficiency (88.81%) and houses a 10.165 LMT coal stockyard and 46 lakh cubic meters of raw water capacity.
- A 765 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) has been installed to ensure efficient power transmission, and fuel is sourced from a 9 MTPA captive coal mine.

## Lok Sabha Speaker Nominates Three MPs to Press Council of India

- **Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla** nominated **Dr. Sambit Patra (BJP)**, **Naresh Mhaske (Shiv Sena)**, and **Kali Charan Munda (INC)** to the **Press Council of India (PCI)**.
- The **PCI**, established under the **Press Council Act of 1978**, is a **quasi-judicial body** tasked with **protecting press freedom** and improving journalistic standards.
- The Council includes **28 members**, comprising **working journalists, newspaper representatives, MPs**, and experts in **education, law, and literature**.
- The new appointments ensure political diversity within the PCI, reflecting bipartisan representation from BJP, Congress, and Shiv Sena.
- PCI members serve a three-year term, and these appointments follow recent Rajya Sabha nominations of BJP MPs Sudhanshu Trivedi and Brij Lal.

### Ladakh Land and Job Regulations of 2025: Empowering Locals and Preserving Cultural Identity

- The Government of India announced a new set of **regulations for Ladakh** focusing on **employment, domicile, women's representation, and language policy** to address local demands.
- The Ladakh Reservation Regulation, 2025, reserves 85% of government jobs and professional education seats for local residents, excluding the 10% EWS quota.
- Domicile eligibility under the Ladakh Civil Services Recruitment Regulation requires either 15 years of residence, 7 years of study with Class 10/12 from Ladakh, or 10 years of service by a parent in the UT.
- Amendments to the Hill Development Councils Act reserve one-third of council seats for women, with rotating constituencies to ensure equitable representation.
- The Official Languages Regulation, 2025, recognizes English, Hindi, Urdu, Bhoti, and Purgi as official languages and promotes others like Shina, Brokskat, Balti, and Ladakhi.

### Telangana Notifies Kumram Bheem Conservation Reserve to Strengthen Tiger Corridor

- Telangana declared **Kumram Bheem Conservation Reserve** under **Section 36(A) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, to **connect the Kawal and Tadoba Tiger Reserves**.
- The reserve covers 1,492.88 sq. km, spans 78 forest blocks, and acts as a critical tiger corridor across Telangana, Maharashtra, and Chhattisgarh.
- It hosts diverse fauna including tigers, leopards, sloth bears, wild dogs, and 240+ bird species, notably the Malabar Pied Hornbill and Long-Billed Vulture.
- A 12-member Conservation Reserve Management Committee was constituted, including DFOs, NGOs, local panchayat leaders, and government officers.
- This declaration strengthens habitat connectivity, ensures community participation, and enables sustainable conservation within India's Eastern Ghats–Western Ghats corridor.

### Uttar Pradesh Approves 20% Police Reservation for Ex-Agniveers: Enhancing Post-Service Opportunities

- The **Uttar Pradesh Cabinet**, led by **CM Yogi Adityanath**, approved **20% horizontal reservation** for **ex-Agniveers** in police recruitment for roles such as constables, PAC, mounted police, and firemen.
- The reservation is horizontal, allowing ex-Agniveers to compete within their social category (e.g., SC, ST, OBC), ensuring equitable access.
- A three-year upper age limit relaxation has also been granted, recognizing the service tenure of Agniveers and aligning them with ex-servicemen provisions.
- The policy will come into effect with the first Agniveer batch's exit in 2026, ensuring a smooth transition from military to civilian employment.
- Uttar Pradesh becomes the first Indian state to offer 20% reservation, compared to 10% in Haryana and Odisha.

### Assam and Meghalaya Joint Hydropower Project Initiative: Kulsi Multipurpose Project

- CMs Himanta Biswa Sarma and Conrad Sangma jointly launched the Kulsi Multipurpose Project to generate 55 MW hydroelectric power and enhance irrigation in Kamrup and Goalpara districts.
- Due to the presence of endangered Gangetic dolphins, both states will conduct ecological assessments and engage local communities before project execution.
- The states also initiated a flood management plan for Guwahati using NESAC satellite imaging, with IIT Roorkee developing flood mitigation strategies.
- As part of long-pending border resolution, they plan to install boundary pillars in five sectors by August 15, 2025, advancing a 52-year-old dispute settlement.
- The project is expected to boost eco-tourism and rural livelihoods, aligning with sustainable development goals of the region.

### India to Conduct Population Census 2027 in Two Phases with Caste Enumeration



- The Government of India announced that the next national population census will be conducted in two phases, beginning in April 2026 and concluding by March 1, 2027.
- The census will include comprehensive caste enumeration, collecting data on SCs, STs, OBCs, and General category castes for the first time since 1931.
- Phase I (House Listing) will be conducted from April to September 2026, while Phase II (Population Enumeration) will take place in February 2027, with October 1, 2026, set as the reference date for snow-bound areas.
- The census will adopt digital data collection methods using mobile apps and tablets, enhancing accuracy and real-time data compilation.
- This data will be critical for constituency delimitation, implementing the 2023 Women's Reservation Bill, and potentially revisiting the reservation ceiling in light of caste demographics.

### **Khichan and Menar Wetlands Receive Ramsar Tag Ahead of World Environment Day**

- **Khichan Wetland (Phalodi) and Menar Wetland (Udaipur) in Rajasthan** were declared **Ramsar Sites**, raising India's total to **91**, the **highest in Asia**.
- Khichan is globally known for hosting thousands of Demoiselle cranes, protected through local community traditions of feeding and sheltering migratory birds.
- Menar, or the Bird Village, supports over 200 bird species across Brahma Talab and Dhand Talab, with community-led conservation efforts enforcing fishing and hunting bans.
- Rajasthan now has four Ramsar Sites, with Sambhar Salt Lake and Keoladeo National Park being the others, reflecting growing emphasis on wetland preservation.
- The recognition was lauded by PM Modi and Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav as a demonstration of India's environmental commitment and public participation.

### **PM Modi Inaugurates Chenab Rail Bridge, Completing Kashmir's Rail Link to India**

- On **June 6, 2025**, PM **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **Chenab Rail Bridge**, the **world's highest railway arch bridge**, finalizing the **Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL)** project.
- Standing 359 meters above the riverbed and built with 30,000 tonnes of steel, the bridge surpasses the Eiffel Tower in height and is resistant to earthquakes and blasts.
- Along with this, he inaugurated the Anji Khad Bridge, India's first cable-stayed railway bridge, enhancing strategic and civilian connectivity in Jammu & Kashmir
- PM Modi also flagged off two Vande Bharat Express trains between Katra and Srinagar, cutting travel time to around three hours with features tailored for harsh winter conditions.
- The USBRL project, first envisioned by Maharaja Hari Singh in 1892, is expected to boost tourism, military logistics, and economic integration, delivering all-weather rail access to the Kashmir Valley.

### **Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla (USBRL) Rail Link Fully Operational After 28 Years**

- The **USBRL project** spanning **272 km** became fully operational, connecting the **Kashmir Valley** to the **Indian Railways network** for the first time with **year-round accessibility**.
- Initiated in 1997, the project was completed in phases: Jammu-Udhampur (2005), Anantnag-Mazhom (2008), Qazigund-Baramulla (2009), Udhampur-Katra (2014), Banihal-Sangaldan (2024), and the final Katra-Banihal stretch (2025), inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi.
- Engineering marvels include the Pir Panjal Tunnel (11.2 km), 36 tunnels, 943 bridges, and the Chenab Rail Bridge—the world's tallest railway arch bridge at 359 m, and Anji Khad, India's first cable-stayed rail bridge.
- The Chenab Bridge, built using 30,000 tonnes of steel (including 12,000 tonnes from SAIL-Bhilai), is designed to resist wind speeds of 266 km/h and earthquakes up to magnitude 8.
- Vande Bharat Express trains between Katra and Srinagar now reduce travel time from 7 hours to 3 hours, ensuring all-weather transport, crucial for the snowbound region.

### Tamil Nadu Declares Dhanushkodi as Greater Flamingo Sanctuary

- Tamil Nadu declared Dhanushkodi Lagoon a Greater Flamingo Sanctuary, protecting 524.8 hectares under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Located within the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve, the area hosts over 10,000 migratory birds and supports local fisheries, sea-turtle nesting, and coastal ecosystems.
- The sanctuary will be managed under an Integrated Management Plan with a ₹50 crore fund for marine conservation and eco-tourism development.
- It is Tamil Nadu's first exclusive flamingo sanctuary, contributing to the Wetlands Mission goal of restoring 100 wetlands in five years.
- Conservationists flagged pollution risks from incidents like the plastic nurdle spill from MSC Elsa 3, calling for continued vigilance and habitat restoration.

### Maharashtra Launches GeoTagged Unique ID for Infrastructure Projects

- The Maharashtra government launched a digital reform initiative to assign a 13-digit geotagged Unique Infrastructure Facility ID (UIFID) to every public infrastructure asset, streamlining project tracking and enhancing transparency.
- The system was piloted in Wardha and will be rolled out across the state from October 1, 2025, with projects being digitally mapped and linked to this unique ID.
- The Maharashtra Remote Sensing Application Centre (MRSAC) will manage geo-tagging and ensure that no invoice payments are made without a valid UIFID.
- The system cross-verifies each new registration to prevent duplication and allows real-time dashboards and monthly district-level reviews for better inter-departmental coordination.
- The initiative aligns with PM Gati Shakti and Gram Manchitra schemes, and all projects from 2020 to 2025 must be registered by March 31, 2026 to ensure data integrity.

### Mumbai Rises to 6th Globally in Under-Construction Data Centre Capacity

- As per **Cushman & Wakefield's 2025 report**, Mumbai ranks **6th globally** in under-construction data centre capacity, with **335 MW** currently being developed—surpassing hubs like **London and Dublin**.

Upon completion, this will boost Mumbai's operational data capacity by 62%, reinforcing its role as India's digital infrastructure leader.

- Mumbai accounts for 42% of India's total under-construction capacity, contributing significantly to the expected doubling of national capacity to 1.8 GW by 2026.
- The city is the 7th most developed data centre market in Asia-Pacific, driven by demand for cloud computing, AI workloads, and new submarine cables.
- Other Indian cities such as Pune and Bengaluru also rank high in Asia-Pacific, reflecting India's emergence as a global data hub.

### Bengaluru Declared India's 'Leopard Capital' with 80–85 Leopards

- A **2024–25 camera-trap survey** by the **Holématti Nature Foundation** found **80–85 wild leopards** in and around Bengaluru, surpassing **Mumbai's 54**, and earning the city the title of **India's 'Leopard Capital'**.
- The study, led by Dr. Sanjay Gubbi, used over 250 cameras across 282 km<sup>2</sup> in Bannerghatta NP and surrounding forests to document the leopard population.
- Bannerghatta alone houses 54 leopards, with the rest spread across nearby habitats such as Turahalli, B.M. Kaval, and Roerich Estate.
- Improved prey availability, reduced translocation, and effective protection measures contributed to the steady population rise since 2019.
- The report recommends declaring key habitats as Conservation Reserves, expanding Bannerghatta NP, and halting leopard translocations to support biodiversity.

### India to Build First Underwater Museum Using INS Guldar in Maharashtra

- On **February 21, 2025**, the Indian Navy handed over **INS Guldar**, a decommissioned **Polnocny-class landing ship**, to Maharashtra for conversion into **India's first underwater museum** off **Nivati Rocks, Sindhudurg**.
- The ₹46.91 crore project, funded by the Union Tourism Ministry, aims to develop the site as both an artificial coral reef and an eco-tourism destination with scuba diving and educational facilities.
- INS Guldar, commissioned in 1985 and decommissioned in 2024, served the Navy for 39 years, completing over 490 beaching operations and nearly 4,000 days at sea.
- The MTDC will lead the ship's conversion, involving environmental cleaning, marine NOCs, and safe scuttling aligned with marine conservation rules.
- The museum will also aid the Indian Navy as a diving training platform, while contributing to marine biodiversity and sustainable tourism in coastal Maharashtra.

### Forest Committee Clears Arunachal's Etalin Hydel Project Despite Ecological Risks

- India's Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) granted in-principle clearance for the 3,097 MW Etalin Hydropower Project in Dibang Valley, allowing diversion of 1,175 hectares of forest land.
- The clearance permits felling of over 278,000 trees, even though the region is classified as a high conservation value area hosting endangered species like tigers, snow leopards, and musk deer.
- A previous FAC review in 2022 had rejected the proposal due to inadequate biodiversity studies, but the June 2025 clearance relied on an earlier four-month Wildlife Institute of India report.
- The project, proposed since 2014, is a run-of-the-river scheme that avoids large reservoirs but still affects critical biodiversity corridors and community forests.
- The clearance was granted with general and specific conditions after the Arunachal Pradesh government addressed prior concerns, making this the sixth FAC review since the project's inception.

### Bairabi-Sairang Rail Project Connects Mizoram's Capital to Indian Railways

- The Commissioner of Railway Safety approved the final 33.86 km stretch from Hortoki to Sairang, completing the 51.38 km Bairabi-Sairang broad-gauge line, formally linking Aizawl to India's railway network.
- The project involved complex engineering: 48 tunnels, 55 major bridges, and 87 minor bridges, with pier #196 standing at 104 metres, taller than the Qutub Minar.
- Originally estimated at ₹2,384 crore, the cost rose to ₹8,200 crore, with phased completion starting in 2024 and formal inauguration expected by July 2025.
- The project marks Aizawl as the fourth Northeast capital to gain railway connectivity and is expected to boost tourism, trade, and reduce logistics costs in line with the Act East Policy.
- Mizoram's CM has requested expanded rail services, employment for local youth, reservation centres, and internet connectivity, with Inner Line Permit (ILP) integration and railway police deployment under review.

### PM Modi's Cyprus Visit Boosts Bilateral Ties and Strategic Cooperation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Cyprus for the first time in over two decades, holding bilateral talks with President Nikos Christodoulides and participating in a business roundtable in Limassol.
- Discussions focused on expanding cooperation in defence, AI, logistics, shipbuilding, and green infrastructure, with emphasis on platforms like the India-Greece-Cyprus Business Council and UPI-Eurobank collaboration.
- The leaders signed multiple MoUs in trade, digital governance, and strategic connectivity, with Cyprus reiterating its support for India's territorial integrity and its role in the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).
- PM Modi was honoured with the Grand Cross of the Order of Makarios III, Cyprus's highest civilian award, and received a warm welcome from the Indian diaspora and cultural groups.
- Both sides affirmed optimism for concluding the India-EU Free Trade Agreement by the end of 2025, with Cyprus positioned as a gateway for Indian access to the EU during its upcoming 2026 EU Council presidency.

### India Sets New Temperature Norms for ACs to Cut Power Consumption

- The government revised national guidelines for **air conditioner operations**, mandating a **temperature band of 20 °C to 28 °C** for all new residential, commercial, and vehicular AC units.
- The updated regulation builds on the **2018 advisory**, which recommended 24 °C default, and could lead to **6% energy savings per degree** increase, helping to reduce **grid stress during heatwaves**.
- Standardised AC usage is expected to save ₹18,000–₹20,000 crore in electricity bills over three years and reduce peak load demand by 60 GW by 2035.
- A parallel ₹5,400 crore fund has been launched to support 30 GWh battery storage projects, enhancing renewable energy integration and grid stability.
- For the first time, vehicle-installed ACs and non-residential cooling systems have been included under central energy-efficiency regulations, expanding the policy's nationwide impact.

### SEZ Reforms Cleared to Boost India's Semiconductor Manufacturing

- The Department of Commerce notified key amendments to the SEZ Rules, 2006, reducing land requirements for semiconductor and electronics component SEZs from 50 to 10 hectares, easing investment barriers.
- The reforms simplify land use, permit mortgaged or leased plots, and allow domestic sales of SEZ-manufactured products upon paying duties, increasing flexibility for high-tech units.
- Changes to Rule 53 enable inclusion of free-of-cost goods in Net Foreign Exchange (NFE) calculations, giving a clearer picture of export performance.
- These steps aim to establish India as a semiconductor hub, with approvals already granted to Micron (₹13,000 crore in Sanand) and Aequs Group (₹100 crore in Dharwad) for new SEZs.
- The reforms are seen as critical to attracting capital-intensive, import-dependent investments and enabling high-skilled employment in India's semiconductor ecosystem.

### Centre's Spending Cap on MGNREGS Faces Legal and Operational Criticism

- The Finance Ministry capped MGNREGS expenditure at 60% of the ₹86,000 crore annual budget for April–September FY26, integrating it into the Monthly Expenditure Plan.
- The cap aims to control chronic overspending, pending dues (~₹22,462 crore combined), and promote fiscal discipline, but contradicts the scheme's demand-driven statutory nature.
- Critics argue that this move undermines legal guarantees under the MGNREG Act, 2005, with precedents like *Swaraj Abhiyan v. Union of India* (2016) affirming that funds cannot override rights.
- The cap could either lead to denial of work or wage delays, aggravating ongoing issues of pending payments and non-payment of unemployment allowances.
- Civil society and legal experts warn this may erode the scheme's purpose as a rural safety net, setting a precedent where statutory entitlements are made conditional on budgetary constraints.

### Lucknow Nominated for UNESCO 'City of Gastronomy' Tag

- In **June 2025**, **Lucknow** was nominated by the **Ministry of Culture** and **Uttar Pradesh government** to UNESCO's **Creative Cities Network** under the **City of Gastronomy** category.
- The nomination showcases Lucknow's rich Awadhi culinary heritage, including iconic dishes like Tunday kebabs, Galawati, Biryani, Bajpai ki Puri, and Motichur laddoos, prepared with traditional dum pukht techniques
- The dossier highlights the contributions of diverse communities in preserving and advancing indigenous food practices and refined spice layering.
- If approved, Lucknow will become India's second gastronomic city after Hyderabad, joining global peers like Alba (Italy) and Arequipa (Peru).
- The bid is expected to enhance cultural tourism, support culinary sustainability, and promote international recognition of India's food heritage.

### Amitabh Kant Retires After Illustrious 45-Year Career in Public Service



- **Amitabh Kant** resigned as **India's G20 Sherpa**, concluding a remarkable **45-year career** in civil service, policy, and economic governance
- Kant, a 1980-batch **IAS officer**, previously served as **Tourism Secretary, CEO of NITI Aayog**, and architect of landmark initiatives like **Make in India, Startup India**, and **Ease of Doing Business**
- As G20 Sherpa (2022–2025), he oversaw India's historic **2023 G20 Presidency**, achieving consensus on the **Leaders' Declaration** and integrating the **African Union into the G20**.
- He also led **digital infrastructure reforms, green hydrogen, Atal Innovation Mission**, and launched **Aspirational Districts Programme**, transforming India's development planning.
- Kant now plans to work with **think tanks, startups**, and academia, continuing his contribution to **policy innovation and public governance**.

### State of India's Environment 2025: Rising Pressures, Limited Progress

- The CSE–DTE 2025 Report found that no Indian state scored above 70/100 on environmental performance, with widespread challenges in waste, sewage, and pollution control.
- Punjab's groundwater extraction hit an unsustainable 156.87%, with major contamination from arsenic, fluoride, uranium, and iron, raising public health alarms.
- India's agricultural land share declined from 62.3% (1950s) to 58.7% (2022–23), while forest cover remains at 21.7%, and mangroves at ~4,992 km<sup>2</sup> with marginal declines.
- Renewable energy rose to 225.8 TWh in 2023–24, though thermal energy still dominates with 1,326 TWh, underscoring challenges in decarbonization.
- The report calls for urgent policy corrections, warning that most Indian states remain ecologically vulnerable despite gains in fisheries, Ramsar site coverage, and EnviStats transparency.

### India's NIHSAD Designated Global Rinderpest Virus Facility

- The ICAR–NIHSAD in **Bhopal** was granted **Category A status** by **FAO and WOA**, making it one of only **six global labs** authorized to store **Rinderpest Virus-Containing Material**.
- Though **rinderpest was eradicated in 2011**, safe preservation of samples is critical for **biosecurity**, disease surveillance, and **emergency response**.
- NIHSAD has been India's official repository since 2012 and a reference lab for avian influenza and Newcastle disease, adhering to BSL-3 containment standards.
- The one-year recognition followed a rigorous joint inspection in March 2025, validating safety, inventory, and One Health coordination protocols
- India's global role in animal health governance has been reaffirmed, emphasizing veterinary biosafety and international disease prevention leadership.

### Indian Navy Inducts INS Arnala, Strengthening Coastal Defence

- The Indian Navy commissioned **INS Arnala**, the first **Anti-Submarine Warfare hallow Water Craft (ASWSWC)**, at **Visakhapatnam** under the Eastern Naval Command.
- Designed for submarine surveillance, SAR, minelaying, and joint operations, it is ideal for shallow littoral zones with a 2.7m draught and diesel-waterjet propulsion.
- The ship is equipped with torpedoes, ASW rockets, and advanced sonar systems, with over 80% indigenous content, involving GRSE, L&T, BEL, and Mahindra Defence.
- INS Arnala is the lead ship of a 16-vessel series, replacing the ageing Abhay-class corvettes, with all ships expected to be in service by 2026.
- Named after Arnala Fort, it symbolizes India's naval legacy and its transformation into a builder's navy under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

### State of India's Environment 2025 Report Highlights

- According to CSE's **State of India's Environment 2025**, **no state** scored above 70/100 in environmental metrics; leading states like **Sikkim** and **Goa** still face issues in **waste and sewage treatment**.
- Punjab reported a 156.87% groundwater extraction rate, with widespread contamination and declining agricultural land (now at 58.69% of total area).
- India's forest cover stands at 21.7%, and mangroves at 4,992 km<sup>2</sup>, while thermal power output surged, despite efforts to raise renewable energy from 65.5 TWh to 225.8 TWh.
- Climate indicators show mean annual temperature rose by 0.69°C since 2001, with rainfall trends remaining erratic.
- The report underscores India's vulnerability and emphasizes that most states are underperforming on critical environmental and public health indicators.

### Centre Approves ₹2,006.40 Crore Aid to Himachal Pradesh for 2023 Disaster Recovery

- A high-level committee chaired by **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** approved **₹2,006.40 crore** in central aid to **Himachal Pradesh** to support recovery from the **2023 floods, landslides, and cloudbursts**.
- The package includes ₹1,504.80 crore under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), supplementing a prior approval of ₹633.73 crore granted in December 2023.
- The 2023 monsoon disasters inflicted massive infrastructural and human losses across HP, with damages estimated in thousands of crores.
- The committee also sanctioned funds for Uttarakhand (₹1,658.17 crore) and Sikkim (₹555.27 crore), and allocated ₹7,253.51 crore for disaster mitigation projects nationwide.
- While BJP leaders welcomed the assistance, the Congress-led HP government deemed the aid insufficient, reigniting a political debate over the centre's response to state-level calamities.

### PM Modi Flags Off India's First Locomotive Export to Guinea from Bihar

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** flagged off India's **first-ever export-bound diesel locomotive** from **Marhowra Diesel Locomotive Factory**, Bihar, destined for **Guinea** under a **₹3,000 crore export deal**.
- The ES43ACi locomotives (4,500 HP) are equipped with AC propulsion, regenerative braking, ergonomic cabs, and are compatible with multiple gauges, to be used in Guinea's TransGuinée Railway for the Simandou iron ore project.
- The PPP-based Marhowra plant, launched in 2018 with Wabtec, has produced over 700 locomotives and will manufacture 150 for Guinea over three years, creating local employment in Bihar.
- The project strengthens the Make in India – Make for the World initiative, elevates India's role in heavy-rail manufacturing, and boosts India-Africa trade relations.
- The event coincided with PM Modi's fourth visit to poll-bound Bihar, where he launched new railway lines, Vande Bharat Express, energy projects, and water infrastructure schemes.

### PM Modi's First-Ever Visit to Croatia Deepens India-Europe Ties

- **PM Modi** made the **first official Indian PM visit to Croatia**, concluding his **three-nation tour** (Cyprus, Canada, Croatia) and holding wide-ranging talks with **Croatian PM Andrej Plenković**.
- Both nations emphasized Croatia's potential as a gateway to Central and Southeast Europe via Adriatic ports, aligning it with India's India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) strategy.
- They signed four MoUs in agriculture, S&T, culture, and a Hindi Chair at the University of Zagreb, enhancing cooperation in defence, shipping, pharma, tourism, and renewable energy.
- Croatia reaffirmed support for India on terrorism, and both countries emphasized rule of law, sovereignty, and UN reforms, with Croatia positioned to influence EU decisions relevant to India.
- Cultural and people-to-people ties were also celebrated, including collaborations on Indology, yoga, and historical exchanges dating back to 18th-century Sanskrit scholarship.

### India and Cyprus Sign MoU to Enable UPI-Based Cross-Border Payments

- During **PM Modi's Cyprus visit (June 15–16, 2025)**, **NPCI International** and **Eurobank Cyprus** signed an MoU to implement **UPI-based cross-border payment systems**, enabling **instant digital transactions**.
- The agreement was finalized at the Limassol Business Roundtable, where other deals like an MoU between NSE International Exchange and Cyprus Stock Exchange were also signed.
- The move allows Indian tourists and businesses to use real-time UPI payments in Cyprus, bypassing currency exchange issues and expanding merchant access to India's fintech ecosystem.
- Strategically, Cyprus's EU and Mediterranean positioning provides a launchpad for UPI's expansion into Europe, supporting India's fintech diplomacy.
- With international UPI adoption already in France, Sri Lanka, UAE, and UK, Cyprus adds to India's growing global digital payment footprint.

### **Sahitya Akademi Announces 2025 Yuva and Bal Sahitya Puraskar Awards**

- The **Sahitya Akademi** announced its **Yuva Puraskar (23 winners)** and **Bal Sahitya Puraskar (24 winners)** for **literary contributions from 2019–2023**, awarding each with **₹50,000 and a copper plaque**.
- Notable Yuva winners include Advait Kottary (English) for *Siddhartha: The Boy Who Became the Buddha*, and Parvati Tirkey (Hindi) for *Phir Ugna*; others span Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Santali.
- Bal Sahitya Puraskar winners include Nitin Kushalappa MP (English) for *Dakshin*, and Sushil Shukla (Hindi) for *Ek Batey Bara*, covering poetry, fiction, and storytelling for children.
- Awards span 23 languages for Yuva and 24 for Bal, selected by language-specific juries and ratified by the Executive Board led by Madhav Kaushik.
- The awards spotlight emerging voices in youth and children's literature, encouraging literary excellence across regional and national languages.

## INTERNATIONAL

### **WHO Adopts First-Ever Global Pandemic Treaty**

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** adopted the **first international treaty on pandemic preparedness and response** at the **78th World Health Assembly in Geneva**, with **124 countries voting in favor** and **11 abstaining**.
- The treaty aims to address inequities exposed by COVID-19 by ensuring equitable access to healthcare resources and strengthening international cooperation in managing future pandemics.
- A key feature is the Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS) system, which mandates the sharing of pathogen data and reserves 20% of pandemic health products (10% free of cost) for equitable distribution.
- The treaty respects national sovereignty, stating that the WHO cannot impose actions like lockdowns or vaccine mandates within member states.
- The treaty will become operational once ratified by at least 60 countries, though the United States abstained, citing concerns over sovereignty and WHO's COVID-19 response.

### **Sudan Appoints Kamil Idris as First Prime Minister Since 2023 Civil War**

- Sudan's army chief **General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan** appointed **Dr. Kamil Idris** as the **first prime minister** since the **civil war** broke out in **April 2023**, marking a significant move toward political transition.
- **Dr. Idris**, a former **WIPO Director-General** and member of the **UN International Law Commission**, brings **diplomatic experience** and **non-partisan credentials** to the role.
- He is tasked with forming a technocratic cabinet, aiming to restore civilian governance and support an inclusive peace process in war-torn Sudan.
- International bodies like the UN and African Union have welcomed his appointment, viewing it as a step toward stability and inclusive governance.
- However, the country remains in crisis, with ongoing conflict between the army and RSF, and nearly half the population facing severe food insecurity due to widespread displacement and hunger.



### India Reaffirms Global Health Commitment at 78th World Health Assembly

- At the **78th World Health Assembly** in Geneva (May 2025), **India** reaffirmed its dedication to **global health equity** under the theme "**One World for Health**", highlighting major reforms through schemes like **Ayushman Bharat**.
- The Ayushman Bharat health insurance program now covers over 580 million people, offering free treatment to all citizens above 70 years and financial support for advanced procedures.
- India has advanced digital healthcare by creating unique digital health IDs and delivering 340 million+ telemedicine consultations, making healthcare more accessible and integrated.
- India showcased its success in disease elimination, including its Trachoma-Free certification and continued efforts to eliminate TB, leprosy, measles, rubella, and kala-azar.
- Supporting the pandemic treaty, India emphasized the need for equitable access, transparent data sharing, and technology transfer, especially for the Global South, while PM Modi called for scalable Indian health models to aid developing nations.

### India Welcomes UK's Decision on Chagos Islands Handover

- The **UK and Mauritius** signed a historic agreement to transfer **sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago** to **Mauritius**, while retaining a **99-year lease over Diego Garcia** for joint UK-US military use.
- India welcomed the move as a step toward decolonization, in line with its consistent support for Mauritius's territorial claims and the broader principle of sovereignty and international law.
- The transfer follows the 2019 ICJ advisory opinion and a UN General Assembly resolution recognizing Mauritius's claim, lending it strong international legal legitimacy.
- Diego Garcia, home to a critical US-UK military base, remains under lease, with Mauritius receiving £101 million annually, preserving strategic military interests.
- While the agreement is a diplomatic breakthrough, displaced Chagossians have expressed concerns over their exclusion from negotiations and uncertainties regarding their right of return.

### Harvard Sues Trump Administration Over Ban on Enrolling Foreign Students

- **Harvard University** sued the **Trump administration** after the revocation of its **SEVP certification**, barring the university from enrolling new **international students** and affecting over **7,000 existing foreign students**.
- The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court in Massachusetts, argues that the move violates the First Amendment, Due Process Clause, and the Administrative Procedure Act, and is a retaliatory federal action.
- The revocation has jeopardized the legal status and academic future of around 27% of Harvard's student body, forcing many to consider transferring or leaving the U.S..
- The legal action follows escalating tensions between the administration and academic institutions, which have also included funding freezes and threats to tax-exempt status over allegations like antisemitism and foreign influence.
- The ban has triggered international backlash, especially from China, amid fears of long-term damage to global academic collaboration and U.S. soft power in higher education.

### Algeria Becomes New Member of BRICS' New Development Bank

- **Algeria** officially joined the **New Development Bank (NDB)** by depositing its **instrument of accession**, as announced by **NDB President Dilma Rousseff** during the bank's **annual meeting**.
- As Africa's top natural gas exporter, Algeria's membership in the NDB is expected to support its economic diversification, enabling access to funding for sustainable infrastructure and development projects.
- The NDB, established in 2015 by BRICS nations and headquartered in Shanghai, has approved over 120 projects worth \$40 billion, with key sectors including clean energy, transport, and digital infrastructure.
- Algeria joins a growing number of non-BRICS members such as Bangladesh, Egypt, UAE, and Uruguay, signaling the NDB's vision for a more inclusive and globally diversified development framework.



- This development underscores Algeria's strategic shift toward deeper engagement in multilateral finance and reflects the expanding influence of BRICS institutions in reshaping the global financial order.

### Saudi Arabia Launches TOURISE to Shape the Future of Global Tourism

- **Saudi Arabia's Minister of Tourism Ahmed Al-Khateeb** launched **TOURISE**, a new **global platform and summit** aimed at reshaping the **future of global tourism over the next 50 years**.
- TOURISE will focus on four strategic pillars: the role of Artificial Intelligence, new investment models, enhancing traveler experiences, and promoting sustainable, inclusive tourism practices.
- The first TOURISE Summit is scheduled for November 11–13, 2025, in Riyadh, featuring an Innovation Zone to showcase technologies and solutions by startups and global firms in the tourism sector.
- The initiative will foster collaboration across public and private sectors, co-develop whitepapers and global tourism indices with international bodies, and establish new benchmarks for a resilient tourism economy.
- Aligned with Vision 2030, TOURISE supports Saudi Arabia's transformation by promoting diverse heritage, job creation, and its emergence as a leading global tourism hub, while tackling climate change, AI disruption, and workforce gaps.

### Saudi Arabia and Kuwait Discover Oil in Neutral Zone After 5 Years

- **Saudi Arabia and Kuwait** jointly announced a new **oil discovery** in the **Partitioned Neutral Zone**, specifically in the **North Wafra Wara-Burgan field**, about **5 km north** of the existing Wafra field.
- The well, named **Wara-Burgan-1**, has an initial output of **over 500 barrels per day**, producing **medium-grade crude oil** with an **API gravity between 26–27 degrees**.
- The discovery was made by Wafra Joint Operations, a collaboration between Saudi Arabia Chevron and Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGO), showcasing strong bilateral energy cooperation
- This is the first oil find in the Neutral Zone since 2020, when production resumed after a five-year suspension due to operational disagreements between the two countries.
- The discovery highlights the strategic energy partnership between Riyadh and Kuwait and their shared focus on enhancing global energy supplies amid ongoing market volatility.

### Six African Nations Sign MoU to Eliminate Kala-Azar

- **Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to eliminate **kala-azar**, a deadly parasitic disease, during a **WHO-AU event** at the **78th World Health Assembly** in **Geneva**.
- **Kala-azar (visceral leishmaniasis)** is transmitted by **infected sandflies** and causes **fever, fatigue, weight loss, and organ enlargement**; if untreated, it is **almost always fatal**.
- Over 70% of global kala-azar cases occur in East Africa, and children under 15 constitute around half of those infected, underscoring the urgent need for regional cooperation.
- The initiative is supported by the WHO, African Union, and DNDi, with other countries like Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, and Tanzania advocating for cross-border coordination on neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).
- As of May 2025, 56 countries have successfully eliminated at least one NTD, signaling progress toward global health equity, especially in vulnerable, underserved communities.

### The One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025

- The **U.S. House of Representatives** narrowly passed the **One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)** by a **215–214 vote**, seeking to extend the **2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act** and implement major reforms across **taxation, social programs, healthcare, and immigration**.
- Key tax provisions include permanent individual and corporate tax cuts, tax exemptions for tips and overtime, an increased child tax credit, and a raised SALT deduction cap for middle- to high-income families.
- The bill imposes strict work requirements for Medicaid and SNAP, bans Medicaid/CHIP coverage for gender-affirming care, and cuts funding to Planned Parenthood, signaling a major overhaul of federal social programs.

- On immigration, it allocates \$46.5 billion for border wall construction, boosts ICE deportation capacity, and introduces stricter enforcement provisions along the U.S.-Mexico border.
- The CBO estimates the bill would add \$3.8 trillion to the national debt over the next decade; critics have dubbed it the “Reverse Robin Hood Bill” for allegedly favoring the wealthy while reducing support for vulnerable populations.

### France’s National Assembly Adopts Long-Debated Bill Legalizing End-of-Life Options

- **France’s National Assembly** passed a landmark bill legalizing **assisted dying** for terminally ill adults, with a vote of **305–199**, marking a significant advance in the country’s **end-of-life legislation**.
- The bill permits French residents over 18 with incurable, advanced-stage illnesses causing untreatable pain to voluntarily request medically prescribed lethal medication, subject to stringent mental competency and medical evaluations
- The procedure involves a patient-initiated request, a mandatory reflection period, and oversight by a medical team, with the option for self-administration or medical assistance if the patient is physically unable.
- Exclusions apply to individuals with severe psychiatric illnesses and certain neurodegenerative disorders, including Alzheimer’s, ensuring that only mentally competent patients qualify.
- The bill now heads to the Senate, where conservative amendments are likely; however, public opinion strongly favors the legislation, reflecting two decades of growing support for assisted dying rights in France.

### U.S. Court Strikes Down Trump’s Tariffs Imposed Under Emergency Powers

- The **U.S. Court of International Trade** ruled that **former President Donald Trump** had **exceeded legal authority** by imposing sweeping tariffs under the **International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)**.
- The case, *V.O.S. Selections, Inc. v. United States*, challenged the “Liberation Day” tariffs, with the court stating that such trade measures require Congressional approval, not unilateral executive action.
- The court ordered the termination of the tariffs within 10 days, affecting imports from China, Mexico, and Canada, though the ruling was temporarily stayed by the Court of Appeals on May 29.
- The stay keeps the tariffs temporarily in force, pending legal briefs due by June 5 (plaintiffs) and June 9 (government), highlighting the ongoing legal tussle.
- The ruling strengthens the principle of separation of powers and has prompted a bipartisan push for the Trade Review Act of 2025, to rein in executive tariff powers.

### Hawaii Implements First Climate Impact Fee in the U.S.

- Hawaii became the first U.S. state to implement a climate impact fee, termed the “Green Fee”, under Senate Bill 1396, signed by Governor Josh Green.
- The law imposes a 0.75% hike on the Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT), raising it to 11% from January 2026, and extends this to cruise ship passengers from July 2026.
- The measure is expected to raise \$100 million annually, which will fund beach restoration, wildfire prevention, climate-resilient infrastructure, and a youth environmental corps.
- The legislation was unanimously passed in the State Senate and strongly supported by the tourism industry, reflecting broad consensus on sustainable tourism.
- A Climate Advisory Team (CAT) will oversee fund allocation, ensuring transparency and alignment with climate resilience priorities.

### India Engages U.S. in Plans to ‘Grey List’ Pakistan at FATF Session

- India is actively lobbying to have Pakistan relisted on the FATF grey list, with Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri holding meetings in Washington with U.S. officials including Michael Faulkender, citing Pakistan’s alleged failures on terror financing.
- The FATF grey list is reserved for nations under increased monitoring; Pakistan, which exited the list in 2022, was previously listed in 2018 due to similar non-compliance issues.

- India is preparing a detailed dossier outlining Pakistan's financial support to extremist groups, highlighting issues such as increased defense spending, misuse of aid, and failure to act against 26/11 perpetrators.
- An all-party consensus, including leaders like Asaduddin Owaisi, has supported the move, reflecting national unity on counter-terrorism concerns.
- India also intends to oppose World Bank funding for Pakistan, fearing diversion of aid toward militarization and extremist activities.

### Thailand's Opal Suchata Chuangsri Crowned Miss World 2025

- Opal Suchata Chuangsri of Thailand became the country's first-ever Miss World, winning the 72nd edition of the global pageant held at HITECH, Hyderabad.
- She triumphed over 107 international contestants, with Ethiopia's Hasset Dereje Admassu as first runner-up; India's Nandini Gupta reached the Top 20.
- Opal, born in Phuket in 2003, is a Political Science undergraduate at Thammasat University and multilingual in Thai, English, and Chinese.
- A breast cancer survivor and advocate since age 16, she champions early detection and health awareness, reflecting her personal and social commitment.
- She previously won Miss Universe Thailand 2024 and was the third runner-up at Miss Universe 2024, showcasing her international presence and versatility.

### First Round of India-Chile CEPA Negotiations Concludes in New Delhi

- India and Chile held the first round of CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) talks in New Delhi, following President Gabriel Boric's April visit.
- Discussions, led by Vimal Anand (India) and Pablo Urria (Chile), spanned 17 thematic areas, including trade in services, investment, IPR, and critical minerals
- The CEPA seeks to expand the 2006 Preferential Trade Agreement, aiming to lower trade barriers, boost digital trade, and foster global value chain integration.
- In FY 2024–25, India had a trade deficit of USD 1.45 billion with Chile, importing primarily copper and minerals, while exporting automobiles and pharmaceuticals
- The CEPA is projected to balance trade, enhance bilateral cooperation, and provide a model for India's Latin America outreach.

### Over 2,000 Illegal Immigrants 'Pushed Back' into Bangladesh Since Operation Sindoor

- Operation Sindoor, launched on May 7, 2025, has led to the deportation of over 2,000 undocumented Bangladeshi immigrants, in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.
- The operation, led by the Ministry of Home Affairs, targets border states like Assam, Tripura, and Meghalaya, with major detentions also made in Gujarat, Delhi, Maharashtra, and Haryana.
- Identified individuals were verified, transported via IAF aircraft, and handed over to BSF, with temporary detention camps providing food and sometimes Bangladeshi currency.
- In a notable trend, around 2,000 immigrants returned voluntarily, fearing arrest and detention amid the nationwide crackdown.
- The operation underscores India's push to address national security and demographic integrity, particularly in border regions vulnerable to illegal migration.

### 17th Nomadic Elephant: India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise

- From **May 31 to June 13, 2025**, India and Mongolia held the **17th edition of Exercise Nomadic Elephant in Ulaanbaatar**, focusing on **counter-terror and insurgency operations**.
- This bilateral exercise, started in **2004**, aims to enhance interoperability under UN peacekeeping mandates, particularly in mountainous and semi-urban terrain.

- India sent 45 personnel from the Arunachal Scouts, while 150 Mongolian Special Forces participated in a show of strategic cooperation.
- The drill included modules on reflex shooting, endurance, room intervention, rock craft, and cyber warfare, adding a modern warfare dimension to training.
- The exercise reinforces **India's Act East Policy** and defence diplomacy, promoting mutual trust and regional stability in Central and East Asia.

### **Annalena Baerbock Elected President of 80th UN General Assembly Session**

- **Annalena Baerbock**, Germany's former Foreign Minister, was elected **President of the 80th UNGA Session**, becoming the **fifth woman** in history to hold this post.
- She won with **167 out of 193 votes**, defeating Helga Schmid, and will **succeed Philemon Yang of Cameroon on September 9, 2025**.
- The election followed the regional rotation principle, with the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) entitled to the presidency this session.
- Baerbock's declared theme, "Better Together", calls for global unity to address issues such as climate change, armed conflict, and poverty.
- Her career includes serving as Germany's Foreign Minister (2021–2025), co-leading the Greens party, and being their Chancellor candidate in 2021.

### **Bangladesh Introduces New Currency Notes Without Mujib, Showcasing Cultural Heritage**

- Bangladesh Bank released new Taka notes (₹1,000, ₹50, ₹20) featuring cultural landmarks instead of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's portrait, marking a symbolic shift.
- The Taka 20 note now features Kantajew Temple and Paharpur Monastery, while the Taka 50 shows Ahsan Manzil and a painting by Zainul Abedin; the Taka 1,000 note includes the National Martyrs' Memorial and Parliament House.
- Since 1971, Mujibur Rahman's image was consistently featured, but the new design is part of a depoliticization effort by the interim government.
- This move follows the ousting of Sheikh Hasina in August 2024 and the rise of a reformist interim government led by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus.
- The redesigned currency aims to highlight national heritage while reducing the use of political iconography on state instruments.

### **U.S. Vetoes U.N. Security Council Resolution Demanding Immediate Ceasefire in Gaza**

- The United States vetoed a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, despite 14 other members voting in favor.
- U.S. Ambassador Dorothy Shea argued that the resolution failed to condemn Hamas, demand disarmament, or ensure hostage release, which could embolden terrorism.
- Countries like China, Pakistan, and France condemned the veto, with many accusing the U.S. of blocking humanitarian relief and furthering the humanitarian crisis.
- Over 2 million Gazans face catastrophic shortages of food and medicine, with rising civilian deaths from Israeli strikes, including at aid distribution centers.
- This was the fifth U.S. veto on Gaza-related resolutions since October 2023, intensifying demands for UNSC veto reform by rights groups and governments.

### **Trump Signs Travel Ban on Citizens from 12 Countries: Aimed at Enhancing National Security**

- **President Donald Trump** signed a **travel ban** affecting **12 countries** like **Afghanistan, Iran, Somalia, and Yemen**, citing **national security risks**.
- The policy also imposes partial restrictions on Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, and others, due to overstay rates and deportation non-cooperation.

- The decision was influenced by a recent visa overstay attack in Colorado, allegedly by an Egyptian national, although Egypt is not on the banned list.
- Exemptions exist for green card holders, individuals with valid visas, and those deemed to serve U.S. interests, echoing Trump's 2017 travel bans.
- The measure has revived legal and civil liberty debates, though the 2018 Supreme Court ruling upholding a similar ban offers legal cover for this move.

### **Trump Signs Order Doubling Steel and Aluminum Tariffs to 50%, Temporarily Exempts UK**

- The U.S. raised **steel and aluminum tariffs from 25% to 50%**, citing **national security**, with the **UK temporarily exempted** pending a **bilateral trade deal**.
- The hike applies to major trading partners like Canada, Mexico, and EU nations, with tariffs becoming effective from June 4, 2025.
- The administration claims the move protects domestic industries from cheap foreign imports, especially from overproducing economies.
- Consumer prices in sectors like construction and automobiles may rise, prompting retaliatory responses from countries like Canada and the EU.
- The UK exemption hinges on the finalization of the U.S.-UK Economic Prosperity Deal by July 9, 2025, failing which the UK may face the full 50% tariff.

### **Gaza-Bound 'Madleen' Aid Boat Carrying Greta Thunberg Intercepted by Israel**

- The **British-flagged yacht Madleen**, carrying **12 activists** including **Greta Thunberg** and **French MEP Rima Hassan**, was intercepted by Israeli forces in international waters and diverted under the ongoing **2007 Gaza naval blockade**.
- The boat carried symbolic humanitarian aid such as baby formula, medical supplies, and desalination kits, and was part of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition.
- Israel called the act a " Hamas-linked provocation", asserting the blockade was necessary to prevent arms smuggling. All passengers were safe and are being deported.
- Activists described the interception as "illegal kidnapping", and UN special rapporteur Francesca Albanese called for continued maritime relief efforts.
- The incident comes amid heightened Israeli military operations post the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack, with over 54,000 Palestinians reportedly killed and a growing humanitarian crisis.

### **Trump Orders National Guard into LA Amid Anti-ICE Immigration Protests**

- Between **June 6-8, 2025**, **U.S. President Donald Trump** invoked **Title 10 authority** to deploy **2,000 National Guard troops** to **Los Angeles**, bypassing California's governor amid violent **anti-immigration protests**.
- The deployment follows ICE raids resulting in numerous arrests and clashes involving road blockades, fires, and tear gas usage across Compton, Paramount, and downtown LA.
- Governor Gavin Newsom condemned the move as "unlawful and dictatorial," alleging violations of the Posse Comitatus Act and state rights.
- Trump defended the action as essential to restore order and protect federal infrastructure, while critics, including VP Kamala Harris, termed it a "military overreach".
- Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth warned of deploying active-duty Marines if disturbances escalated further.

### **UNFPA 2025 Report Warns of Global Fertility Crisis Driven by Lack of Reproductive Choice**

- The **UNFPA's State of World Population Report** titled "*The Real Fertility Crisis*" revealed that **1 in 5 people** globally are unable to have the number of children they desire due to **economic and social barriers**.
- The report emphasizes that the fertility decline is not due to lower desire for parenthood, but because of financial instability, housing stress, and climate anxiety, particularly affecting women.

- It critiques coercive demographic policies and asserts that baby bonuses and restrictions on reproductive rights are largely ineffective and may be counterproductive.
- India's population has reached 1.46 billion, overtaking China, while its Total Fertility Rate has dropped to 1.9, from nearly 5 in 1970—below the replacement level.
- Globally, fertility rates have fallen below replacement in over half the world's countries, and the global population is projected to peak within this century before beginning a gradual decline.

### **Brazil and France Launch Blue NDC Challenge to Integrate Oceans in Climate Action**

- At UNOC3 in Nice on June 10, 2025, Brazil and France launched the **Blue NDC Challenge**, urging countries to integrate **marine-focused climate actions** in their **Paris Agreement commitments (NDCs)**
- The initiative promotes ocean-based strategies like **sustainable fisheries, offshore renewable energy, blue carbon ecosystems, and marine spatial planning** into national climate goals.
- So far, eight countries—including Australia, Kenya, Fiji, Mexico, and Seychelles—have joined, while Brazil is incorporating mangrove and coral reef conservation into its updated NDC.
- Out of 195 Paris Agreement signatories, only 21–22 had submitted updated NDCs by June 2025, missing the February deadline for COP30 preparations in Belém, Brazil.
- Experts estimate ocean-based solutions could deliver up to 35% of needed emissions reductions to limit warming to 1.5°C, reinforcing the urgency of marine climate integration.

### **India-US Conduct First-Ever Special Forces Air Exercise 'Tiger Claw'**

- Between May 26 and June 10, 2025, the Indian Air Force (IAF) and U.S. Air Force (USAF) held their first Special Forces exercise, 'Tiger Claw', at the Garud Regimental Training Centre (GRTC) in Chandinagar, Uttar Pradesh.
- India's Garud Commandos and USAF Special Forces practiced airfield seizure, hostage rescue, and behind-enemy-lines missions to enhance interoperability and tactical coordination.
- The drills were spread across North India, marking a distinct milestone separate from prior joint exercises like Cope India or Red Flag, and aligning with India's AFSOD tri-service integration goals
- GRTC's terrain and infrastructure enabled advanced combat simulations, including live tactical drills with precision execution and field coordination.
- The exercise symbolizes growing India-US defence partnership in the Indo-Pacific, focused on specialized joint readiness and future multilateral operations.

### **India and UK Conduct PASSEX 2025 in North Arabian Sea**

- The Indian Navy and the UK Carrier Strike Group conducted PASSEX 2025 in the North Arabian Sea, reinforcing strategic maritime cooperation and interoperability between the two navies
- Indian platforms included INS Tabar, a conventional submarine, and a P-8I aircraft, while the UK contingent deployed HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Richmond.
- The two-day exercise involved anti-submarine warfare, tactical manoeuvres, and joint helicopter operations, including a professional officer exchange for on-deck coordination.
- Conducted in a highly strategic maritime corridor, the exercise showcased both nations' commitment to a rules-based Indo-Pacific order.
- The drill supports frameworks like SAGAR and the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, reflecting enhanced military ties and shared Indo-Pacific security goals.

### **"No Kings" Protests Erupt Across U.S. on Trump's 79th Birthday**

- On **June 14, 2025**, over **5 million Americans** protested across **2,100+ cities** under the **"No Kings"** movement, criticizing **President Trump's second-term policies** and his **birthday military parade**.
- Demonstrators from civil society groups, celebrities, and grassroots organisations denounced Trump's **immigration crackdowns, authoritarian tendencies**, and perceived erosion of **democratic norms**.

- While largely peaceful, some cities saw violence; Los Angeles police used tear gas, and a shooting in Salt Lake City left one protester critically injured.
- Protest leaders avoided Washington D.C. to contrast Trump's centralized spectacle with community-driven defiance, labelling the day a "Day of Defiance".
- The protests reflect deepening opposition to Trump's leadership, amid concerns over civil liberties, militarism, and the future of constitutional democracy in the U.S.

### Sweden's NitroCapt Wins \$2 Million Prize for Green Fertilizer Innovation

- **NitroCapt AB**, a Swedish startup, won the **\$2 million Food Planet Prize 2025** for developing a **green nitrogen fertilizer** using **air, water, and renewable electricity**—drastically reducing emissions.
- Its **plasma-based process** replaces fossil-fuel-driven production, cutting energy use tenfold and creating clean nitrate fertilizer with minimal carbon footprint.
- The innovation offers a scalable, localized manufacturing model, particularly beneficial for decentralized agricultural regions in Africa and South Asia.
- The fertilizer industry, previously comparable to aviation in emissions, could be significantly decarbonized through NitroCapt's approach, supporting global food system resilience
- With commercial scaling on the horizon, the technology is seen as a game-changer for sustainable farming, earning praise for advancing soil health and climate-friendly agriculture.

### Iran Moves Toward NPT Withdrawal Amid Rising Nuclear Tensions

- **Iran's parliament** began drafting legislation to withdraw from the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** following **Israeli airstrikes** and a critical **IAEA resolution**.
- The move could terminate Iran's transparency obligations, intensifying global fears of nuclear weapon development despite Tehran's claim of a peaceful program.
- Iran cited the strikes and alleged Western bias in IAEA assessments as reasons for considering treaty exit while asserting Supreme Leader Khamenei's fatwa still bans nuclear arms.
- Analysts warn that Iran's potential withdrawal would weaken the NPT regime, trigger regional proliferation, and destabilize Middle Eastern security dynamics.
- Iran may further escalate tensions by threatening to block the Strait of Hormuz, thereby endangering global oil supply chains.

### 2025 UNESCO Report Flags Rising Global Out-of-School Youth

- The **UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report 2025** estimates that **272 million children and youth** were out of school in **2023**, a sharp upward revision of **21 million** from earlier figures.
- The population includes 78 million primary, 64 million lower secondary, and 130 million upper secondary-aged learners, with major disparities in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Girls continue to face disproportionate exclusion due to poverty, child marriage, and gender norms, contributing to a 7 million gap compared to boys.
- The report highlights post-COVID learning loss, where millions, especially from marginalized communities, never returned to classrooms due to inadequate remote education access.
- Global progress remains slow, with countries falling 75 million short of SDG 4 targets for 2025, threatening to derail 2030 education benchmarks.

### Blaise Metreweli Becomes First Female Chief of UK's MI6

- **Blaise Metreweli** was appointed as the **first woman to lead MI6** (UK's Secret Intelligence Service), taking charge from **October 1, 2025**.
- A career intelligence officer since 1999, she held top roles in **MI6, MI5**, and was most recently Director-General of Technology & Innovation, overseeing cyber-intelligence operations.



- Her appointment marks a major diversity milestone, aligning MI6 with other UK agencies like MI5 and GCHQ, which have also appointed women to top positions.
- Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Foreign Secretary David Lammy praised her for her strategic vision and tech expertise, crucial in the era of AI and cyber threats.
- Her appointment is culturally resonant, drawing comparisons to fictional “M” of James Bond fame, symbolizing real-world gender progress in intelligence leadership.

### **Bonn Climate Conference SB62 Sets Stage for COP30 in Brazil**

- The Bonn Climate Change Conference (SB62) began on June 16, 2025, gathering over 5,000 delegates from nearly 200 countries to advance work ahead of COP30.
- The conference features dialogues on climate finance, just transitions, adaptation metrics, and the ocean-climate nexus, with emphasis on developing nation priorities.
- A new Sharm el-Sheikh Dialogue was launched to build capacity for low-emission transitions, alongside debates on equity, health, and fossil fuel phaseouts.
- The event was marred by agenda disputes and the absence of the U.S., with developing countries demanding focus on finance and trade-related climate impacts.
- Outcomes from SB62 will inform final decisions at COP30 (Nov 2025, Brazil) on issues like transparency, finance architecture, and climate ambition frameworks.

### **ILO Adopts Convention on Biological Hazards**

- The 113th International Labour Conference (ILC) adopted Convention No. 192 and Recommendation No. 209, establishing global standards for protecting workers from biological hazards.
- These instruments mandate risk assessments, emergency protocols, and right to refuse unsafe work, applicable across sectors such as healthcare, forestry, and agriculture.
- They provide special protection for pregnant women, youth, and migrants, with emphasis on training and occupational health services.
- The convention was shaped by lessons from COVID-19 and aims to prepare workplaces for future outbreaks and climate-linked threats.
- The ILC also adopted resolutions on the platform economy, maritime labour law, and Palestine’s observer status upgrade.

### **Iran Moves Toward NPT Withdrawal Amid Escalations**

- **Iran's Parliament** began drafting a bill to **withdraw from the NPT**, citing **Israeli airstrikes** and an **IAEA resolution** accusing Tehran of noncompliance.
- Exiting the treaty would eliminate IAEA oversight and allow pursuit of nuclear weapons, raising alarms about regional proliferation.
- Iran maintains its nuclear program is peaceful under a religious ban on weaponization, but asserts withdrawal is a strategic deterrent.
- The move could destabilize global nuclear governance, complicate diplomacy with the U.S., Russia, Europe, and fuel Strait of Hormuz tensions.
- Analysts warn it may undermine the credibility of the NPT and escalate the Middle East arms race.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

### **Centre Approves Appointment of Three New Supreme Court Judges**

- **President Droupadi Murmu** approved the elevation of **Justices N.V. Anjaria, Vijay Bishnoi, and A.S. Chandurkar** to the **Supreme Court**, restoring the court's full strength of **34 judges**.



- The appointments followed the **May 26, 2025** recommendation of the **Supreme Court collegium** headed by **Chief Justice B.R. Gavai** and were swiftly approved by the Union Government.
- Justice **Anjaria**, former Chief Justice of Karnataka HC, is known for his tenure at the Gujarat HC; **Bishnoi**, ex-Chief Justice of Gauhati HC, has extensive civil and constitutional law experience; **Chandurkar** is noted for landmark rulings on **IT Rules** and **hijab ban**.
- The oath of office was administered by CJI Gavai on May 30, just one day after the presidential clearance, signaling prompt institutional coordination.
- The appointments come at a crucial time to address judicial backlog and strengthen constitutional adjudication in the apex court.

### **Lt Commander Yashasvi Solankee Becomes First Woman ADC to the President of India**

- Lieutenant Commander Yashasvi Solankee, aged 27, made history by becoming the first woman Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, reflecting a major stride toward gender inclusivity in the armed forces.
- Selected through a rigorous evaluation process in April 2025, which included physical fitness tests, intelligence assessments, a 15-day orientation at the Presidential Estate, and a personal interview with the President, Solankee was chosen from three shortlisted women naval officers.
- The ADC role involves acting as a liaison between the President and external officials, briefing the President, accompanying her in ceremonial and diplomatic events, and being available round the clock, highlighting the position's operational and ceremonial importance.
- Lt Commander Solankee, formerly a technical officer with the Naval Armament division in Hyderabad, will serve a 2.5 to 3-year tenure, embodying the growing empowerment of women in senior military and national leadership roles.

### **RBI Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar Joins 16th Finance Commission as Part-Time Member**

- T Rabi Sankar, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, was appointed as a part-time member of the 16th Finance Commission by the President of India, filling the vacancy left by Ajay Narayan Jha.
- His tenure lasts until the Finance Commission's report submission or October 31, 2025, whichever comes first.
- The Finance Commission, chaired by Arvind Panagariya, advises on revenue sharing between the Centre and States for the fiscal period 2026–31.
- Sankar heads critical RBI departments including financial market regulation, fintech, currency management, and oversaw the development of India's Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).
- His expertise is expected to enhance discussions on fiscal federalism, tax devolution, and strengthen the Commission's policy recommendations.

### **S Mahendra Dev Appointed Chairman of Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council**

- Eminent economist **S Mahendra Dev** has been appointed as the **Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)**, bringing deep expertise in **agriculture, rural economy, and development economics**.
- Dev holds a PhD from Delhi School of Economics and completed post-doctoral research at Yale University, and has served as Vice Chancellor of IGIDR and editor of the Economic and Political Weekly.
- His appointment, effective from June 5, 2025, signals a policy focus on inclusive, development-led economic growth, especially in rural and agricultural sectors.
- The EAC-PM advises the Prime Minister on macroeconomic trends, reforms, and sustainable growth strategies within the NITI Aayog framework.
- Dev's leadership is expected to strengthen rural-centric economic policymaking and promote equitable development across India.

## SPORTS

### Joe Root Becomes Fastest to 13,000 Test Runs: A Historic Milestone in Cricket

- **Joe Root** became the **fastest player in history** to reach **13,000 runs in Test cricket**, achieving the feat in his **153rd match**, breaking **Jacques Kallis's record** of 159 Tests.
- Root is the first Englishman and fifth cricketer overall to cross the 13,000-run mark, joining the ranks of Sachin Tendulkar, Ricky Ponting, Jacques Kallis, and Rahul Dravid.
- He reached the milestone during a Test match against Zimbabwe at Trent Bridge, with a single off Victor Nyauchi, though he was later dismissed for 34 runs by Blessing Muzarabani.
- Since his 2012 debut against India, Root has been a consistent performer, scoring over 2,000 Test runs against Australia and India, and over 1,000 against several other top teams.
- With 13,000 runs, Root is now within 2,916 runs of breaking Sachin Tendulkar's all-time Test record of 15,921 runs, keeping hopes alive for another major cricketing milestone.

### Arsenal Triumphs Over Barcelona to Win Women's Champions League 2025

- **Arsenal Women** defeated defending champions **Barcelona 1-0** in the **UEFA Women's Champions League final** held at **Estádio José Alvalade, Lisbon**, securing their **first European title since 2007**
- The winning goal was scored by **Stina Blackstenius** in the **75th minute**, assisted by **Beth Mead**, sealing a historic victory celebrated by thousands of fans in North London.
- Arsenal's defensive excellence, led by Leah Williamson, and midfield dominance from Frida Maanum disrupted Barcelona's attacking flow, while coach Renée Slegers' substitutions proved tactically crucial.
- Barcelona's attempts, including a near-goal from Claudia Pina, were thwarted, ending their bid for a third consecutive title and reaffirming Arsenal's European resurgence.
- The match was attended by 38,356 spectators, reflecting the growing popularity and competitive edge of women's club football in Europe.

### UN Declares 25th May as World Football Day

- The **UN General Assembly** adopted **Resolution A/RES/78/281**, designating **May 25 as World Football Day** to mark the **centenary of the 1924 Olympic football tournament**.
- The resolution was introduced by Libya and co-sponsored by 160+ member states, recognizing football's ability to promote peace, development, and global unity.
- The day commemorates football's historical evolution and supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by encouraging inclusion, gender equity, and social integration.
- In 2025, FIFA organized the first World Football Week (May 21-25), with global events celebrating football's cultural and developmental impact.
- A major celebration was held at UN headquarters in New York on May 22, featuring global football icons and UN leaders reaffirming football's role as a tool for diplomacy and solidarity.

### India to Host Khelo India Northeast Games Annually

- Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced that the Khelo India Northeast Games will be held annually, rotating across all eight northeastern states to tap into regional sports talent.
- The games aim to identify and develop local athletes, especially in traditional sports, and integrate them into national-level training programs.
- The initiative is expected to boost sports infrastructure and foster economic activity and social unity through increased community participation.

- Supporting measures include the National Sports Repository System (NSRS) for athlete scouting via video submissions and the ASMITA League to promote women's participation in sports, which saw 13,000 girls compete last year.
- The Northeast's successful hosting of the Khelo India University Games 2023 has demonstrated its organizational readiness for large-scale sports events, validating its selection for this annual initiative.

### **Cristiano Ronaldo Breaks Barriers with 800 Goals in Club Football**

- Cristiano Ronaldo became the first footballer to score 800 goals in club football, achieving the feat while playing for Al-Nassr in a 3–2 loss to Al-Fateh.
- At age 40, Ronaldo continues to excel, having secured the Saudi Pro League Golden Boot with 25 goals in the 2024–25 season, his second consecutive win.
- His club-wise tally includes: Sporting CP (5), Manchester United (145), Real Madrid (450), Juventus (101), and Al-Nassr (99), showing unmatched consistency across leagues.
- Despite Ronaldo's success, Al-Nassr finished third in the league, missing qualification for the AFC Champions League.
- This milestone cements Ronaldo's status as one of football's greatest and sets a new global benchmark for longevity and goal-scoring records in club football.

### **Serena Williams Honoured with 'Princess of Asturias Award for Sports 2025'**

- **Serena Williams** was awarded the **Princess of Asturias Award for Sports**, Spain's prestigious honour recognizing her **global sporting legacy** and **societal contributions**.
- Serena's achievements include **23 Grand Slam singles titles**, **4 Olympic golds**, and **319 weeks as World No. 1**, alongside her advocacy for **gender and racial equality**.
- The award ceremony will be held in October 2025 in Oviedo, with a €50,000 prize, a sculpture by Joan Miró, and royal recognition.
- The jury praised her for "breaking barriers in sports and society", noting her philanthropy via the Serena Williams Foundation, which supports education and women's empowerment.
- This recognition not only celebrates her tennis excellence but also her transformative impact beyond sport, making her a role model for future generations.

### **Royal Challengers Bengaluru Clinch Maiden IPL Title After 18-Year Wait**

- **Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB)** won their **first IPL title** by defeating **Punjab Kings** by **6 runs** at the **Narendra Modi Stadium**, ending an **18-year drought**.
- RCB scored **190/9**, led by **Virat Kohli's 43 runs**, while **PBKS** fell short despite Shashank Singh's unbeaten 61 off 30 balls.
- Bowlers Krunal Pandya (2/17) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (2/38) were instrumental in defending the target with tight death bowling.
- An emotional Virat Kohli celebrated the long-awaited triumph with wife Anushka Sharma, as fans erupted in citywide celebrations with the chant "Ee Sala Cup Namde".
- Season awards included Orange Cap (Sai Sudharsan, 759 runs), Purple Cap (Prasidh Krishna, 25 wickets), and MVP (Suryakumar Yadav), while CSK won the Fair Play Award.

### **Magnus Carlsen Wins Norway Chess 2025 After Final-Round Drama**

- GM Magnus Carlsen clinched his seventh Norway Chess title, finishing with 16 points, ahead of Fabiano Caruana (15.5) and Gukesh D (14.5) in Stavanger.
- Carlsen drew against Arjun Erigaisi in the classical round but lost in Armageddon, while Gukesh's blunder against Caruana cost him the title despite an earlier win over Carlsen.
- The tournament saw Carlsen recover from a round 6 emotional outburst, regaining composure to secure the championship.

- Gukesh's first classical win over Carlsen marked a significant milestone for Indian chess, though he missed his first Norway title due to a late error.
- Held from May 26–June 6, the tournament featured top global players and used a classical + Armageddon tiebreak format, highlighting endurance and pressure handling.

### Wimbledon 2025 Sets Record with \$73 Million Prize Pool

- The All England Club announced on June 12–13, 2025 that Wimbledon 2025 will offer a record £53.5 million (~\$73 million) in prize money, a 7% rise over 2024 and double that of 2015.
- Men's and Women's singles champions will each earn £3 million (~\$4.07 million)—an 11.1% increase and the highest payout in Grand Slam history.
- Even first-round losers will earn nearly \$90,000, as the prize hike applies across doubles, mixed doubles, and wheelchair tennis, emphasizing equitable distribution.
- The 2025 tournament will debut electronic line-call technology, retiring traditional line judges, and reschedule the singles finals to July 12–13 at 11 a.m. ET, two hours later than previous years.
- The AELTC has also promised structural reforms, including addressing calendar strain and enhancing fan experience and facility expansion.

### Cristiano Ronaldo Becomes Global Ambassador for Esports World Cup 2025

- On **June 13, 2025**, football legend **Cristiano Ronaldo** was named **Global Ambassador** for the **Esports World Cup 2025**, to be held in **Riyadh** with a **record \$70 million prize pool**.
- Ronaldo will lead the campaign under the "**Rise Above**" theme and feature as a **playable character** in **Fatal Fury: City of the Wolves**, merging traditional sports with gaming.
- The tournament will host over **2,000 players** from **100+ countries**, representing **200 clubs** in **25 esports titles**, reinforcing Saudi Arabia's **Vision 2030 entertainment ambitions**.
- With over **1 billion followers**, Ronaldo's influence is expected to significantly broaden **global esports reach**, attracting non-gaming audiences to the event.
- This partnership marks a strategic extension of Ronaldo's past engagements with **EWC 2023–24**, and supports Riyadh's emergence as a **global esports capital**.

### FIFA Launches First-Ever 32-Team Club World Cup in the United States

- The inaugural FIFA Club World Cup 2025 began on June 14 in the U.S., featuring 32 elite clubs in a revamped format across 12 cities, with the final set for July 13 at MetLife Stadium.
- The tournament includes eight groups of four, with Manchester City, PSG, Bayern Munich, Real Madrid, and Inter Miami among the top contenders; Kingsley Coman scored the first goal.
- With a \$1 billion prize pool, the winner could earn up to \$125 million, and the event is streamed globally on DAZN, with supplementary coverage on TNT Sports, Foxtel, and others.
- The event has been criticized for excluding clubs like Arsenal and Liverpool, fixture congestion, and multi-club ownership legal hurdles, but is hailed for its star power and global appeal.
- The opening ceremony, headlined by French Montana and Swae Lee, emphasized FIFA's aim to transform this into a global football celebration ahead of the 2026 World Cup.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Tianwen-2 Mission: China's Dual Asteroid and Comet Exploration Endeavor

- China will launch the Tianwen-2 mission, targeting a sample-return from asteroid 469219 Kamo'oalewa, followed by a long-term study of comet 311P/PANSTARRS, showcasing its deep-space capabilities.
- The mission will use a Long March 3B/E rocket from Xichang Satellite Launch Center, with asteroid arrival in July 2026, sample return to Earth in November 2027, and comet rendezvous expected by January 2035.
- Kamo'oalewa is a quasi-satellite of Earth, about 50 meters in diameter, with a fast 28-minute rotation, and may have lunar origins, based on spectral similarities.
- China will use anchor-and-attach and touch-and-go techniques to collect at least 100 grams of material using robotic arms and drills that prevent rebound in low gravity.
- After the sample return, the spacecraft will perform a gravity assist from Earth to reach comet 311P/PANSTARRS, aiming to advance multi-target mission planning and autonomous navigation technologies.

### India's AMCA Stealth Jet Project Approved

- India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh approved the execution model for the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), advancing India's goal to build fifth-generation stealth fighters.
- The AMCA will be a twin-engine, multirole combat aircraft with supercruise, advanced stealth, and cutting-edge avionics, capable of air superiority and ground strike missions.
- The Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) under DRDO will lead the project, inviting private and public sector participation—a major departure from previous state-monopoly models.
- The move enhances self-reliance in defense manufacturing, reduces import dependency, and strengthens India's strategic posture amid regional security challenges.
- The first prototype is expected by 2028–29, with serial production by 2038–39 and induction into the Indian Air Force by 2034, forming a core part of India's next-gen airpower strategy.

### How the Madden-Julian Oscillation Helped Trigger the Early Onset of the Monsoon

- The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** reported the **earliest onset of the southwest monsoon** since 2009, arriving in **Kerala on May 24, 2025**, eight days ahead of schedule.
- A key driver was the **Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)**, an atmospheric phenomenon that entered an **active convective phase** in mid-May, enhancing **moisture buildup** over the Indian Ocean.
- The active MJO phase led to intensified cloud formation and rainfall, contributing to the early monsoon onset and its faster progression across India, including an unprecedented early arrival in Mumbai.
- Other contributors included neutral ENSO conditions, a low-pressure area in the Arabian Sea, and a trough over Vidarbha, all of which enhanced moisture transport and convection.
- This event underscores the critical role of intra-seasonal climate variability like the MJO in shaping monsoon dynamics and influencing regional weather patterns.

### Global Temperature Likely to Breach 1.5°C in Next Five Years: WMO

- The **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** reported that global temperatures have an **86% chance of temporarily exceeding the 1.5°C threshold** by 2029.
- The report predicts an **80% chance** that at least one year between **2025–2029** could become the **warmest on record**, surpassing the 2024 temperature peak.
- Arctic warming is expected to accelerate, with the region projected to warm 2.4°C above the 1991–2020 average, exacerbating ice melt and sea-level rise.
- The world will likely experience shifts in precipitation patterns, with regions like the Sahel, Northern Europe, and Alaska getting wetter, while Amazonia may see more droughts.



- Though temporary breaches of the 1.5°C target don't violate the Paris Agreement, the report signals a shrinking window for climate action to avoid long-term catastrophic consequences.

### Indian Space Situational Assessment Report (ISSAR) 2024

- The **ISSAR 2024** by ISRO's **IS4OM** highlighted a surge in **space traffic and debris**, calling for stronger **space situational awareness (SSA)** and **traffic management**.
- In **2024**, **261 global launches** led to the addition of **2,963 objects**, while **space debris** rose to **3,665** due to **on-orbit breakups**, including a **Long March rocket** fragmentation event.
- India launched 136 spacecraft, with ISRO conducting 10 Collision Avoidance Manoeuvres (CAMs) and responding to 53,000+ close approach alerts, underscoring growing congestion in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and GEO.
- ISRO's Project NETRA advanced its tracking and debris monitoring, integrating phased-array radars and telescopes, and emphasized the need for international cooperation on Space Traffic Management (STM).
- Notable missions like Aditya-L1 and Chandrayaan-2 Orbiter continued operations, while solar activity drove a record 2,095 re-entries, including 335 deorbited Starlink satellites.

### Starlink Secures Licence for Satellite Internet Services in India

- **Starlink** (owned by **Elon Musk's SpaceX**) received a **GMPCS licence** from the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** to offer **satellite internet** in India.
- This makes Starlink the **third satcom licence-holder** after **Jio Satellite** and **Bharti OneWeb**, pending further approvals from **IN-SPACe**, spectrum allocation, and security vetting.
- Starlink has partnered with **Reliance Jio** and **Airtel** for hardware distribution and aims to connect India's **remote and under-served areas**, with **introductory plans** under ₹850/month.
- The government has agreed to allocate satellite spectrum administratively instead of auction, aligning with Starlink's demands, though this has triggered concerns from telecom operators.
- The market for LEO satellite broadband in India is projected to reach \$1.9 billion by 2030, with competitors including Amazon Kuiper expected to enter soon.

### First Gene-Edited Sheep Marks Milestone in Livestock Biotechnology

- Researchers at **SKUAST-Kashmir** unveiled **South Asia's first gene-edited sheep**, created by disabling the **MSTN gene** using **CRISPR-Cas9** for **30% higher muscle mass**.
- The lamb, a Kashmir Merino, was born from a CRISPR-edited embryo and confirmed through whole-genome sequencing to be non-transgenic, aligning with India's 2022 gene-editing rules.
- Led by Prof. Riyaz A. Shah, the project signals a leap in precision breeding, supported by ICAR to meet rising meat demand and reduce import dependence.
- Editing the MSTN gene could boost carcass yield by 8 kg per animal, potentially adding ₹10,000–₹12,000 in farm-gate value without compromising wool quality.
- The development places India among a select group of countries with proven gene-editing capabilities in livestock, alongside advances like hornless cattle and GalSafe pigs.

### Russia to Build Eight Nuclear Reactors in Iran under Strategic Agreement

- **Iran's Atomic Energy Organization** confirmed that **Russia** will construct **eight nuclear reactors**, including **four at Bushehr**, under a pre-existing bilateral agreement.
- The expansion aligns with Iran's goal to **triple its civilian nuclear energy capacity**, complementing ongoing work on **Units 2 and 3 at Bushehr**.
- Russia's **Rosatom** had earlier completed **Bushehr-1** and continues to play a central role through funding and technical collaboration.
- Iran's nuclear program is under **Western scrutiny**, and Russia's involvement also includes an offer to remove **Iran's excess enriched uranium**, signalling broader **diplomatic engagement**.



- Additional planned reactors like **Derzhavin** reflect Iran's move toward **nuclear self-reliance**, supported by strategic alliances.

### Germany Sets Fusion Record with 43-Second Plasma at Wendelstein 7X

- The **Wendelstein 7X stellarator** in Germany sustained a **fusion plasma for 43 seconds**, setting a **world record** in the **Max Planck Institute's OP 2.3 experiment**.
- Using a **pellet-injector system** developed by **Oak Ridge Lab**, about **90 frozen** hydrogen pellets were injected during the pulse, combined with microwave heating.
- Plasma temperatures exceeded 30 million °C, achieving high triple product values, which are essential for net energy generation.
- The campaign also set a new energy throughput record of 1.8 GJ in a 360-second run, a significant benchmark in fusion research.
- The project reflects global scientific collaboration across the EU, U.S., Germany, Spain, and Hungary, with stellarators seen as a promising path to sustainable fusion energy.

### Global Carbon Pricing Instruments Now Cover 28% of Emissions

- The World Bank's 2025 Carbon Pricing Report, released on June 10, states that over 80 instruments (43 carbon taxes, 37 ETS) are now active, covering 28% of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- Despite expansion, only 6% of emissions are priced within the effective US\$40–100 per tonne range required to meaningfully cut emissions, indicating a significant pricing gap.
- Revenue from carbon pricing reached \$103 billion in 2024, with the EU ETS contributing 41%, followed by Germany (14%) and Canada (9%), mainly from the power and industrial sectors.
- Emerging economies like India, Brazil, and Türkiye are expanding frameworks; India's energy-efficiency ETS, launched in 2024, is expected to evolve into a full market by 2026.
- Challenges include low price levels, uneven sectoral coverage, and verification gaps, though innovations like blockchain monitoring and efforts like ISO 14068 standardization are underway.

### ISRO Successfully Tests Payload Rocket Launch from Uttar Pradesh

- **ISRO**, in partnership with **Thrust Tech India**, conducted its **first rocket launch with a payload from Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh**, marking a new chapter in India's decentralised space activity.
- The 15 kg rocket ascended **1.1 km** before deploying a **mini-satellite payload**, which landed safely within **400 metres** of the designated zone under parachute.
- The test was part of INSPACe CANSAT and Model Rocketry Competition 2024–25, aimed at involving students and youth in hands-on aerospace innovation.
- The main competition, scheduled for October–November 2025, will see participation from over 900 student-built satellites, promoting national STEM capacity.
- ISRO officials confirmed that the test successfully demonstrated capabilities and would help generate space awareness and build grassroots talent for India's future space missions.

### Honda Successfully Tests Reusable Rocket with Precision Landing

- **Honda R&D** successfully launched and landed a **6.3m reusable vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) rocket** at **Taiki, Hokkaido**, reaching **~271–300m** altitude and landing **within 37 cm of target**.
- The prototype uses **scaled-down Falcon-like technology** with **retractable legs, aerodynamic fins**, and weighs **1,312 kg wet**—designed for **technology validation only**.
- This marks a strategic move toward suborbital launch capability by 2029, with future applications in small satellite deployment, climate observation, and communications.
- The test positions Honda alongside SpaceX, JAXA, Blue Origin, and others in reusable space tech, indicating its diversification into aerospace.

- Honda's venture complements its broader ecosystem strategy, integrating mobility, robotics, and sustainability technologies for next-gen services.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

### “Original Sin” Book Reveals Alarming Insights into Biden’s Mental Health and Presidency

- In **May 2025**, journalists **Jake Tapper and Alex Thompson** released *Original Sin: President Biden’s Decline, Its Cover-Up, and His Disastrous Choice to Run Again*, revealing alleged **cognitive deterioration** in **Joe Biden’s presidency** and a deliberate cover-up by senior aides.
- The book presents a **dual image of Biden**—as a respected Vice President and a confused leader during his presidency—citing incidents like **memory lapses, failure to recognize allies**, and forgetting **his son Beau’s death anniversary**.
- It alleges that **presidential decisions were effectively made by aides**, functioning as a **“five-member board”**, while Biden served as a symbolic figure, raising ethical concerns about leadership transparency.
- The revelations follow Biden’s **2024 debate struggles, withdrawal from the 2024 presidential race**, and his **advanced prostate cancer diagnosis** in **2025**, deepening public and political scrutiny.
- The book has reignited discussions on **health disclosure norms, media accountability**, and the electorate’s **right to transparency** regarding the mental fitness of those in the highest office.

### “The Diary of a Cricketer’s Wife” Offers Candid Glimpse into Life Beyond Cheteshwar Pujara’s Cricket Career

- In **May 2025**, **Puja Pujara**, wife of veteran Indian cricketer **Cheteshwar Pujara**, released her memoir *The Diary of a Cricketer’s Wife*, published by **HarperCollins India**, offering a **deeply personal account** of the emotional challenges faced by cricketers’ families.
- The book was prompted by the **emotional fallout after Pujara’s exclusion** from the Indian Test team following the **2023 WTC Final loss to Australia**, marking a pivotal moment in both their lives.
- Across its **318 pages**, Puja shares heartfelt episodes such as **withholding news of a family medical emergency** during a critical series, spotlighting the **personal sacrifices and silent strength** behind the scenes.
- While Puja expressed **anger and disappointment** over the omission, Cheteshwar remained composed, reflecting his **stoic temperament**, which has defined his cricketing legacy of **103 Tests and 7,195 runs**.
- The memoir stands out in Indian sports literature by **humanizing the experience of cricket WAGs**, providing a **female perspective** often overlooked, and promoting empathy towards the **unseen emotional labor** of athletes’ partners.

### New Book Offers Scholarly Reappraisal of Indira Gandhi Era Ahead of Emergency’s 50th Anniversary

- Released on **May 23, 2025**, TCA Srinivasa Raghavan’s *Indira Gandhi and the Years that Transformed India* provides an **objective and archival-based analysis** of Indian politics during the **1970s**, with special focus on the **Emergency period (1975–77)**.
- The book examines the **constitutional tussle among the executive, legislature, and judiciary**, highlighting the **institutional conflicts** that culminated in the imposition of the Emergency following the **Allahabad High Court’s 1975 verdict** invalidating Indira Gandhi’s 1971 election.
- Unlike sensational accounts, Raghavan avoids focusing on **personal leadership styles** or **Sanjay Gandhi’s political role**, instead emphasizing the **long-term political and constitutional consequences** of the Emergency era.
- It also critiques the **use of coercion during Emergency** and traces how the period has shaped India’s heightened sensitivity to **civil liberties and citizens’ rights** in contemporary discourse.
- Published ahead of the **50th anniversary of the Emergency on June 26, 2025**, the book contributes a **measured historical perspective** to ongoing debates about the balance of power and democratic resilience in India.





### Audrey Truschke's "India: 5000 Years of History" Offers a Critical, Nuanced View of the Subcontinent's Past

- Published in 2024 by Picador India, Audrey Truschke's *India: 5000 Years of History* provides a **comprehensive, multi-layered narrative** spanning from the **Indus Valley Civilization** to modern India, analyzing political, cultural, social, and religious transformations over millennia.
- Truschke, a prominent American historian and Indologist at **Rutgers University**, is known for her **bold reinterpretations** of contentious figures and narratives, encouraging readers to challenge oversimplified views of Indian history.
- The book begins by contextualizing the **urban sophistication and trade networks** of the Indus Valley Civilization, followed by a critical examination of the **Vedic period**, emphasizing oral traditions and Sanskrit literature as foundational to early Indian society.
- Rejecting the simplistic **Aryan invasion theory**, Truschke advocates for a nuanced understanding based on **linguistic shifts, archaeological continuity, and genetic evidence**, highlighting India's ancient history as a product of **migration, adaptation, and internal complexity**.
- Through a blend of **narrative storytelling, primary sources**, and thematic analysis, the book portrays India's past as **pluralistic and contested**, inviting deeper reflection on identity and power dynamics shaping the subcontinent.

### A.K. Bhattacharya's "Different Strokes (1998–2014)" Chronicles India's Economic Governance Post-Reforms

- Published by **Penguin Business** in 2025, A.K. Bhattacharya's third book in his *India's Finance Ministers* series, *Different Strokes (1998–2014)*, examines India's economic evolution during a crucial period following the **1991 reforms**.
- The volume covers the tenures of four key finance ministers—**Yashwant Sinha, Jaswant Singh, Pranab Mukherjee, and P. Chidambaram**—highlighting their achievements and challenges amidst accelerating GDP growth and infrastructure expansion.
- Bhattacharya's writing is noted for its **clinical, non-judgmental, and engaging storytelling**, focusing on policy dilemmas, coalition pressures, and institutional dynamics without personal bias.
- Key themes include reforms and missed opportunities in **employment generation, social spending, taxation, and fiscal consolidation**, offering insights into India's complex economic governance.
- The book serves as an essential resource for **students, civil services aspirants, political historians, and economic journalists**, deepening understanding of India's post-reform political economy and policy continuity.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### World Hunger Day 2025

On **May 28, 2025**, **World Hunger Day** was observed with the theme "**Sowing Resilience**", highlighting the need for **climate-resilient agriculture** to fight hunger in the face of climate change.

- The focus was on empowering **women and smallholder farmers**, who produce up to **80% of food in many developing nations**, by ensuring **access to tools, training, and markets**.
- The day drew global attention to **maternal and child nutrition**, with calls from former UK ministers to expand initiatives like the **Child Nutrition Fund** and **micronutrient supplementation** programs.
- At the national level, India hosted the **8th Right to Food Campaign Convention in Jaipur**, where the **Jaipur Declaration** advocated for **inclusive food policies** and improved implementation of schemes.
- The 2025 observance emphasized **community-led solutions**, investment in **drought-resistant crops**, and the integration of **climate action** into food security planning.

### World Environment Day 2025

On **June 5, 2025**, the world observed **World Environment Day** under the theme "**Beat Plastic Pollution**", highlighting the **urgent global challenge** of plastic waste.

- The event was hosted by the **Republic of Korea**, with **Jeju Province** serving as the focal venue showcasing **plastic-free innovation and recycling practices**.
- Established by the **UN in 1972**, the day emphasizes **climate action, resource efficiency, and sustainable development goals**, especially **SDG 12** and **SDG 14**.
- In **India**, campaigns like **“Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0”** and **awareness drives in Nagpur** were organized, while **Geneva** hosted multilateral dialogues on **plastic pollution treaties**.
- The day reinforced calls for **global bans on single-use plastics, promotion of circular economies, and corporate accountability** for waste management.

### Birsa Munda Punyatithi 2025

On **9 June 2025**, India observed the **125th death anniversary** of **Birsa Munda**, a revered tribal freedom fighter, with nationwide tributes led by the **Prime Minister**, and mass gatherings in **Jharkhand**.

- **PM Narendra Modi** called him a **“great hero of the freedom struggle”**, while the **Jharkhand Governor and Chief Minister** paid floral tributes at his memorial sites in **Kokar and Birsa Chowk**.
- His legacy of **“Jal-Jungle-Zameen”** was highlighted through public ceremonies, **cleanliness drives**, and traditional tribal rituals, including **Johar salutations and Sarna prayers**.
- Educational and cultural programs, including **lectures, essay contests, and folk dances**, were conducted across **Jharkhand, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh** to honour his ideals.
- The observance revived national discussion on his **Ulgulan rebellion (1899–1900)**, which led to the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908**, and served as a prelude to his **150th birth anniversary in November 2025**.

### UN Celebrates First International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations

- On **10 June 2025**, the UN observed the **first International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations**, established through **UNGA Resolution 78/286**, with backing from **China and 80+ Member States**.
- Events included a **UNESCO–China youth symposium** in **Paris**, and a high-level **UN Alliance of Civilizations** dialogue and exhibition in **New York**, showcasing global cultural diversity.
- UN leaders including **António Guterres** and **Philemon Yang** emphasized that **intercultural dialogue** is critical for **peace, solidarity, and upholding UN Charter values**.
- The resolution encourages **governments, civil society, and academia** to launch **educational and cultural initiatives** promoting civilizational diversity and global unity.
- The Day complements **UNESCO’s World Day for Cultural Diversity (21 May)** and serves as a foundation for broader intercultural trust ahead of the **Summit of the Future 2025**.

### Great Indian Bustard Conservation Milestone

## RANKING

### Climate Change Performance Index 2025: Where Does India Stand?

- India ranked **10th globally** in the **2025 Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)** released by **Germanwatch**, making it one of the **top-performing G20 nations** alongside the **UK**.
- India scored **67.99 overall**, earning a **high rating** in **GHG emissions** and **energy use**, but only **medium in climate policy** and **low in renewable energy**.
- Strengths include rapid expansion in solar power, new energy efficiency standards, and EV promotion, combined with low per capita emissions.
- No country received a “very high” rating in all categories, keeping the top three positions vacant; **Denmark, Netherlands, and UK** lead the rankings.
- The report highlights the urgent need for India to improve renewable energy integration and climate governance despite its significant progress.

### India Falls to 131st Rank in Global Gender Gap Index 2025



- On **June 12, 2025**, the **World Economic Forum** ranked **India 131st out of 148** in the **Global Gender Gap Report**, despite an improved overall parity score of **64.4%**.
- India made gains in **Economic Participation**, improving to **40.7%**, due to rising income parity and steady labour force participation; however, Political Empowerment fell due to declines in women MPs and ministers
- The Educational Attainment sub-index reached 97.1%, and Health and Survival indicators also showed high parity, but regional comparisons placed India below Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan.
- The report warns that global gender parity still remains 123 years away, despite 2025 showing the largest post-COVID improvement, closing the global gap to 68.8%.
- India's ranking declined due to slower progress relative to other countries, highlighting the need for urgent policy reforms in women's political and leadership inclusion.

### **India Becomes Third-Largest Global Power Generator: IEA Report 2025**

- The **International Energy Agency's World Energy Investment 2025 report** ranked **India third globally** in new power generation capacity over the last five years, behind **China and the USA**.
- India's growth was driven by rising residential, commercial, and industrial power demand, with 83% of 2024's investments going into clean energy, especially solar PV.
- In 2024, India secured \$2.4 billion in development finance and saw FDI flows reach \$5 billion, nearly double pre-pandemic levels.
- Despite the clean energy surge, coal still supplies two-thirds of India's power, though non-fossil capacity rose to 44%, nearing the 2030 target of 50%.
- India's transition reflects both green leadership and challenges in balancing growth with sustainability, as it tries to reduce its fossil fuel dependency.

### **India Drops to 71st in WEF Energy Transition Index 2025**

- On **June 18, 2025**, the **World Economic Forum**, along with **Accenture**, released its **Energy Transition Index 2025**, ranking **India 71st out of 118**, down **eight spots** from 2024.
- India scored 53.3 overall, with notable gains in energy efficiency, clean energy access, and methane emission reduction, but lagged in grid reliability and energy security.
- Regulatory reforms and increased renewable financing were acknowledged, but India's dependence on imported fuels and rural access issues hindered performance.
- Despite the drop, India's transition readiness improved through increased clean fuel penetration and better regional energy equity.
- Globally, the ETI saw its fastest YoY improvement since COVID, with Sweden, Finland, and Denmark maintaining top ranks due to robust grids and green policies.

### **FAO-WFP Hunger Hotspots Report Flags Sudan, Gaza, and South Sudan at Famine Risk**

- On **June 16, 2025**, the **FAO and WFP** released the **Hunger Hotspots Report**, identifying **Sudan, South Sudan, Mali, Haiti, and Palestine** as facing the **highest levels of acute food insecurity** through **October 2025**.
- In Sudan, ongoing conflict and displacement have pushed 25 million people into food crisis zones; South Sudan sees 7.7 million affected due to floods and violence, with 63,000 facing famine-like conditions.
- Palestine's Gaza region, still under siege, has nearly 500,000 at famine risk; Haiti battles hunger driven by gang violence, and Mali by inflation and internal conflict.
- Yemen, Myanmar, DRC, Nigeria, and others are listed as high-concern areas, with climate disasters, conflict, and aid access restrictions driving the crisis.
- The report calls for urgent humanitarian funding, secure aid corridors, and agricultural support, with WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain warning that lives cannot be saved without action.



## SUMMIT'S & MOU'S

### India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT 2025 Begins in Ulaanbaatar

- India and Mongolia commenced the **17th edition of Exercise NOMADIC ELEPHANT** in **Ulaanbaatar**, aiming to enhance **interoperability under UN peacekeeping mandates**.
- The Indian Army sent **45 personnel from the Arunachal Scouts**, while the Mongolian side included a **150-member Special Forces unit**, focusing on semi-conventional warfare.
- Training includes endurance drills, reflex shooting, cyber warfare, rock craft, heliborne operations, and drone countermeasures, increasing the exercise's tactical sophistication.
- Initiated in 2004, the exercise is held alternately in both nations, with the previous edition hosted in Umroi, Meghalaya, in 2024.
- The exercise reaffirms the India-Mongolia strategic partnership and commitment to regional security, cultural ties, and military diplomacy.

### Reforms in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) through DESH Bill

- The Government of India is replacing the **SEZ Act, 2005** with the **Development of Enterprise and Service Hubs (DESH) Bill** to modernize and liberalize SEZ operations.
- The DESH framework will allow both domestic and export-oriented units, remove export-only restrictions, and offer single-window clearance for investors.
- It aims to boost exports, attract foreign and domestic investment, and create new employment opportunities in sectors like IT, manufacturing, and services.
- The reformed SEZs will be better integrated into global value chains, enhancing India's competitiveness in international trade.
- The policy reflects stakeholder inputs and addresses past limitations like rigid regulation and limited domestic-market integration.

### High Seas Treaty Inches Closer to Enforcement at UN Ocean Conference

- At the **UN Ocean Conference 2025 in Nice**, **18 countries** ratified the **High Seas Treaty (BBNJ Treaty)**, bringing the total to **49 ratifications**, just **11 short** of the threshold for it to come into force.
- Once **60 countries ratify**, a **120-day countdown** will begin before the treaty becomes legally binding, expected by **early 2026**.
- The treaty is the first global framework for protecting marine biodiversity in international waters, mandating MPAs, EIAs, technology sharing, and benefit sharing from marine genetic resources.
- It creates oversight bodies like the Conference of Parties (COP) and a Scientific & Technical Body, with COP1 scheduled within one year of activation.
- UN Secretary-General Guterres hailed the rapid progress as a "record," with global leaders including President Macron backing a 2025 ratification goal.

## ECONOMY

### RBI Transfers Record ₹2.69 Lakh Crore Surplus to Centre for FY25

- The **RBI announced a record surplus transfer of ₹2.69 lakh crore** to the **Government of India**, exceeding both the **previous year's ₹2.11 lakh crore** and the **budget estimate of ₹2.56 lakh crore**.
- The transfer was made under the revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF), with the Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB) set at 7.5%—the upper end of the stipulated range, enhancing the RBI's financial resilience.
- The surplus was largely driven by foreign exchange operations, including \$399 billion in dollar sales and higher interest income from global rate hikes.
- This record payout strengthens the government's fiscal position, allowing for more capital expenditure or a reduction in borrowing, potentially lowering the fiscal deficit to around 4.2% of GDP.
- Economists view the transfer as a significant fiscal boost, offering greater flexibility in managing public finances and implementing development projects in FY25.

### RBI Sells Nearly \$400 Billion in FY25

- In FY25, the **RBI sold \$398.71 billion** in the **foreign exchange market**, marking its **largest-ever annual gross intervention** to stabilize the **Indian rupee** amid **capital outflows** and **global economic instability**.
- Despite some purchases, net forex sales stood at \$34.51 billion, the highest since the 2008–09 global financial crisis, reflecting the aggressive nature of RBI's intervention.
- The peak month was December 2024, when the RBI sold \$69.05 billion, accounting for nearly 73% of annual sales concentrated in the second half of the fiscal year.
- These interventions led to a drop in forex reserves by \$80 billion, bringing them below \$625 billion, as the rupee fell to a record low of ₹87.95 per dollar in February 2025.
- The RBI also trimmed its forward dollar book to \$84.34 billion by March-end, reflecting a strategic shift to manage future currency risks while defending the rupee's stability.

### Bitcoin Hits \$110K as GENIUS Act Boosts Crypto Confidence

- **Bitcoin hit an all-time high of \$111,816**, fueled by optimism surrounding the **GENIUS Act**, which aims to regulate **U.S. stablecoins** through clearer frameworks and **consumer protections**.
- The GENIUS Act, which passed a Senate procedural vote (66–32), mandates asset-backed reserves, AML compliance, and bankruptcy protection protocols for stablecoin issuers.
- Investor sentiment surged with over \$3.6 billion in ETF inflows in May, while analysts predict that the stablecoin market could expand from \$248 billion to \$2.5 trillion by 2030.
- The bill has bipartisan support, though critics like Senator Elizabeth Warren have flagged potential conflicts of interest due to Donald Trump's association with "USD1" and "TrumpCoin" ventures.
- With regulatory clarity on the horizon, Bitcoin's rise reflects growing institutional confidence in crypto assets amid evolving U.S. policy landscapes and mainstream acceptance.

### Trade War Fears Abound After Trump Announces 50% Tariffs on EU

- **U.S. President Donald Trump** announced a sweeping **50% tariff on all European Union imports**, effective **June 1**, citing a **\$235.6 billion trade deficit** and accusing the EU of **unfair trade practices**.
- The tariffs target sectors such as automobiles, pharmaceuticals, wine, and cheese, and Trump also warned of a 25% tariff on smartphones not manufactured in the U.S., impacting companies like Apple and Samsung.
- The European Union strongly opposed the move, with Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič warning of retaliation, and Irish Deputy PM Simon Harris highlighting potential disruptions to pharmaceutical and semiconductor supply chains.
- Global markets reacted sharply, with the Dow Jones falling by over 1,000 points, alongside significant losses in the S&P 500 and Nasdaq, reflecting fears of a transatlantic trade war.



- The EU is considering countermeasures, including tariffs on U.S. aircraft, medical devices, and agricultural goods, and has affirmed its readiness to defend EU trade interests if the U.S. proceeds.

### India-Bangladesh Trade Tensions: Regional Impact of Land Port Closures

- India imposed **import restrictions on Bangladeshi goods via land ports**, affecting approximately **USD 770 million** in trade, following **Bangladesh's April 2025 ban on Indian yarn imports** through land routes.
- The restrictions apply to seven categories, including ready-made garments (RMG), processed foods, carbonated drinks, plastic items, and wooden furniture, which are now only allowed via Kolkata and Nhava Sheva seaports.
- This move has heavily impacted Bangladesh's RMG exports, of which 93% previously used land ports, while Indian textile mills are expected to gain ₹1,000–2,000 crore from reduced foreign competition.
- The northeastern Indian states—Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, and Meghalaya—have faced supply chain disruptions, increased logistics costs, and longer transit times due to these curbs.
- Exports of Indian agricultural goods, especially ginger from Mizoram, have also been hit as border closures hinder the two-way trade dynamic, raising concerns over regional economic strain.

### India Surpasses Japan to Become the World's 4th Largest Economy

- India overtook **Japan** to become the **4th largest economy globally**, with a **nominal GDP of \$4.187 trillion**, marginally exceeding Japan's **\$4.186 trillion**, as confirmed by **IMF data** and **NITI Aayog CEO B.V.R. Subrahmanyam**.
- India remains the fastest-growing major economy, with projected GDP growth exceeding 6%, and the IMF estimates that India may surpass Germany by 2028 to become the third-largest economy.
- The growth is fueled by strong domestic consumption, economic reforms, rising global trade integration, and expansion in services and technology sectors, supported by a young, dynamic workforce.
- Per capita income has seen a dramatic rise, doubling from \$1,438 in 2013–14 to \$2,880 in 2025, indicating improved living standards and broad-based economic upliftment.

### ASEAN-GCC Summit 2025: Strengthening Economic and Strategic Ties

- The **second ASEAN-GCC Summit** was held in **Kuala Lumpur**, focusing on enhancing **economic, strategic, and cultural cooperation** between Southeast Asian and Gulf nations.
- Leaders discussed a potential **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** and sought to expand collaboration in **energy, digital economy, and finance**, aiming to foster sustainable development and trade growth.
- The summit reaffirmed core diplomatic principles such as mutual respect, non-interference, and adherence to international law as the basis for the ASEAN-GCC partnership.
- In response to rising global protectionism, both blocs expressed strong support for a rules-based multilateral trading system centered around the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- A joint statement concluded the summit, outlining cooperation in counter-terrorism, climate sustainability, cultural exchange, and economic resilience.

### Industrial Growth Slows to Eight-Month Low of 2.7% in April 2025

- India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grew by only 2.7% in April 2025, the lowest in eight months, largely due to a decline in mining output and sluggish growth in electricity and consumer non-durables.
- Manufacturing grew by 3.4%, with strong gains in machinery (17.0%), automobiles (15.4%), and basic metals (4.9%), while mining contracted by 0.2%.
- In the use-based classification, capital goods surged by 20.3%, consumer durables rose by 6.4%, but non-durables declined by 1.7%, indicating weak rural demand.
- The slowdown is partly attributed to a high base effect from April 2024's 5.2% growth, as well as global trade headwinds and regulatory bottlenecks.
- Slower output in infrastructure/construction goods (4.0%) and primary goods (-0.4%) raises concerns over investment and production momentum early in the fiscal year.

### RBI's Draft Guidelines on Gold Loans and Finance Ministry's Response

- In April 2025, the RBI issued draft guidelines to regulate gold loans, including an LTV cap of 75%, restrictions on gold types, and stricter valuation and repayment norms.
- The proposals aim to address a 76.9% surge in gold loans, growing NPAs (₹6,824 crore combined in banks and NBFCs), and irregular lending practices.
- The Union Finance Ministry suggested exempting loans under ₹2 lakh and deferring implementation to January 1, 2026, to protect small borrowers.
- The guidelines also require ownership declarations, prohibit concurrent loans, and mandate the return of collateral within 7 working days, or else ₹5,000/day compensation.
- This marks an effort by the RBI to tighten supervision over a rapidly expanding loan segment while balancing financial inclusion concerns.

### RBI Annual Report 2024–25: Key Highlights

- India's real GDP growth slowed to 6.5% in FY25, down from 9.2%, but still retained its position as the fastest-growing major economy, with inflation easing to 4.6%.
- The RBI's net income surged by 27.5% to ₹2.69 lakh crore, enabling a record surplus transfer to the government, supported by a revised contingency risk buffer of 6% ±1.5%.
- The RBI's balance sheet expanded by 8.2% to ₹76.25 lakh crore, driven by significant growth in gold holdings (52.09%) and domestic investments (14.32%).
- The ₹2, ₹5, and ₹2000 notes were discontinued, with the ₹500 note dominating circulation, and digital rupee (e₹) usage rising by 334% to ₹1,016.5 crore.
- Digital payment innovations like 'UPI Circle' and enhanced UPI Lite transaction limits were introduced to expand financial access and usage across demographics.

### Germany Becomes the World's Top Creditor, Overtaking Japan After 34 Years

- In 2024, Germany surpassed Japan to become the world's largest creditor nation with net external assets of ₹569.7 trillion (\$3.99 trillion), driven by a current account surplus and currency appreciation.
- Germany recorded a €248.7 billion current account surplus, aided by strong exports, contributing to its rise.
- A 5% euro appreciation against the yen increased the yen-denominated value of Germany's euro-based assets.
- Japan's assets also hit a record high of ₹533.05 trillion (\$3.73 trillion) due to robust overseas investments, despite falling to second place.
- China ranked third, with net external assets at ₹516.3 trillion (\$3.6 trillion), as creditor nation rankings reflected shifts in global economic dynamics.

### Nicaragua Becomes 101st WTO Member to Accept Fisheries Subsidies Agreement

- On **June 2, 2025**, Nicaragua became the **101st WTO member** to accept the **Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies**, bringing the pact closer to **formal implementation**.
- The agreement, adopted during the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (2022), is the first WTO treaty focused on environmental sustainability, targeting overfishing and IUU practices.
- It prohibits subsidies for illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, fishing overexploited stocks, and fishing in unregulated high seas.
- The WTO Fish Fund will be activated to support developing and least-developed countries in upgrading legal, monitoring, and enforcement systems.
- The treaty requires 111 ratifications to enter into force, and with 10 more needed, attention now turns to finalizing expanded terms at the 13th WTO Ministerial in February 2026.

### Flipkart Secures NBFC Licence from RBI: Enters Direct Lending Space

- **Flipkart** received a **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)** licence from the **Reserve Bank of India**, allowing it to offer **direct loans** to consumers and sellers.

- The licence was issued to Flipkart Finance Private Limited on March 13, 2025, making it the first major Indian e-commerce firm to enter lending independently
- Previously, Flipkart partnered with Axis Bank, IDFC Bank, and others for loan facilitation, but now plans to use its own capital for credit disbursement.
- Lending services will be provided through the Flipkart platform and its fintech app Super.money, marking a major step into financial services.
- Operational preparations are underway, with formal launch of lending products expected in the coming months after management appointments and model finalization.

### **RBI Announces 55th Monetary Policy Committee Meeting Decisions (June 2025)**

- The **RBI's Monetary Policy Committee** cut the **repo rate** by **50 basis points** to **5.50%**, marking the **third rate cut in 2025** amid easing inflation and global economic uncertainties.
- The **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)** was reduced by **100 basis points** to **3%**, phased in four stages beginning **September 2025**, potentially injecting **₹2.5 lakh crore** into the economy.
- The RBI changed its stance from 'accommodative' to 'neutral', signaling a more balanced approach to growth and inflation management.
- CPI inflation for FY26 was revised down to 3.7%, with GDP growth maintained at 6.5%, supporting a moderately optimistic macroeconomic outlook.
- The policy led to a stock market rally, especially in real estate and financial sectors, while borrowers are expected to benefit from lower EMIs and reduced loan interest rates.

### **RBI Premieres 5-Part Docuseries 'Unlocked: Beyond the Rupee' to Demystify India's Central Bank**

- On **June 3, 2025**, the **Reserve Bank of India** released a **five-part docuseries** titled "**RBI Unlocked: Beyond the Rupee**" on **JioHotstar**, aiming to **educate the public** on its core functions and history.
- The series offers insight into the RBI's roles in monetary policy, currency management, banking regulation, and financial inclusion, bridging the information gap between the institution and citizens.
- Produced by Chalkboard Entertainment, each episode runs 25–30 minutes, presenting 90 years of RBI history through engaging visuals and expert interviews.
- The documentary features exclusive footage from inside currency presses and gold vaults, along with commentary from economists, policymakers, and former governors.
- The initiative reflects the RBI's commitment to public outreach and transparency, providing an accessible look into how the central bank shapes India's financial system.

### **India's Extreme Poverty Rate Falls to 5.3% at \$3/Day Threshold (World Bank Report 2025)**

- The **World Bank** reported on **June 7–8, 2025**, that India's **extreme poverty rate** dropped from **27.1% (2011–12)** to **5.3% (2022–23)** using a revised global poverty line of **\$3/day (2021 PPP)**.
- Despite the higher benchmark, the number of people in extreme poverty fell from 344.5 million to 75.2 million, reflecting a shift of nearly 269 million people out of extreme poverty.
- Under the earlier \$2.15/day line, India's poverty rate declined to 2.3% in 2022–23 from 16.2% in 2011–12, demonstrating significant socio-economic upliftment.
- The decline is attributed to improved household consumption surveys, targeted subsidies, PDS reforms, welfare schemes, and economic growth.
- Rural poverty fell from 18.4% to 2.8%, urban poverty from 10.7% to 1.1%, and lower-middle-income poverty (\$4.20/day) declined from 57.7% to 23.9%, reducing the urban–rural poverty gap.

### **World Energy Investment Report 2025**

- The **IEA's World Energy Investment Report 2025** forecasts a record **USD 3.3 trillion** in global energy spending, with **clean energy** investments (USD 2.2 trillion) **doubling fossil-fuel outlays**.



- Solar PV dominates with USD 450 billion in funding, while battery storage, nuclear, and grids have seen notable rises, but grid bottlenecks continue to hinder renewable integration.
- Despite the clean-energy surge, China and India are expanding coal capacity, with approvals of ~100 GW and 15 GW respectively, marking the highest global coal approvals since 2015.
- In India, 83% of power investment in 2024 went to clean energy, with the country receiving USD 2.4 billion in development finance for clean-energy projects.
- The report urges tripling annual clean-energy investments to USD 4 trillion by 2030 to stay on the Net-Zero 2050 pathway, especially in emerging markets and energy-poor regions.

#### **Sri Lanka's DFCC Bank Lists Green Bonds on NSE IX in GIFT City**

- DFCC Bank PLC became the first foreign entity to list bonds on the NSE International Exchange (NSE IX) at GIFT IFSC, listing LKR 2.5 billion in green bonds for solar energy financing.
- The bonds will support rooftop and ground-mounted solar PV projects in Sri Lanka, contributing to its goal of 70% renewable electricity by 2030.
- The listing follows a global path, having been earlier issued in Sri Lanka and Luxembourg, and now expands its market access through dual-listing at GIFT City.
- The event highlighted South Asia's green finance growth, backed by regulatory efforts from IFSCA and global ESG principles, furthering BIMSTEC sustainability collaboration.
- DFCC, a pioneer in sustainable banking, marks this milestone as part of GIFT City's evolution into a Global South green finance hub, encouraging similar issuances from neighbouring countries.

