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IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

Operation Mahadev: Indian Security Forces Neutralise Terrorists of Pahalgam Attack

- Operation Mahadev was launched by the Army, CRPF, and J&K Police in the Lidwas area near Dachigam National Park, resulting in the killing of three terrorists, including Suleiman Shah alias Hashim Musa, the mastermind of the April 22, 2025 Pahalgam terror attack.
- The Pahalgam attack involved five terrorists who opened fire on civilians in Baisaran Valley, killing 26 people (mainly Hindu tourists) and injuring 20, marking one of India's deadliest civilian terror strikes since the 2008 Mumbai attacks
- The operation followed a 14-day intelligence pursuit, triggered by an unusual satellite phone signal, and culminated in a well-coordinated encounter that neutralised Musa, Abu Hamza, and Yasir, along with the recovery of advanced weapons.
- The codename "Mahadev" symbolised protection of the Amarnath Yatra route and the sacred geography of Dachigam forest, highlighting the cultural and spiritual duty of safeguarding pilgrims.

Exercise Bold Kurukshetra 2025

- The 14th edition of Exercise Bold Kurukshetra between India and Singapore began on 28 July 2025 in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, and will continue until 4 August 2025, aiming to enhance joint interoperability under United Nations mandates.
- The participating units include India's Mechanised Infantry Regiment and the 42 Armoured Regiment of Singapore's 4 Singapore Armoured Brigade, reflecting strong defence partnership between the two nations.
- This edition is structured as a table-top exercise and computer-based wargame, focusing on mechanised warfare and validation of joint operational procedures for UN peacekeeping under Chapter VII scenarios.
- The exercise is led by Colonel Arjun Ganapathi for India and Lieutenant Colonel Khiew Zhi Yoong for Singapore, with the opening ceremony marked by a symbolic regimental flag handover. It will conclude with an equipment display by the Indian Army, showcasing India's mechanised capabilities and advancements in defence technology.

Exercise Drone Prahar

- The Indian Army conducted Exercise Drone Prahar at Rayang in Arunachal Pradesh's East Siang district, aiming to validate drone integration in battlefield operations.
- The drill focused on enhancing intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR) and sensor-to-shooter coordination, thereby improving commanders' situational awareness and operational control.
- Key scenarios demonstrated real-time precision targeting, layered drone surveillance, and dynamic battlefield decision-making support to ground forces. The exercise also tested systems for airspace deconfliction, secure communications, and interoperability protocols across services, ensuring seamless coordination in tactical environments.

Indian Coast Guard's Fast Patrol Vessel 'Atal' Launched in Goa

- Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) launched 'Atal', the sixth Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) in the Adamya-class series of eight ships, at Vasco-da-Gama on July 29, 2025.
- The 52-metre long, 320-tonne vessel features over 60% indigenous content and includes a controllable pitch propeller (CPP) system, a first for its class in India.
- Designed for coastal patrol, EEZ monitoring, island security, and anti-smuggling, the FPV also supports fisheries protection, anti-piracy, and search and rescue operations.
- The project has generated local employment, particularly through MSMEs and ancillary industries, strengthening India's shipbuilding ecosystem.
- With the addition of 'Atal', the Coast Guard fleet moves toward its target of 200 vessels and 100 aircraft by 2030, enhancing India's maritime security capacity.

Maharashtra to Celebrate MS Swaminathan's Birth Anniversary as Sustainable Agriculture Day

- The Maharashtra government declared that August 7—the birth anniversary of M.S. Swaminathan—will be observed annually as Sustainable Agriculture Day across the state.
- This decision pays tribute to Swaminathan, known as the architect of India's Green Revolution, whose high-yield wheat and rice innovations enabled India's food self-sufficiency.
- All agricultural universities in Maharashtra will establish Bio-Happiness Centres, focusing on sustainable farming, climate adaptation, and food security research.
- Statewide events will be organised each year, and awards named after Swaminathan will promote excellence in sustainable agriculture.
- Swaminathan, born in 1925 and awarded the Bharat Ratna in 2024, championed the concept of the "Evergreen Revolution," blending productivity with ecological balance.

Project 17A Frigate Himgiri

- GRSE delivered Himgiri (Yard 3022), the third Nilgiri-class stealth frigate under Project 17A, to the Indian Navy at Kolkata, marking a milestone in naval self-reliance.
- Named after the original INS Himgiri, a Leander-class frigate decommissioned in 2005, the new vessel carries forward its legacy with advanced stealth design, automation, and combat systems.
- Built using Integrated Modular Construction, the ship achieved ~75% indigenisation, involving over 200 MSMEs and generating significant employment in India's defence ecosystem.
- Armed with BrahMos missiles, Barak-8 SAMs, MF-STAR radar, HUMSA-NG sonar, and Shakti EW systems, Himgiri provides multi-domain combat capability.
- With a CODOG propulsion system, 6,600-ton displacement, and 30-knot top speed, it strengthens India's Indo-Pacific presence and contributes to the Navy's 2035 target of 170–175 warships.

Renowned Economist and Author Meghnad Desai Passes Away at 85

- Lord Meghnad Desai, noted economist, author, and UK Labour peer of Indian origin, passed away on 29 July 2025 at the age of 85. Reports differ on whether his death occurred in London or Gurugram.
- Born in Vadodara in 1940, he studied at the University of Mumbai and completed his PhD in economics at the University of Pennsylvania in 1963.
- At the London School of Economics (LSE), he became Professor in 1983, later Professor Emeritus, and founded the Centre for the Study of Global Governance in 1992.
- Elevated as Baron Desai in 1991, he served in the House of Lords, resigning from Labour in 2020 over antisemitism concerns, later sitting as a crossbencher. Author of over 25 books, recipient of the Padma Bhushan (2008), and chair of the Gandhi Memorial Statue Trust, he was praised by PM Modi and global leaders for strengthening India-UK intellectual ties.

Indigenous Kavach 4.0 Safety System Commissioned

- The Indian Railways commissioned Kavach 4.0, its indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection system, on the Mathura–Kota section of the Delhi–Mumbai corridor.
- Certified by RDSO in 2024 and approved for operations at 160 km/h in 2025, Kavach 4.0 introduces improved positioning, fibre-optic communications, and direct links to Electronic Interlocking systems.
- Operating at Safety Integrity Level 4 (SIL-4), the highest global standard, it enables automatic braking and in-cab signalling, even under fog and poor visibility conditions.
- Deployment required telecom-scale infrastructure with RFID tags, optical fibre cables (5,856 km), 619 towers, and integration of station and onboard Kavach units. This rollout marks a step toward Atmanirbhar Bharat, strengthening India's modern, indigenous rail-safety infrastructure.

First Private Railway Station of Uttar Pradesh: Gomti Nagar Station, Lucknow

- Gomti Nagar Railway Station in Lucknow has become Uttar Pradesh's first privately managed station, and the first such project in the North Eastern Railway zone, under the Integrated Station Facility Management System (ISFMS).
- Indian Railways retains control over train operations, security, and ticketing, while private operators handle passenger amenities like cleanliness, catering, parking, digital displays, and commercial leasing.

- The RLDA will oversee nine-year operational licences with an optional three-year extension, sharing revenue with 15% for RLDA and 85% for Indian Railways.
- The redeveloped station features solar panels, lifts, escalators, commercial blocks, and a wide concourse, with plans for lounges, retail zones, and food courts. As one of the pilot projects along with Chandigarh station, Gombi Nagar represents Indian Railways' shift toward public-private partnerships in station modernization.

PM Modi's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' Sets Guinness World Record with 3.53 Crore Registrations

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flagship initiative Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC) 2025 set a Guinness World Record for registering 3.53 crore people on the MyGov platform in one month.
- The certificate was presented in New Delhi on 4 August 2025, in the presence of Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan, Ashwini Vaishnaw, and Jitin Prasada, with adjudication by Guinness official Rishi Nath.
- The 8th edition reached over 21 crore viewers across platforms, highlighting its wide reach among students, parents, and teachers.
- Since 2018, PPC has provided a direct platform for PM Modi to engage with students on exam stress, mindfulness, digital distractions, and NEP 2020 goals. Leaders described PPC as a festival of inclusive education, a tool for building resilience and confidence, and a model of participatory governance in a Viksit Bharat vision.

India Becomes World's 5th Biggest Aviation Market

- India became the fifth-largest aviation market in 2024, handling 241 million passengers (domestic + international), surpassing Japan's 205 million.
- Passenger traffic grew 11.1% year-on-year, rising from 211 million in 2023 to 241 million in 2024, reflecting strong recovery and demand.
- The Mumbai-Delhi air corridor ranked as the 7th busiest route globally, carrying about 5.9 million passengers in 2024.
- According to IATA's World Air Transport Statistics (WATS), the global top four markets were the United States (876m), China (741m), United Kingdom (261m), and Spain (241m). India's rapid aviation expansion highlights its role as a growth hub, driven by rising middle-class travel demand, airport capacity upgrades, and government UDAN connectivity schemes.

Agnishodh and Project SAMBHAV

- The Indian Army inaugurated Agnishodh, its new Research Cell at IIT Madras, aimed at converting academic innovations into deployable defence technologies. It supports the Army's Five Pillars of Transformation, focusing on technology absorption, tri-service integration, and HR development.
- Agnishodh prioritises AI, quantum computing, cybersecurity, wireless communication, and unmanned systems, while upskilling Army personnel in advanced technological fields.
- Alongside this, Project SAMBHAV (Secure Army Mobile Bharat Vision) was showcased as a secure 5G-based communication system offering encrypted connectivity in high-risk and remote battle environments. SAMBHAV reduces dependence on public networks and enhances on-the-move battlefield communication, ensuring speed, security, and resilience in critical operations.

Punjab Becomes First State to Empanel Sign Language Experts Under Juvenile Justice Act

- Punjab became the first Indian state to empanel sign language interpreters, translators, and special educators under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, ensuring justice access for children with hearing and speech impairments.
- Announced by Dr. Baljit Kaur, the initiative will provide district-wise experts to assist children in court proceedings and other formal interactions.
- It also aligns with the POCSO Act, 2012, strengthening safeguards for vulnerable children during sensitive legal processes.
- Experts will be compensated as per legal provisions, institutionalising support for children with disabilities. Punjab has also promoted inclusive governance by broadcasting assembly sessions in sign language, demonstrating a wider commitment to accessibility.

Chhattisgarh Emerges as Major Ni-Cu-PGE Mineral Belt

- The Geological Survey of India (GSI) confirmed a major Nickel (Ni), Copper (Cu), and Platinum Group Elements (PGE) discovery in Mahasamund district, Chhattisgarh.

- Found in ultramafic rocks near Amapara–Pipariya, the deposits are critical for EV batteries and hydrogen fuel cells, supporting India's energy transition.
- Preliminary studies suggest high nickel sulphide and PGE concentrations, making the site promising for commercial exploration.
- The discovery reduces import dependence on critical minerals, strengthening India's supply chain resilience. Identified via aerogeophysical surveys and mapping, the deposit will be opened for auction-based exploration with sustainable mining practices.

Merchant Shipping Bill

- The Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024, passed in Lok Sabha, repeals the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, modernising India's maritime governance with 16 Parts and 325 clauses
- It aligns with IMO conventions like MARPOL, SOLAS, and the Wreck Removal Convention, updating safety and environmental frameworks.
- The Bill broadens the definition of vessels, enables temporary registration for recycling, and relaxes ownership norms for OCI-linked entities.
- Oversight shifts to the Director-General of Maritime Administration, empowered with greater enforcement and security authority. It enhances seafarer welfare, accident reporting, and green shipping, aiming to boost India's role in the blue economy and global maritime trade.

'Bharat' Taxi: Cooperative Ride-Hailing Platform

- India's cooperative sector announced the launch of 'Bharat' Taxi, a ₹300-crore ride-hailing platform set to rival Ola and Uber by the end of 2025. The initiative is led by eight major cooperatives, including NCDC, IFFCO, GCMF, KRIBHCO, NABARD, NDDB, and NCEL, operating independently without direct government ownership
- Initial operations will cover Delhi, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra, with over 200 drivers already registered. The project will expand nationwide, supported by a new mobile app expected by December 2025.
- A tech partner will be onboarded through tender, with guidance from IIM-Bangalore for strategy and marketing. The app will feature a unified cooperative interface to ensure affordability, safety, and higher driver earnings.
- The cooperative business model seeks to strengthen driver income, passenger security, and fair pricing, while aligning with the government's push for cooperative-led enterprises under Amit Shah's vision for 2025.

Ancient Buddhist Site, Sarnath — UNESCO Nomination

- India officially nominated Sarnath, near Varanasi, for UNESCO World Heritage status in the 2025–26 cycle, moving the site from its Tentative List (1998).
- Revered as the site where Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon, Sarnath hosts monuments such as the Dhamek Stupa, Ashokan Pillar, Chaukhandi Stupa, and the Lion Capital of Ashoka.
- The ASI and Ministry of Culture spearheaded the dossier, supported by Uttar Pradesh Tourism, emphasizing sustainable tourism, ecological conservation, and community involvement.
- If inscribed, Sarnath would become Uttar Pradesh's fourth UNESCO site, and the state's first Buddhist heritage site, strengthening India's global cultural diplomacy.

Tamil Nadu's State Education Policy 2025

- Tamil Nadu launched its own State Education Policy (SEP) 2025, rejecting the NEP 2020 and making it the first state to adopt a separate comprehensive framework.
- The policy upholds the two-language formula of Tamil and English, abolishes board exams for Class 11, and scraps proposed public exams for Classes 3, 5, and 8, focusing on reducing student stress.
- Admissions to arts and science courses will be based on Class 11–12 consolidated scores, while the state maintains its strong opposition to NEET for medical admissions.
- Flagship initiatives like Ennum Ezhuthum Mission ensure foundational literacy, while TN-SPARK expands AI, robotics, and digital learning for future-ready education.
- With a 230-page policy developed by a 14-member committee, SEP emphasizes social justice, equity audits, and teacher training, while contesting withheld Samagra Shiksha funds from the Centre.

FAO Food Price Index Increases

- The FAO Food Price Index rose to 130.1 points in July 2025, its highest since February 2023, marking a 1.6% monthly rise and a 7.6% increase year-on-year
- Meat prices climbed 1.2% to a record high, while vegetable oils surged 7.1%, driven by palm, soy, and sunflower oil.
- Prices of cereals, sugar, and dairy declined, with cereals dropping 0.8% to a five-year low, sugar falling for the fifth consecutive month, and dairy slipping by 0.1%.
- Despite the July increase, the index remains 18.8% below its March 2022 peak, showing moderated pressures after global supply shocks.
- The Index serves as a global benchmark, reflecting commodity trade trends and providing key insights for food security and policy-making.

2025 Numbeo Index

- India ranked 67th globally in the Numbeo Safety Index with a score of 55.8, reflecting moderate global safety perceptions.
- Mangalore was ranked the safest city in India (score 74.2, 49th globally), followed by Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Surat, and Jaipur, credited to lower crime and better civic infrastructure.
- Cities like New Delhi, Noida, and Ghaziabad were ranked among the most unsafe, with concerns about violent crime and women's safety.
- Globally, Abu Dhabi topped the rankings for the ninth consecutive year (score 88.8), with other Middle Eastern cities dominating the top slots.
- Based on public perception surveys, the Index highlights disparities in urban safety and underlines the role of law enforcement, infrastructure, and governance in crime reduction.

India's 3rd Voluntary National Review on SDGs (VNR 2025)

- NITI Aayog presented India's third Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the UN ECOSOC High-Level Political Forum in New York, reaffirming alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The report highlights that 248 million people exited multidimensional poverty (2013–14 to 2022–23) and 81.35 crore benefited from the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana food security scheme.
- It emphasizes health and nutrition gains through POSHAN Abhiyaan and Ayushman Bharat, reducing out-of-pocket expenditure from 62.6% (2014–15) to 39.4% (2020–21).
- Digital public infrastructure via JAM and UPI ensured inclusive service delivery, with India contributing 48.5% of global real-time payments in FY25. The VNR also details clean energy, infrastructure, and startup growth, positioning India as a leader in SDG localization, South-South cooperation, and digital innovation aligned with the Viksit Bharat @2047 vision.

Indian Ports Bill, 2025

- The Indian Ports Bill, 2025 replaces the colonial-era Indian Ports Act, 1908, modernizing maritime governance through digitization and regulatory reform. It creates the Maritime State Development Council (MSDC) headed by the Union Minister, with representation from coastal states, the Navy, and Coast Guard.
- State Maritime Boards will oversee non-major ports, supported by Dispute Resolution Committees at the state level, with appeals only to High Courts. All tariffs must be electronically published, ensuring transparency in cargo and vessel data.
- Ports must comply with environmental and safety conventions like MARPOL and Ballast Water Management, alongside waste reception and disaster preparedness. Penalties are prescribed for non-compliance. By simplifying procedures and integrating systems, the Bill is expected to reduce logistics costs, improve hinterland connectivity, and boost exports and MSME opportunities, in line with India's Maritime Vision 2047.

SHRESTH: India's First State Health Regulatory Excellence Index

- The Union Health Ministry launched SHRESTH (State Health Regulatory Excellence Index), India's first framework to benchmark state drug regulators for safety and quality. Implemented by CDSCO, it evaluates states on parameters such as infrastructure, licensing, and responsiveness.
- Manufacturing states are assessed on 27 indicators, while distribution states/UTs are ranked on 23 indicators. Monthly data submissions are mandated, with transparent rankings published thereafter.

- The Index builds on India's WHO-recognized Maturity Level 3 (ML3) vaccine regulation status, with the aim to extend this credibility to medicine regulation. It aligns with WHO's Global Benchmarking Tool under WHA Resolution 67.20. The initiative promotes data-driven governance, public trust in medicines, and targeted reforms in digitization, infrastructure, and human resources for regulatory systems.

Cabinet Approves ₹4,600 Crore Semiconductor Manufacturing Projects

- The Union Cabinet cleared four semiconductor projects worth ₹4,600 crore under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM), raising the total to 10 sanctioned facilities across six states. The projects are located in Odisha (Bhubaneswar), Punjab (Mohali), and Andhra Pradesh.
- Odisha will host India's first compound semiconductor fab by SiCSem and advanced glass-based packaging by 3D Glass Solutions. Punjab's CDIL expansion will boost production of high-power devices like MOSFETs and IGBTs. Andhra's ASIP unit, in collaboration with South Korea's APACT, will produce consumer and auto electronics.
- Collectively, the facilities will manufacture over 300 million semiconductor units annually for defense, EVs, data centers, mobiles, and solar inverters. The projects will generate 2,034 direct skilled jobs and large indirect employment. This expansion underscores India's goal of building a domestic semiconductor ecosystem and reducing dependence on imports, with investments now totaling about ₹1.6 lakh crore under ISM.

Two More Defence Industrial Corridors

- The Government of India approved two new Defence Industrial Corridors, one in Maharashtra and one in Assam, expanding on the earlier corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- The new corridors aim to strengthen Atmanirbhar Bharat, boost indigenous defense manufacturing, create jobs, and improve the national industrial base in aerospace and defense.
- The UPDIC has already attracted investments of ₹28,475 crore and hosts major units like the BrahMos missile plant, while the TNDIC supports cutting-edge aerospace and defense clusters.
- Maharashtra plans to develop hubs in Pune, Nashik, and Sambhajinagar, while Assam's corridor will advance defense industry presence in the northeast, enhancing regional security and economic growth.

India Achieves 100 GW Solar PV Manufacturing Milestone

- India's solar PV module manufacturing capacity under the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) has reached 100 GW, a sharp rise from 2.3 GW in 2014. The ALMM was first notified in 2019, with the inaugural list in 2021 covering just 8.2 GW.
- The ecosystem now includes 100 manufacturers and 123 module units, compared to just 21 manufacturers in 2021.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the milestone as a step toward Atmanirbhar Bharat, while Minister Pralhad Joshi credited schemes like the PLI for solar modules. This achievement advances India's 500 GW non-fossil fuel target for 2030 and strengthens its role in the global clean-energy transition.

New OCI Rules Tighten Overseas Citizenship Regulations

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) tightened OCI regulations, expanding grounds for cancellation. OCI status will now be revoked if holders face two-year imprisonment or are charge-sheeted for crimes punishable with seven years or more.
- The earlier five-year limitation for revocation has been removed, meaning such convictions can lead to cancellation at any time.
- These stricter provisions apply even if convictions occur abroad, provided offences are recognized under Indian law. Issued under Section 7D of the Citizenship Act, 1955, the move aims to protect the integrity of OCI status and prevent misuse by individuals with serious criminal records.

Narendra Modi Sets Record with Longest Independence Day Speech

- On August 15, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a 103-minute Independence Day address from the Red Fort, the longest in India's history. This surpassed his own 2024 record of 98 minutes.
- It was Modi's 12th consecutive speech, breaking Indira Gandhi's record of eleven, and placing him second to Jawaharlal Nehru's seventeen.
- Modi has a consistent record of long speeches, ranging from 65 minutes in 2014 to the latest 103 minutes in 2025. Key announcements included Mission Sudarshan Chakra (Iron Dome-like defence shield), GST reforms,

the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana, a High-Powered Demography Mission, and a major nuclear energy expansion.

Pasang Wangchuk Sona ISRO Space Laboratory Inaugurated in Arunachal Pradesh

- On August 16, 2025, Education Minister Pasang Dorjee Sona inaugurated the Pasang Wangchuk Sona ISRO Space Laboratory at Mechuka Government Higher Secondary School in Shi-Yomi district.
- Established through collaboration between ISRO and the Muskaan Foundation, the lab brings space science education to one of India's most remote regions.
- Dedicated to Sona's father, it aims to inspire students to "dream bigger and explore science fearlessly."
- The inauguration saw participation from officials including Deputy Commissioner Liyi Bagra and Muskaan Foundation's COO Pranesh Debnath. The lab is envisioned as a STEM hub that will ignite curiosity, innovation, and scientific ambition among local youth.

India Achieves Historic Deep Ocean Dives in Atlantic

- Two Indian aquanauts, Raju Ramesh and Commander (Retd) Jatinder Pal Singh, achieved record dives in the North Atlantic Ocean aboard the French submersible Nautille.
- Ramesh reached 4,025 m while Singh touched 5,002 m, placing India among fewer than six nations with human dives beyond 5,000 m.
- Conducted with IFREMER (France), the dives provided hands-on training for NIOT teams in piloting, sample collection, and mission recovery.
- They serve as a precursor to India's Samudrayaan Mission, which plans to send a three-person crew to 6,000 m depth using the indigenously built MATSYA-6000 by 2027. These advances highlight India's Blue Economy strategy and its seabed resource exploration contract with the International Seabed Authority.

Simplified Two-Tier GST System Proposed

- The government unveiled plans for GST 2.0, a simplified two-slab GST structure to be implemented by Diwali 2025.
- Proposed slabs: 5% on essentials, 18% on most goods/services, and 40% on luxury/sin goods (like tobacco, pan masala).
- The reform seeks to resolve classification disputes, inverted duty structures, and compliance inefficiencies, reducing burdens on MSMEs.
- Nearly 99% of goods from the 12% bracket would shift to 5%, while 90% from the 28% bracket move to 18%. Expected benefits include consumer affordability, demand growth, and economic predictability, aligning with PM Modi's "Diwali gift" announcement.

C.P. Radhakrishnan Named NDA's Vice-Presidential Candidate

- On August 17, 2025, the BJP Parliamentary Board, chaired by PM Narendra Modi, announced C.P. Radhakrishnan, Governor of Maharashtra, as the NDA's candidate for Vice-President.
- Born in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, he is a two-time Coimbatore MP and veteran RSS/BJP leader with decades of organizational experience.
- He earlier served as Governor of Jharkhand (2023–24) and held additional charges of Telangana and Puducherry before moving to Maharashtra in July 2024.
- Belonging to the Gounder OBC community, his nomination carries symbolic appeal in Tamil Nadu and broader southern India. The NDA aims for consensus support, with BJP chief J.P. Nadda confirming outreach to opposition parties.

Cloudbursts and Landslides Hit Jammu & Kashmir's Kathua

- On August 17, 2025, a cloudburst in Jodh Ghati village and a landslide in Janglote, Kathua district killed seven people, including five children.
- Flash floods and hillside collapses destroyed homes, roads, and parts of NH-44 and the Jammu–Pathankot railway line.
- Rescue operations were launched by the Army, SDRF, and NDRF, with helicopters deployed for evacuations.
- The Ujh River swelled near danger levels, threatening low-lying areas, while a police station and mud houses were damaged. Leaders including Amit Shah, LG Manoj Sinha, and CM Omar Abdullah announced ex-gratia relief and pledged intensified rescue efforts.

Ajay Kumar Bhalla Given Additional Charge as Nagaland Governor

- Following the death of Nagaland Governor La. Ganesan on August 15, 2025, President Droupadi Murmu assigned Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Governor of Manipur, additional charge of Nagaland.
- A 1984-batch IAS officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre, Bhalla served as Union Home Secretary (2019–2024), handling major crises including J&K reorganisation and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- He has been Governor of Manipur since December 2024 and now assumes dual responsibility for Nagaland.
- The move ensures governance continuity until a regular appointment is made, especially given the sensitive situation in Manipur (under President's Rule) and Nagaland.

Uttarakhand Minority Educational Institutions Bill, 2025

- The Uttarakhand Cabinet approved this Bill to extend minority status benefits to Sikh, Jain, Christian, Buddhist, and Parsi institutions, previously reserved only for Muslim-run schools.
- It repeals the Madrasa Education Board Act, 2016 and Arabic and Persian Madrasa Rules, 2019, effective July 1, 2026.
- The Bill creates the State Minority Education Authority (SMEA) to grant recognition, monitor compliance, and prevent misuse of funds.
- Institutions must register under the Societies Act, Trust Act, or Company Act, ensuring autonomy with accountability.
- Supporters view it as inclusive reform, while critics warn it could dilute Articles 26 and 30 rights of religious institutions.

President Murmu Inaugurates Plumeria Garden, Banyan Grove & Babbling Brook at Rashtrapati Bhavan

- President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated three new features in Amrit Udyan at Rashtrapati Bhavan—the Plumeria Garden, Banyan Grove, and Babbling Brook.
- The Plumeria Garden showcases floral landscapes, while the Banyan Grove offers reflexology paths, Panchtatva trails, and forest-inspired soundscapes.
- The Babbling Brook, replacing the musical fountain, features water cascades, reflecting pools, and sculptural spouts, creating a serene reflective environment.
- Public access runs from August 16 to September 14, 2025, with Gate 35 entry, online booking, kiosks, and shuttle service from Central Secretariat Metro Station.
- Enhancements include QR-code plant guides, Braille signage, ramps, and visitor amenities, blending Mughal-British landscaping traditions with modern inclusivity in the 15-acre Amrit Udyan.

Centre Plans Uniform OBC Creamy Layer Policy Across Jobs

- The Government of India is preparing a proposal for a uniform creamy layer policy for OBC reservations across central and state services, PSUs, universities, and possibly private jobs.
- The move follows consultations with DoPT, NCBC, NITI Aayog, and multiple ministries, aiming to remove anomalies caused by varied criteria in different sectors.
- Under the proposed “equivalence model,” posts such as Assistant Professors (Level 10) or equivalent roles in statutory bodies may classify their children as creamy layer.
- The aim is to ensure fair distribution of reservation benefits to genuinely disadvantaged OBC families while reducing arbitrariness in implementation.
- A parliamentary panel has urged revision of the existing ₹8 lakh income ceiling (last updated in 2017), citing inflation and the need for broader socio-economic indicators like property and wealth.

‘SabhaSaar’: AI Tool for Gram Sabhas

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj launched SabhaSaar, an AI-powered tool, on August 15, 2025, starting in Tripura with plans for nationwide rollout.
- Built on the Bhashini platform, the tool transcribes audio/video recordings of Gram Sabhas, translates them into multiple languages, and generates structured minutes.
- Panchayat officials can upload records via the e-GramSwaraj portal, creating tamper-proof documentation and easing manual workloads.

- By supporting Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, and English, the system ensures inclusive multilingual governance.
- The initiative complements Panchayat NIRNAY and is expected to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability in rural decision-making.

Indian Railways Commissions First Removable Solar Panel System at BLW, Varanasi

- Indian Railways commissioned the country's first removable solar panel system between active tracks at Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW), Varanasi, inaugurated on August 15, 2025.
- The system spans 70 meters of Line-19, consisting of 28 bifacial panels with an installed capacity of 15 kWp, mounted on concrete sleepers with epoxy bonding and rubber pads to mitigate vibration
- The design allows quick removal with 4 bolts, ensuring uninterrupted track maintenance and rail operations
- The installation achieves ~21.31% efficiency with a power density of 220 kWp/km, capable of generating about 3.21 lakh units annually per km.
- This innovation utilizes unused rail space, reduces land costs, and supports the net-zero carbon emissions goal of Indian Railways.

ECI's 28 Reform Initiatives in Six Months

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) rolled out 28 reform measures across six pillars: stakeholder engagement, electoral system cleanup, technology adoption, roll purity, ease of voting, and capacity building.
- Over 4,700 meetings engaged 28,000 political representatives, while 20 high-level meetings involved party presidents and senior leaders.
- Electoral roll reforms included delisting 334 inactive RUPPs, eliminating duplicate EPICs, and linking death registrations for real-time updates.
- Technology upgrades introduced ECINET, 100% webcasting, real-time turnout monitoring, and mandatory VVPAT counting for mismatched EVM data.
- Ease-of-voting reforms included reducing voters per booth to 1,200, adding mobile deposit facilities, and redesigning voter slips for clarity.

Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill, 2025

- Parliament passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2025, modernizing mineral policy with a focus on critical minerals.
- Leaseholders may now add lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, gold, and silver without additional fees or royalties, supporting clean energy and EV supply chains.
- The National Mineral Exploration Trust was renamed the National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust, with contributions raised from 2% to 3% of royalty.
- Reforms allow full sale of captive mine surpluses, legalize mineral dump sales, and permit extensions for deep-seated mining leases.
- The law supports India's Critical Mineral Mission (₹32,000 crore), aiding resource independence and overseas asset acquisition in Argentina, Australia, and Zambia.

Jan Vishwas Bill, 2025

- The government introduced the Jan Vishwas Bill, 2025, amending 355 provisions across 16 central Acts, with 288 provisions decriminalized and 67 amended for citizen ease.
- Minor offences like honking in silence zones, faulty weights, or tethering animals will now attract warnings or monetary fines instead of jail.
- First-time offences in 76 categories will only receive advisories, while repeat violations incur graduated penalties.
- The bill enables administrative penalties by officials, easing judicial burdens, with fines auto-revised 10% every three years.
- It seeks to enhance Ease of Doing Business and Ease of Living, though has been referred to a Select Committee for review.

Constitution 130th Amendment Bill, 2025

- The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, introduced by Home Minister Amit Shah, proposes automatic removal of the Prime Minister, CMs, or Ministers detained for 30 days or more on charges punishable by 5+ years imprisonment.
- It amends Articles 75, 164, and 239AA, applying to Union, State, and Delhi governments.
- Removed ministers may be reappointed after detention ends, but cannot govern while under arrest.
- The government justifies it as a safeguard against running governments from jail and to uphold constitutional integrity.
- Opposition leaders call it “draconian” and a “super-Emergency,” while strategist Prashant Kishor supported the reform as long-overdue accountability.

Jalalabad Renamed Parashurampuri

- The Ministry of Home Affairs approved the renaming of Jalalabad in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh, to Parashurampuri, recognising the town’s cultural and religious significance as the birthplace of Lord Parashuram.
- The request was initiated by the Uttar Pradesh government, endorsed by the Ministry of Science & Technology, and formalised through a no-objection certificate in August 2025; a gazette notification is expected soon.
- Leaders including Jitin Prasada, CM Yogi Adityanath, and Home Minister Amit Shah welcomed the move, with local religious leaders celebrating it as a victory for Sanatan Dharma and regional pride.
- Historically founded in 1560 by Akbar, Jalalabad carried Mughal legacy, but the renaming is seen as reclaiming cultural identity and removing a “symbol of slavery.”
- Following notification, official records, signage, and documents will be updated to reflect the new name, boosting its profile as a site of pilgrimage and heritage tourism.

6th Anniversary of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

- The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), launched on August 15, 2019, marked its 6th anniversary, with 15+ crore rural households now connected to tap water supply
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the initiative’s role in improving public health, women’s empowerment, and rural development, noting that rural coverage now extends to ~80% households.
- The mission’s deadline has been extended to 2028 from the earlier 2024 target, with higher allocations under the 2025–26 Union Budget to complete national coverage
- Technology integration includes IoT sensors, geo-tagging, and IMIS dashboards for real-time monitoring, along with community-led water quality testing programs.
- While widely praised, a Parliamentary Standing Committee flagged concerns over the accuracy of state data uploaded to JJM’s portal, urging stronger verification for effective implementation.

Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill, 2025

- Parliament passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2025, modernising the 1957 Act to boost transparency, investment, and critical mineral supply.
- Key reforms include expanding the National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT), permitting lease extensions, and allowing multiple strategic minerals like lithium, cobalt, and nickel within one lease.
- The bill removes the 50% sales cap on captive mines, enables mineral exchanges for trading, and authorises state governments to permit sale of mineral dumps.
- Lessees’ contribution to NMEDT rises from 2% to 3% royalties, expected to add ₹2,500 crore over five years to exploration and development funding.
- Strategically, the reforms support the Critical Mineral Mission, strengthening India’s resource independence for EVs, semiconductors, clean energy, and defence industries.

Yamuna Water Pipeline Project: MoU for Inter-State Water Transfer

- The states of Haryana and Rajasthan signed an MoU to jointly prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Yamuna Water Pipeline Project, aimed at transferring water to drought-prone regions of Rajasthan.
- Phase-1 of the project will divert up to 577 MCM of water annually from the Hathnikund Barrage (Tajewala Headworks) during the monsoon months (July–October) to the Shekhawati districts of Churu, Sikar, and Jhunjhunu.
- The plan involves constructing an underground pipeline network to ensure efficient conveyance with minimal losses and enhanced water security.

- A task force has been formed to oversee the project, with a consultant soon to be appointed; meetings were held in April 2025 to advance planning.
- The initiative promises major relief to Rajasthan's water-stressed areas but has drawn political criticism over concerns it may dilute Rajasthan's entitlements under the 1994 water-sharing agreement.

CAG Review of the FRBM Act

- The CAG compliance report for 2022-23 highlighted that general government debt stood at 81% of GDP, far above the FRBM Act target of 60% by 2024-25.
- Central government debt, which peaked at 61% of GDP in 2020-21, eased to 58% by 2022-23, reflecting some progress toward fiscal consolidation.
- However, interest payments consumed 35% of revenue receipts, up from 34% in the previous year, highlighting persistent fiscal stress.
- The report flagged unrealised tax revenue of ₹21.3 lakh crore, nearly 70% of gross tax collections, and exposed ₹18,000 crore discrepancies in deficit reporting across official statements.
- While the CAG noted weaknesses in transparency and data consistency, it confirmed that government guarantees remained within FRBM norms at 0.23% of GDP against the 0.5% ceiling.

Kerala Becomes India's First Fully Digitally Literate State

- Kerala was officially declared India's first fully digitally literate state by CM Pinarayi Vijayan, following the state-wide Digi Keralam campaign.
- Digital literacy was defined as the ability to use smartphones, digital payments, and government e-services; nearly 21.87 lakh people were trained, achieving 99.98% coverage across 83 lakh households.
- Training modules covered UPI, social media, utility payments, OTP usage, and cyber-fraud awareness, reaching even remote tribal areas like Edamalakudi and Attappadi.
- The effort mobilised 2.57 lakh volunteers from Kudumbashree, NSS/NCC, MGNREGA, and student groups, with third-party verification by the Department of Economics & Statistics.
- The programme emphasised Kerala's K-SMART e-governance platform and will expand to DigiLocker integration and cybercrime awareness in its Phase-2 roadmap.

National Space Day 2025

- On August 23, 2025, India celebrated its second National Space Day, commemorating Chandrayaan-3's lunar landing on the same date in 2023.
- The theme "Aryabhata to Gaganyaan: Ancient Wisdom to Infinite Possibilities" highlighted India's journey from traditional astronomy to modern human spaceflight ambitions.
- The flagship event was hosted at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, featuring astronaut interactions, public exhibitions, and panel discussions.
- On August 22, ISRO held the National Meet 2025 (NM2.0) with ministries, industry, and researchers on leveraging space technology for Viksit Bharat 2047.
- Nationwide, ISRO centres organised open houses, exhibitions, and planetarium programmes, engaging students and citizens across states.

Rajiv Gauba-Led Panels for Next-Gen Reforms & Viksit Bharat Vision

- The Centre set up two high-powered reform committees led by Rajiv Gauba (NITI Aayog Member; ex-Cabinet Secretary) to accelerate reforms for Viksit Bharat 2047.
- One panel will operationalise Viksit Bharat goals, while the other will focus on non-financial sector regulatory reforms including licensing and compliance.
- Members include Secretaries from DPIIT, MSME, Expenditure, Power, along with industry experts from CII, FICCI, Assocham, and leaders like Pawan Goenka and Janmejaya Sinha.
- The committees will coordinate with ministerial groups chaired by Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh, ensuring fast-track decision making.
- Outcomes expected include ease of doing business improvements, streamlined approvals, and trust-based governance, aligning with the 2025 Budget reform roadmap.

Kaziranga Ranks Third Globally in Tiger Density

- Kaziranga Tiger Reserve in Assam now ranks third globally in tiger density at 18.65 tigers per 100 sq km, behind Bandipur and Corbett reserves.
- Tiger numbers rose from 104 in 2022 to 148 in 2024, including 83 females and 55 males, reflecting successful population recovery.
- A 103-day survey under NTCA Phase IV protocols used 293 camera traps across 1,307 sq km, generating over 4,000 tiger images and expanding coverage into Biswanath Wildlife Division.
- New monitoring tools like drones, M-STriPES, and electronic surveillance improved anti-poaching and habitat protection measures.
- Conservation success also relied on 113 female forest rangers known as “Van Durgas” and strong local community participation, strengthening India’s wildlife protection model.

India Revives Sawalkote Hydroelectric Project

- The Sawalkote Hydroelectric Project (1,856 MW) on the Chenab River has been revived by NHPC in collaboration with J&K Power Development Corporation, following India’s suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in April 2025
- Conceived in the 1960s, the project faced decades of delays due to environmental clearances and Pakistan’s objections under IWT, but tenders were issued internationally in July 2025.
- It involves constructing a 192.5 m gravity dam, eight turbine units, and a 56 MW environmental flow station, with an estimated cost of ₹22,704 crore and phased completion expected by 2035
- The project has been designated of national importance, bypassing IWT notifications and symbolising India’s assertion over western river resources.
- Along with Sawalkote, at least five other hydropower projects in Jammu & Kashmir—including Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kirthai, Parnai, and Ratle—are being revived to add over 5,000 MW capacity.

Environment Protection (Management of Contaminated Sites) Rules, 2025

- The Environment Ministry notified the Management of Contaminated Sites Rules, 2025 under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, India’s first binding framework to identify and remediate chemically polluted sites.
- Covering 189 hazardous substances (e.g. PFAS, pesticides, PAHs, heavy metals), the rules establish land-use based response levels for agricultural, residential, and industrial zones.
- SPCBs must assess suspected sites within 90 days, confirm contamination, impose land-use restrictions, and designate the responsible person under the polluter-pays principle
- Cleanup is guided by CPCB-empanelled reference organisations, funded initially by the Environmental Relief Fund or state budgets, with cost recovery from polluters.
- Oversight is provided by a Central Remediation Committee, while progress is tracked on a CPCB geospatial portal, ensuring public disclosure and accountability.

India Achieves 20% Ethanol Blending in Petrol

- India achieved 20% ethanol blending (E20) in petrol during ESY 2024–25, five years ahead of the 2030 target, marking a key milestone in its energy transition.
- Ethanol production rose from 38 crore litres in 2013–14 to 661 crore litres by June 2025, enabling consistent E20 supply.
- The blending drive saved ₹1.36 lakh crore in foreign exchange, generated ₹1.96 lakh crore revenue for distilleries, boosted farmer incomes by ₹1.18 lakh crore, and reduced 698 lakh tonnes of CO₂ emissions.
- Key policies included the National Policy on Biofuels 2022, reduced GST to 5%, expanded feedstock options, long-term offtake agreements, and flex-fuel vehicle norms.
- With validated engine compatibility and a roadmap for 1,700 crore litre/year capacity by 2025, India positioned itself as a global leader in biofuels.

India Lost 18 Times More Forest Than It Gained (2015–2019)

- A study by IIT Bombay and SASTRA University revealed India lost 1,032.89 sq km of forests for every 56.3 sq km gained between 2015–2019, a ratio of 18:1 loss to gain.
- The decline was recorded in every Indian state, with Tamil Nadu and West Bengal accounting for nearly half of total forest loss.

- Gains occurred in small, fragmented forest islets in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Rajasthan, which lacked ecological connectivity.
- The study used Copernicus Global Land Service (CGLS) data with stricter thresholds (15% canopy, 100m resolution), unlike the FSI methodology, explaining discrepancies with official reports.
- Researchers stressed that fragmented and degraded patches cannot compensate for large-scale ecological loss, calling for better monitoring, forest connectivity, and policy action.

First Auction for Green Ammonia by SECI

- The Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) conducted the first green ammonia auction under the National Green Hydrogen Mission, achieving a record-low discovery price of ₹55.75/kg.
- The contract secures 75,000 tonnes per year of green ammonia for supply to Paradeep Phosphates Ltd., Odisha, making it the first of 13 auctions planned under the SIGHT Scheme.
- The discovered price is significantly lower than the H2Global auction 2024 (₹100.28/kg) and close to grey ammonia benchmarks, boosting competitiveness.
- The auction demonstrated strong investor confidence, backed by robust payment security, and will contribute toward scaling green hydrogen and fertilizer decarbonization.

Environment Protection (Management of Contaminated Sites) Rules, 2025

- The Environment Ministry notified the Environment Protection (Management of Contaminated Sites) Rules, 2025 under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, marking India's first binding legal framework for chemical site clean-up.
- The Rules apply to industrial landfills, spill sites, and abandoned chemical facilities but exclude radioactive waste, mining pollution, marine oil spills, and municipal solid waste dumps.
- Local bodies must upload suspected sites twice yearly; SPCBs conduct a 90-day preliminary assessment, followed by a detailed site investigation if hazards exceed limits for any of the 189 hazardous substances.
- A designated Responsible Person (polluter/site owner) must prepare a remediation plan within six months, while government funds cover orphan sites, with costs recoverable under the Polluter Pays principle.
- Oversight involves SPCBs, CPCB, and a Central Remediation Committee, ensuring transparency, liability, and public disclosure to safeguard health and ecosystems.

Haryana Defines 'Forests'

- The Haryana government notified its first official definition of "forest (dictionary meaning)" on August 18, 2025, in compliance with Supreme Court directives.
- Land qualifies if it has ≥40% canopy density and is ≥5 hectares when isolated or ≥2 hectares if contiguous with notified forests
- Plantations, orchards, and agro-forestry areas outside official forest land are explicitly excluded.
- District-level committees and a state-level panel will vet areas, and the Chief Secretary will file an affidavit before the Supreme Court in September 2025.
- Experts caution that the criteria may exclude Aravalli scrublands, potentially weakening protection, though the government says it ensures clarity and judicial compliance.

Nepal Officially Joins the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- On August 24, 2025, Nepal officially joined the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), a global coalition launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2023 to conserve seven big cat species.
- The IBCA, headquartered in New Delhi under the National Tiger Conservation Authority, coordinates anti-poaching, training, conservation strategies, and knowledge-sharing across member nations.
- Nepal brings critical ecological value, being home to snow leopards, tigers, and leopards, and has successfully increased its tiger population from 121 in 2009 to 355 in 2022.
- India has pledged USD 100 million in grants over five years to support IBCA, while facilitating privileges and immunities for the organisation similar to UN agencies.
- Nepal's membership strengthens cross-border Himalayan conservation efforts and enhances global cooperation on big cat protection.

ISRO Chief Dr. V. Narayanan Honoured with GP Birla Memorial Award

- On July 25, 2025, ISRO Chairman Dr. V. Narayanan was conferred with the G. P. Birla Memorial Award 2025, also known as the Lifetime Achievement Award, for his contributions to India's space programme.
- A veteran in cryogenic propulsion, he played a pioneering role in developing indigenous cryogenic engines that powered India's GSLV Mk-III and key missions such as Chandrayaan.
- Under his leadership, ISRO advanced deep-space exploration, expanded launch capabilities, and laid foundations for missions including Gaganyaan, Chandrayaan-4/5, and India's future space station.
- The GP Birla Award legacy includes past recipients such as Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam and Nobel laureate Dr. Venkatraman Ramakrishnan, making it one of India's most prestigious recognitions in science.
- During the GP Birla Memorial Lecture, Dr. Narayanan unveiled ISRO's roadmap to expand India's satellite fleet to 150 by 2028, deploy the first space station module by 2028, and accelerate launches including NISAR.

71st National Film Awards (2023) – Announced in 2025

- The 71st National Film Awards were announced by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting on 1 August 2025, honouring films certified in 2023.
- 12th Fail won Best Feature Film, while Shah Rukh Khan (for *Jawan*) and Vikrant Massey (for *12th Fail*) jointly received Best Actor, marking their first National Awards.
- Rani Mukerji won Best Actress for *Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway*, also her first, while Sudipto Sen won Best Director for *The Kerala Story*.
- Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani, directed by Karan Johar, won Best Popular Film for Wholesome Entertainment, reflecting mass appeal and spectacle.
- The awards highlight a balance of realism, social narratives, and popular cinema, with several landmark first-time recognitions for veteran actors.

M.S. Swaminathan Award for Food and Peace

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Global M.S. Swaminathan Award for Food and Peace at the centenary conference in New Delhi, commemorating the Father of India's Green Revolution. The award was created by the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) in partnership with The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS).
- The first recipient, Professor Ademola A. Adenle of Nigeria, was recognised for advancing sustainable agriculture, food security, and climate resilience, especially in vulnerable communities.
- PM Modi emphasised that food security is inseparable from global peace, invoking the Upanishads to highlight the philosophical and practical link between hunger eradication and social stability.
- The award reflects Swaminathan's vision of an Evergreen Revolution and bio-happiness, encouraging global collaboration on agriculture, biodiversity, and climate justice.

Manika Vishwakarma Crowned Miss Universe India 2025

- Manika Vishwakarma of Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan won the Miss Universe India 2025 crown at the Jaipur finale, and will represent India at the 74th Miss Universe in Thailand on November 21, 2025
- The finale, organized by Glamanand Group, featured 48 contestants, with Tanya Sharma (UP) as first runner-up, Mehak Dhingra (Haryana) second, and Amishi Kaushik third.
- Manika is a Political Science and Economics student at Delhi University, a trained classical dancer, visual artist, and former NCC cadet.
- As founder of Neuronova, she advocates neurodivergence awareness (e.g., ADHD) as cognitive strengths rather than disabilities.
- Judges praised her intellect and stage presence, and she follows the legacy of Sushmita Sen, Lara Dutta, and Harnaaz Sandhu as India's Miss Universe representatives.

INTERNATIONAL

India Hosts 2nd BIMSTEC Ports Conclave

- India hosted the 2nd BIMSTEC Ports Conclave at Visakhapatnam under the theme "*Navigating the Future: Blue Economy, Innovation & Sustainable Partnerships*."
- Delegates from all seven BIMSTEC nations—Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and India—discussed customs harmonisation, logistics corridors, cruise tourism, and green shipping.

- India announced a BIMSTEC Sustainable Maritime Transport Centre at Mumbai's IOCE-SMaRT to support digital integration and implementation of the Maritime Transport Cooperation (AMTC) Agreement.
- The Kaladan Corridor was highlighted as a flagship project linking India's Northeast with Myanmar and the Bay of Bengal.
- Minister Sarbananda Sonowal emphasized India's commitment to leveraging the Blue Economy, port-led growth, and Act East and Neighbourhood First strategies.

United Kingdom Set to Recognise Palestinian State

- UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced plans to formally recognise Palestine at the September 2025 UNGA unless Israel commits to a Gaza ceasefire, aid access, and peace talks toward a two-state solution.
- Conditions include no West Bank annexation, daily humanitarian aid flows, and Hamas releasing hostages and renouncing governance in Gaza.
- The move aligns with France's pledge to recognise Palestine, making them the first G7 UN Security Council members to do so, heightening pressure on Israel.
- Critics argue Palestine lacks full Montevideo Convention statehood criteria, sparking legal debates, while public opinion in the UK remains divided.
- The UK government sees the timing as a strategic effort to revive peace diplomacy and address the worsening Gaza crisis.

State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2025

- The SOFI 2025 report recorded that 673 million people (8.2%) suffered hunger in 2024, a decline for the third straight year.
- Africa remains worst affected with 307 million hungry, while Southern Asia showed improvement due to agricultural productivity and food programs.
- Around 2.3 billion people faced moderate or severe food insecurity, while 2.6 billion still could not afford a healthy diet due to global food inflation.
- Malnutrition persists: stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies remain high, while obesity has risen globally to 16% of adults.
- Crises in Gaza and Sudan have reached famine levels, with the UN warning the world is not on track to achieve SDG-2 Zero Hunger by 2030.

First-Ever BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival Begins in New Delhi

- The inaugural BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival, titled "*SaptaSur: Seven Nations, One Melody*", was launched at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 4 August 2025 by Dr. S. Jaishankar.
- Artists from all seven BIMSTEC member states—India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand—performed, showcasing traditional music as a medium of regional unity.
- The festival, organised by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), fulfilled Prime Minister Modi's commitment at the 2025 BIMSTEC Summit in Thailand to promote cultural diplomacy.
- Jaishankar emphasized music's role as a cultural bridge and a tool for identity, dignity, and mutual respect during uncertain global times.
- The initiative supports India's Act East and Neighbourhood First policies, enhancing soft power diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific.

Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative (IBRRI)

- At Ramsar COP15 (July 2025), the Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative (IBRRI) launched its Strategic Plan 2025–2030 to coordinate transboundary wetland conservation.
- The initiative, involving Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, with support from the IUCN Asia Regional Office, aims to halt wetland loss and enhance climate resilience.
- Its governance includes a Steering Committee, a Secretariat in Bangkok, and a Stakeholder Committee of governments, NGOs, and academia.
- The five strategic objectives focus on wetland conservation, policy mainstreaming, education & awareness, financing, and governance.
- The Indo-Burma Hotspot's 38 million hectares of wetlands support fisheries, agriculture, and livelihoods, but face threats from urbanization, hydropower, and climate change, making IBRRI vital.

India–Russia Protocol on Industrial Cooperation

- At the 11th Working Group session in New Delhi, India and Russia signed a Protocol to deepen industrial cooperation across traditional and emerging sectors
- The meeting was co-chaired by Amardeep Singh Bhatia (DPIIT Secretary) and Alexey Gruzdev (Deputy Minister, Russia), with around 80 delegates participating
- Collaboration covers aluminium, fertilizers, railways, mining technology, and extends to aerospace, carbon fibre, additive manufacturing, and 3D printing.
- Focus areas also include critical minerals, underground coal gasification, industrial infrastructure, and waste management.
- The Protocol underscores the two nations' resolve to enhance technology transfer, resource exploration, and economic cooperation.

Moldova Becomes 107th Member of International Solar Alliance

- Moldova became the 107th member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) by depositing its Instrument of Ratification in New Delhi.
- ISA, launched by India and France at COP21 (2015), promotes solar energy adoption, lowers costs, and mobilises global investment.
- Moldova gains access to ISA's technical support, financing tools, and partnerships to scale up solar deployment domestically.
- ISA initiatives span agriculture, healthcare, transport, and power, serving as a global platform for policy dialogue and innovation.
- India's leadership in expanding ISA membership reinforces its role in clean energy diplomacy and climate action.

Thailand and Cambodia Finalize Ceasefire Details

- Thailand and Cambodia concluded an Extraordinary Border Committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 7 August 2025, finalising terms of the July 28 ceasefire after five days of fighting that killed 43 people and displaced 300,000 citizens.
- Both sides agreed to freeze troop positions, prohibit reinforcements, and avoid provocations or new fortifications. The ceasefire bans attacks on civilians and commits to the humane release of captured soldiers, consistent with the Geneva Conventions.
- An ASEAN monitoring team, led by Malaysia, will oversee compliance, with interim observer missions deployed separately in each country. Regular ministerial-level communication was agreed to prevent flare-ups.
- The conflict context highlighted artillery and airstrikes along the disputed border, and the deal is seen as a key step in regional stability, civilian protection, and ASEAN's conflict-mediation role.

Azerbaijan and Armenia Peace Deal at White House

- On 8 August 2025, Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev signed a historic peace agreement at the White House, hosted by U.S. President Donald Trump.
- The agreement ends nearly four decades of conflict, including disputes over Nagorno-Karabakh, and establishes the TRIPP (Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity), a transit corridor linking Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan via Armenia.
- The U.S. gained exclusive 99-year development rights for TRIPP, which will include roads, railways, pipelines, and fibre optics, reshaping regional connectivity.
- The deal marks a geopolitical shift, reducing Russian influence, sidelining the OSCE Minsk Group, and drawing mixed reactions—Turkey welcomed the corridor while Iran strongly opposed it as a provocation.

Tuvalu: The World's First Planned Climate Migration

- Tuvalu initiated the world's first planned climate migration under the Falepili Union Treaty with Australia, in response to existential threats from sea-level rise.
- The treaty, effective since 2024, grants up to 280 Tuvaluans annually the right to live, work, and study in Australia with access to social services.
- Tuvalu, with a population of ~11,000, faces the risk of submersion by 2050, making migration essential for survival while preserving statehood and sovereignty under international law.

- Australia pledged financial support for climate adaptation projects, including the Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project, and committed to disaster and security assistance
- While securing a migration pathway, the treaty has sparked debate in Tuvalu over Australia's influence on foreign policy and security matters.

Equator Prize 2025 – Bibi Fatima Women's SHG

- The Bibi Fatima Women's Self-Help Group (SHG) from Dharwad, Karnataka, won the UNDP Equator Prize 2025 for community-led, nature-based climate solutions.
- Formed in 2018, the group now works with 5,000 farmers across 30 villages, promoting millet-based mixed cropping, natural farming, and biodiversity conservation.
- The SHG maintains community seed banks with over 250 indigenous varieties and runs a solar-powered millet unit producing value-added products, ensuring food security and women's empowerment.
- Collaborating with ICAR-IIMR, Sahaja Samruddha, CROPS4HD, and Selco Foundation, it integrates solar energy, rural entrepreneurship, and climate-resilient practices.
- It was the only Indian winner among 10 global recipients, receiving USD 10,000 and UN recognition, reinforcing women and youth leadership in sustainable agriculture and green economies.

U.S.-China Trade Truce and Agricultural Leverage

- The U.S. and China extended their tariff truce for 90 days, delaying escalation of duties while continuing negotiations. China wields its agri-commodity imports, particularly soybeans, as a bargaining tool.
- China's U.S. farm imports dropped from \$13.1 billion (H1 2024) to \$6.4 billion (H1 2025), with soybean imports falling from \$17.9 billion in 2022 to just \$2.5 billion. It has shifted sourcing to Brazil, Argentina, Canada, and Paraguay.
- The U.S. farm sector, especially in the Corn Belt, is politically sensitive, giving China leverage to force talks and delay tariff hikes. President Trump urged Beijing to increase U.S. soybean imports to support farmers.
- Alongside agriculture, China controls supplies of rare-earth elements, creating dual leverage in trade talks while U.S. tariffs remain under suspension.

India-Zambia Trade Cooperation Pact

- India signed an MoU with Zambia to boost cooperative trade alliances, led by the Ministry of Cooperation and NCEL (National Cooperative Exports Ltd.).
- The pact formalizes a framework for export partnerships between cooperatives in both countries, helping India strengthen its cooperative export ecosystem.
- India's diplomatic missions will provide market intelligence and importer connections, supporting NCEL's global expansion into Africa and Southeast Asia.
- NCEL has also signed MoUs with partners in Senegal and Indonesia, positioning Indian cooperatives as global exporters in agriculture and allied products.

India-Oman CEPA Concluded

- India and Oman concluded negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), launched in 2023 and finalized by August 2025.
- The CEPA covers trade in goods, services, intellectual property, and competition policy, making it broader than traditional FTAs.
- Bilateral trade reached USD 10.61 billion in 2024-25, with India exporting oils, rice, and machinery, while importing crude, LNG, fertilizers, and chemicals.
- Oman is India's third-largest GCC export destination; the CEPA adds to India's expanding FTA network, including pacts with Mauritius, UAE, Australia, EFTA, and UK.

Neeraj Ghaywan's Homebound Triumphs at IFFM 2025

- At the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM), Neeraj Ghaywan's film Homebound won Best Film and Best Director awards.
- Featuring Ishaan Khatter, Vishal Jethwa, and Janhvi Kapoor, the drama explores belonging and displacement.
- It was chosen as the closing film of IFFM 2025, which runs its 16th edition as the largest Indian film festival abroad.

Microsoft Tops TopBrand 2025 Global Ranking

- At the China Brand Festival (Shenzhen), Microsoft topped the TopBrand 2025 Global Brands list with a value of USD 1.06 trillion.
- NVIDIA ranked second (USD 1.046 trillion), and Apple third (USD 997.6 billion).
- Other top-ten entries included Amazon, Alphabet, Saudi Aramco, Walmart, Meta, Berkshire Hathaway, and Broadcom.
- PetroChina was the highest-ranked Chinese brand at 14th.
- Analysts noted China's underrepresentation compared to its economic scale, underscoring a gap in global brand influence.

Russia to Launch Venera-D Mission to Venus by 2036

- Russia announced its Venera-D mission to Venus, featuring a lander, orbiter, and balloon probe, targeted for launch between 2034 and 2036.
- The design phase begins in January 2026 with the Lavochkin Association, lasting two years before full mission development.
- The "D" in Venera-D stands for *Dolgozhivushaya* ("long-lasting"), reflecting the goal of extended surface operations beyond earlier Soviet landers.
- Earlier plans for NASA collaboration were abandoned post-2022 sanctions, but Russia is proceeding independently to revive its Venus exploration legacy.
- Scientific objectives include mapping the Venusian surface, studying atmospheric dynamics, and exploring geological and plasma environments.

India-Saudi Arabia Joint Working Group on Maritime Cooperation

- India and Saudi Arabia established a Joint Working Group (JWG) on maritime cooperation, following talks between Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Minister Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser.
- The JWG will focus on maritime trade, port infrastructure, shipping, logistics, and allied sectors, aligning with India's Maritime India Vision 2030 and Saudi's Vision 2030.
- The new Jeddah-Mundra/Nhava Sheva shipping route, launched by Folk Maritime Services, was highlighted as a means to cut costs and improve transit times.
- India showcased major investment opportunities such as the Vadhavan Port project (Maharashtra) and Outer Harbour Project (Tamil Nadu), supported by the \$3 billion Maritime Development Fund.
- India also proposed Saudi collaboration on the MAITRI digital platform for harmonising maritime trade procedures, boosting bilateral efficiency and integration.

Iran Conducts "Sustainable Power 1404" Missile Drills in Gulf of Oman

- Iran launched "Sustainable Power 1404", a two-day naval and missile drill in the Gulf of Oman and northern Indian Ocean, its first major exercise since the June 2025 war with Israel.
- Assets included frigates, missile boats, submarines, drones, coastal missile batteries, and electronic warfare brigades, showcasing a multi-domain military approach.
- Missiles such as Nasir, Qadir, and Qader anti-ship cruise systems were fired successfully, while the Bavar-5 kamikaze drone destroyed designated sea targets.
- Officials described the drills as enhancing combat readiness, deterrence, and domestic defence capability, while projecting resilience against future threats.
- Taking place near a vital maritime corridor, the exercise follows Iran's Casarex 2025 drill with Russia and coincides with its suspension of IAEA cooperation, heightening regional security concerns.

India and EAEU Begin FTA Negotiations

- India and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) signed Terms of Reference (ToR) in Moscow to initiate Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, during EAM S. Jaishankar's visit.
- The ToR was signed by Ajay Bhadoo (India) and Mikhail Cherekaev (EAEU), formalising the negotiation framework amid rising U.S. tariffs on Indian exports.
- Bilateral trade stood at USD 69 billion in 2024, with the EAEU's five members—Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic—representing a GDP of USD 6.5 trillion.

- The FTA aims to expand market access, support MSMEs, unlock new sectors, and strengthen competitiveness against non-market economies.
- Strategically, the move reflects India's effort to diversify trade partnerships and build resilience against Western trade pressures.

SLINEX-25 Naval Exercise

- The 12th edition of SLINEX, the India-Sri Lanka bilateral naval exercise, was conducted off Colombo from August 14-18, 2025, reinforcing Indian Ocean cooperation.
- The event had two phases: a Harbour Phase (professional exchanges, HADR training, sports, memorial tribute) and a Sea Phase (gunnery, navigation, VBSS, at-sea fueling).
- Indian assets included INS Rana and INS Jyoti, while Sri Lanka deployed SLNS Gajabahu and SLNS Vijayabahu, with support from a Bell 412 helicopter.
- Commanding officers engaged with Sri Lankan naval leadership, while Indian ships opened to public visitors and diaspora, fostering community ties.
- The exercise highlighted interoperability, maritime diplomacy, and people-to-people outreach, aligned with India's MAHASAGAR policy.

Trump Appoints Sergio Gor as U.S. Ambassador to India and Special Envoy for South & Central Asia

- U.S. President Donald Trump nominated Sergio Gor, current head of the White House Presidential Personnel Office, as the next Ambassador to India and Special Envoy for South & Central Asia
- At 38 years old, Gor is one of the youngest U.S. envoys nominated, though he has limited diplomatic experience; analysts flagged concerns over his preparedness for the role
- His appointment comes amid strained U.S.-India ties over tariffs and India's purchases of Russian oil, making the position strategically sensitive.
- Gor's background includes controversies, such as a public clash with Elon Musk, and delays in his security clearance process.
- Born in Tashkent (1986) and later a U.S. citizen, he co-founded Winning Team Publishing with Donald Trump Jr., highlighting his strong political ties to the Trump family.

APPOINTMENTS

AIFF Appoints Khalid Jamil as Head Coach of India Senior Men's Football Team

- The All India Football Federation (AIFF) appointed Khalid Jamil as the new head coach of the Indian Senior Men's Team, making him the first Indian coach in 13 years since Savio Medeira (2011-12).
- Jamil, an ex-international midfielder with over 40 caps, holds an AFC Pro License and gained recognition for leading Aizawl FC's 2017 I-League title and strong performances with ISL clubs.
- His selection followed a SWOT evaluation against Stephen Constantine and Štefan Tarkovič, with advisors and legends urging preference for an Indian coach to nurture domestic talent.
- Jamil has been awarded AIFF Men's Coach of the Year for both 2023-24 and 2024-25, strengthening his candidacy.
- He now faces immediate challenges with the CAFA Nations Cup 2025 and AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers, where he must quickly rebuild team confidence and tactical identity.

Anuradha Thakur Nominated as Director on RBI Central Board

- The Central Government nominated Anuradha Thakur, Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs, as a Director on the Central Board of the RBI, replacing Ajay Seth.
- Her appointment comes ahead of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting scheduled for August 4-6, 2025, ensuring continuity in decisions on price stability and monetary policy.
- The RBI Central Board, comprising the Governor, Deputy Governors, government nominees, and experts, provides general superintendence and direction to India's central bank.
- Thakur's inclusion strengthens policy coordination between RBI and the Ministry of Finance, while her expertise in economic affairs and regulation adds value to decision-making.

- The move aligns with the RBI's current priorities: controlling inflation, maintaining a neutral policy stance, strengthening banking regulation, and addressing conflicts of interest in the financial sector.

Lt Gen Pushendra Singh to Take Charge as Vice Chief of Army Staff

- Lt Gen Pushendra Singh, a decorated officer with over 35 years of service, assumed charge as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff (VCOAS) on August 1, 2025, succeeding Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani.
- An alumnus of the Indian Military Academy, he was commissioned into the 4 Para (Special Forces) in 1987 and participated in key operations including Operation Pawan, Operation Meghdoot, Operation Rakshak, and Operation Orchid
- His career includes significant international exposure through UN Peacekeeping Missions in Lebanon and Sri Lanka, which enhanced his leadership and multinational coordination skills.
- He commanded the Rising Star Corps from April 2022, strengthening India's northern defence preparedness from its Yol cantonment headquarters.
- His appointment reflects the Army's confidence in his expertise in counter-insurgency, high-altitude warfare, and modernization, making him well-suited for evolving security challenges.

Commodore Varghese Mathew Takes Charge as Naval Officer-in-Charge, Kerala

- Commodore Varghese Mathew assumed charge as the Naval Officer-in-Charge (Kerala) at the Southern Naval Command headquarters in Kochi on August 1, 2025.
- An alumnus of Sainik School and NDA, he was commissioned in 1996 and specialised in Gunnery and Missile Warfare, with advanced training from DSSC Wellington and the Naval War College.
- He has served in multiple key assignments, including at the Tri-Services Headquarters in New Delhi, gaining valuable experience in joint defence planning.
- His appointment is significant for strengthening naval training infrastructure, enhancing coastal defence, and reinforcing India's maritime preparedness in the Indian Ocean Region.

Dr. A Rajarajan Appointed Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)

- Veteran space scientist Dr. A Rajarajan took charge as Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram on August 1, 2025, succeeding Dr. S. Unnikrishnan Nair.
- With nearly four decades of ISRO experience, he earlier served as Director of SDSC SHAR, Sriharikota, overseeing missions like Chandrayaan-3, Aditya-L1, and Gaganyaan TV-D1.
- A composites expert, he played a key role in lightweight, high-strength structures for rockets and spacecraft, and supported private launches such as Vikram-S by Skyroot Aerospace.
- His leadership at VSSC is expected to drive indigenisation, promote public-private partnerships, and support India's Human Spaceflight Programme.

Vice Admiral Manish Chadha Assumes Command of Indian Naval Academy

- Vice Admiral Manish Chadha, AVSM, VSM, assumed command of the Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala on August 1, 2025, succeeding Vice Admiral CR Praveen Nair.
- Commissioned in 1991, he is a specialist in Communication and Electronic Warfare and has commanded frontline warships including INS Mysore, INS Veer, and INS Kirpan
- He is an alumnus of DSSC Wellington and completed the Higher Command Course at the U.S. National Defence University, expanding his global maritime strategy expertise.
- His leadership ensures INA continues to deliver world-class naval training, aligning with AatmaNirbhar Bharat and strengthening India's presence in the Indo-Pacific.

Ajay Kumar Bhalla Appointed Nagaland Governor with Additional Charge

- Following the demise of Nagaland Governor La Ganesan on August 15, 2025, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Governor of Manipur, was given additional charge of Nagaland.
- The appointment was announced on August 16, 2025 through a communiqué by the President of India to ensure constitutional continuity.
- Bhalla, a retired IAS officer and former Union Home Secretary, has been Governor of Manipur since 2024.
- This interim arrangement maintains administrative stability in Nagaland until a full-time Governor is appointed.

RBI Appoints Indranil Bhattacharyya as MPC Member

- The Reserve Bank of India appointed Indranil Bhattacharyya, Executive Director of the Monetary Policy Department, as an ex officio member of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).
- He replaces Rajiv Ranjan, who is retiring, ahead of the MPC's policy meeting from September 29 to October 1, 2025.
- With 28 years of central banking experience, Bhattacharyya has worked extensively on monetary policy, financial markets, and international research, including a stint at the Qatar Central Bank.
- His appointment ensures continuity in policy deliberations as the RBI balances inflation management with growth stability.

Justices Alok Aradhe and Vipul Pancholi Elevated to Supreme Court

- The President of India approved the elevation of Justice Alok Aradhe, Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, and Justice Vipul Pancholi, Chief Justice of the Patna High Court, to the Supreme Court.
- This restores the apex court to its full sanctioned strength of 34 judges.
- Justice Aradhe, originally from the Madhya Pradesh High Court, is noted for his administrative acumen, having served as Acting CJ in J&K and Karnataka.
- Justice Pancholi, from the Gujarat High Court, faces controversy over seniority and representation, but if seniority stands, he is in line to become CJI in October 2031.

Urjit Patel Appointed IMF Executive Director for 3-Year Term

- Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel was appointed as Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on August 28, 2025, for a three-year term.
- He will represent India and its constituency countries on the IMF Board, strengthening India's voice in global economic governance.
- Patel earlier served as the 24th Governor of RBI (2016–2018), navigating major reforms such as demonetisation and the GST rollout.
- His tenure at RBI ended amid tensions over the autonomy of the central bank, particularly concerning the transfer of surplus reserves.
- The appointment reinforces India's role in multilateral financial institutions, reflecting Patel's expertise in both domestic and international finance.

SPORTS**Divya Deshmukh Creates History: Wins FIDE Women's Chess World Cup 2025**

- Divya Deshmukh, a 19-year-old from Nagpur, became the first Indian woman to win the FIDE Women's World Cup in Batumi, Georgia, defeating Grandmaster Koneru Humpy in the rapid tiebreak by 1.5–0.5.
- Both classical games ended in draws, but Divya secured victory by drawing the first rapid game and winning the second game with Black pieces, sealing her historic triumph.
- With this achievement, she earned the prestigious Grandmaster (GM) title, becoming India's 88th Grandmaster and only the fourth Indian woman to hold this title after Anand, Harika, and Vaishali.
- She received \$50,000 prize money, with Humpy earning \$35,000, and also qualified along with Humpy and Tan Zhongyi for the 2026 Women's Candidates Tournament.
- Leaders and chess icons hailed her achievement, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Viswanathan Anand, and Judit Polgar praising her composure, calling it a landmark for Indian chess.

FIFA and AIFF Launch India's First FIFA Talent Academy for Girls

- The AIFF, in collaboration with FIFA and the Telangana government, launched India's first FIFA Talent Academy for girls at the Gachibowli Stadium Complex, Hyderabad, under FIFA's global Talent Development Scheme (TDS).
- The academy will house 60 elite players (30 girls U16 and 30 boys U14), with training, education, medical care, and nutrition, marking the country's first residential girls-only football academy.
- With an annual cost of ₹7.23 crore, funding is shared by FIFA (₹65 lakh), AIFF (₹61 lakh), and Telangana (₹5.97 crore), ensuring sustainable governance and infrastructure support.
- The initiative supports Vision 2047 and Telangana's Sports Policy 2025, aiming to nurture talent for India's U17 FIFA World Cup aspirations.

- Globally, this is among the few FIFA academies dedicated to girls, representing a milestone for women's football development and inclusive grassroots growth in India.

Himalayan Kingfisher: Mascot for Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025

- The Himalayan Kingfisher was unveiled as the mascot for the first Khelo India Water Sports Festival (KIWSF) to be held at Dal Lake, Srinagar from August 21–23, 2025.
- The bird was chosen for its energy, fearlessness, and water affinity, symbolizing eco-friendly sport and youth engagement.
- The logo features a Shikara on Dal Lake against snow-capped mountains and pine trees, reflecting Kashmir's natural beauty.
- The event will host rowing, canoeing, kayaking, and demonstrations like water skiing and dragon boat races, with over 400 athletes from 36 states/UTs.

India Bids to Host 2030 Commonwealth Games

- The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) formally approved India's bid to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games, with candidate cities Ahmedabad, Delhi, and Bhubaneswar.
- Ahmedabad leads the bid with its Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sports Enclave, housing multiple state-of-the-art facilities.
- The bid is framed as a step toward hosting the 2036 Olympics, showcasing India's capacity for global sports diplomacy.
- India also plans to reinstate sports like shooting, wrestling, badminton, women's cricket, and hockey, emphasizing medal potential and cultural appeal.

Real Madrid Named World's Most Valuable Football Club 2025

- Real Madrid retained its position as the world's most valuable football club in both Forbes and Brand Finance rankings for 2025.
- Forbes valued the club at US\$6.75 billion, with record revenues of US\$1.13 billion in 2023–24, the highest ever for any football team.
- Manchester United and Barcelona ranked second and third, with valuations of US\$6.6 billion and US\$5.65 billion, respectively.
- Brand Finance valued Real Madrid's brand at €1.921 billion, with a AAA+ rating and a brand strength score of 94.9/100, underscoring its unmatched global influence.

Ahmedabad to Host Three Major International Sports Events in 2025

- The Gujarat government announced that Ahmedabad will host three major international sporting events in 2025 as part of its strategy to bid for the 2036 Olympic Games.
- The Commonwealth Weightlifting Championship will be held at Naranpura Sports Complex from August 24–30, featuring 350 lifters from 29 countries.
- The Asian Aquatics Championship, scheduled for September–October 2025, will include top swimmers from China, Japan, and South Korea.
- The AFC U-17 Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers will take place at The Arena by TransStadia from November 22–30, with teams from India, Iran, Palestine, Taiwan, and Lebanon.
- These events support Ahmedabad's sports hub vision, strengthening its credentials for hosting the 2036 Olympics.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISRO to Launch 3 More Navigation NavIC Satellites by 2026

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) plans to launch NVS-03, NVS-04, and NVS-05 by 2026 to replenish and strengthen the NavIC constellation, which is currently functioning with only four operational satellites.
- The launch schedule anticipates NVS-03 by late 2025, followed by NVS-04 and NVS-05 at roughly six-month intervals through 2026, though NVS-05 may extend into 2027–28 if delayed.

- NavIC, also known as the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), was originally designed as a seven-satellite system serving India and 1,500 km beyond, but failures have left the system partially degraded.
- The new NVS series features L1/L5/S-band signals, a civil L1 service for IoT/wearables, upgraded Indian Rubidium Atomic Frequency Standards (iRAFS), and extended lifespans of up to 12 years.
- Strategically, these launches are vital to restoring autonomous regional navigation capability, reducing reliance on GPS and Galileo, and enhancing India's space-based infrastructure through GSLV Mk II launches from Sriharikota.

Turkey Unveils Gazap: The World's Most Powerful Non-Nuclear Bomb

- At IDEF 2025 in Istanbul, Turkey unveiled Gazap, a 970 kg thermobaric fragmentation bomb described as the world's most powerful non-nuclear weapon.
- The bomb disperses 10,000 fragments within 1 km, generating 10.16 fragments per square metre—over three times more destructive than conventional MK-series bombs.
- Its thermobaric warhead creates temperatures near 3,000 °C, producing overpressure waves capable of melting steel and concrete, leaving a 160-m debris cloud.
- Designed for F-16 and F-4 aircraft, it may be adapted for drone deployment, alongside Turkey's NEB-2 bunker buster and Tayfun Block-4 hypersonic missile.
- Analysts warn Gazap's near-nuclear destructive power signals Turkey's drive for strategic self-reliance, raising concerns especially in South Asia amid defence ties with Pakistan.

SpaceX Launches NASA's Crew-11 Mission to the ISS

- On 1 August 2025, SpaceX Falcon 9 launched Crew Dragon Endeavour carrying NASA's Crew-11 mission from Kennedy Space Center under the Commercial Crew Program.
- The crew includes Zena Cardman (NASA), Mike Fincke (NASA), Kimiya Yui (JAXA), and Oleg Platonov (Roscosmos), reflecting continued international collaboration.
- After ~15 hours in orbit, the spacecraft docked with the Harmony module of the ISS on 2 August, beginning a mission scheduled for ~six months with possible extension.
- Research tasks include lunar landing simulations, astronaut health studies, plant & cell biology, and on-demand nutrient generation experiments.
- The mission underscores NASA's reliance on private-sector transport, international cooperation despite geopolitical tensions, and resilience amid Boeing Starliner delays.

ISRO HOPE Mission in Ladakh

- ISRO launched the HOPE mission (Himalayan Outpost for Planetary Exploration) at Tso Kar Valley, Ladakh, simulating astronaut life for Gaganyaan and future human spaceflight.
- Located at 14,000 ft altitude, the analogue habitat mimics planetary conditions with low pressure, high UV, permafrost, and extreme cold.
- Two analogue crew members will live in isolation within 8m habitat and 5m utility modules, equipped with hydroponics, circadian lighting, and life-support systems.
- The mission studies psychological, genomic, and physiological responses to stress, while testing health monitoring, planetary operations, and sample handling.
- HOPE strengthens India's human spaceflight roadmap, supporting upcoming lunar and interplanetary missions, with lessons directly feeding into habitat design and workflows.

WHO Classifies Hepatitis D as Cancer-Causing

- On World Hepatitis Day (28 July 2025), the WHO's IARC classified hepatitis D virus (HDV) as a Group I carcinogen, confirming it causes liver cancer.
- Co-infection of HDV with HBV increases the risk of hepatocellular carcinoma by 2–6× compared to HBV alone.
- About 12 million people (5% of HBV patients) are co-infected with HDV, particularly among high-risk groups such as injecting drug users and haemodialysis patients.
- Since HBV vaccination prevents HDV, the classification highlights the urgent need for expanded immunization alongside emerging treatments like bulevirtide.

Rhisotope Project

- The Rhisotope Project, launched in South Africa in 2025 by Wits University with IAEA support, uses radioactive isotopes to protect rhinos from poaching
- The method involves injecting rhino horns with a safe low-level isotope, detectable by radiation monitors at ports, airports, and borders worldwide.
- South Africa, home to the largest rhino population, faces severe poaching crises, with over 10,000 rhinos killed in the last decade.
- Pilot tests on 20 rhinos confirmed animal safety and effective horn detection in smuggling scenarios, making it a groundbreaking conservation tool.
- Partners include the IAEA, Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa, Limpopo Rhino Orphanage, and UNESCO Waterberg Biosphere, aiming for continent-wide adoption.

India's First Animal Stem Cell BioBank at NIAB, Hyderabad

- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated India's first Animal Stem Cell BioBank at NIAB, Hyderabad, a state-of-the-art facility for veterinary biotech research.
- Built with an investment of ₹1.85 crore over 9,300 sq ft, it houses stem cell culture labs, 3D bioprinting, cryostorage units, and high biosafety systems.
- Applications include regenerative medicine, reproductive biotechnology, disease modeling, and livestock health, supporting veterinary clinics and research centres.
- The facility is part of the National Biopharma Mission, promoting biobanking and indigenous biotech capabilities for animal health.
- Five new veterinary diagnostic kits were also launched, targeting Brucellosis, Mastitis, Toxoplasmosis, Japanese Encephalitis, and antimicrobial resistance, advancing India's One Health approach.

India Successfully Test-Fires Agni-5 Missile

- India test-fired the Agni-5 intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) from Chandipur, Odisha, under the supervision of the Strategic Forces Command, validating all parameters.
- The solid-fuel missile, developed by DRDO, has a strike range of 5,000 km and can carry nuclear warheads, placing nearly all of Asia and parts of Europe within reach.
- The missile is designed for future integration of MIRV technology, enabling multiple warheads on a single launch; India tested its first MIRV under Mission Divyastra in March 2024.
- The test underscores India's efforts to modernise its missile arsenal amid heightened regional tensions following the 2025 confrontation with Pakistan.
- Neighbouring states, particularly Pakistan, expressed concern over the test, viewing it as a reinforcement of India's strategic deterrence posture.

NASA's Surya AI (Heliophysics Foundation Model)

- NASA and IBM launched Surya, an open-source AI model trained on nine years of Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO) data for space-weather forecasting.
- With 366 million parameters, Surya predicts solar flares, solar wind, irradiance, and EUV spectra, improving short-term forecasts by ~16% over prior methods.
- The model is available on GitHub and Hugging Face, supporting global researchers and operational users.
- It demonstrated emergent learning, identifying features like the Sun's differential rotation, showing advanced AI representation capabilities.
- Surya will help protect astronauts, satellites, aviation, power grids, and communications, strengthening resilience against solar storms.

DRDO Successfully Tests Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS)

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully tested the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS), also called Sudarshan Chakra, off the coast of Odisha on August 23, 2025
- IADWS is a multi-layered indigenous air-defence platform integrating kinetic and non-kinetic systems to intercept drones, missiles, and aircraft.

- It combines three core components: QRSAM (Quick Reaction SAMs for mobile units), VSHORADS (short-range man-portable interceptors), and Directed Energy Weapons (DEW)—a high-energy laser system for drone neutralisation
- A central Command & Control Centre developed by DRDL orchestrates missiles, lasers, radars, and communications in real time.
- During trials, the system simultaneously engaged three targets, including UAVs and a multicopter drone, validating its operational reliability.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Uttarakhand CM Releases Book on Student Wellness, Stresses Mental Health

- On July 26, 2025, Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami launched the book “*Sustainable Wellness of Students: A Collective Responsibility in Higher Education*” in Dehradun, highlighting the importance of student welfare and mental health.
- He urged universities to adopt a student-centric approach, balancing academic demands with psychological and social support systems.
- The book, edited by Prof. Lata Pandey and Dr. Ramanand, explores strategies like counselling, career guidance, and rehabilitation, with contributions from multiple stakeholders.
- Dhami stressed the need for a Hindi version to ensure wider outreach, while linking the initiative to NEP 2020, under which Uttarakhand was the first state to implement reforms.
- The event also saw the Higher Education Department reaffirming the state’s commitment to student-friendly policies and wellness frameworks.

The Conscience Network by Sugata Srinivasaraju

- Journalist-author Sugata Srinivasaraju in *The Conscience Network* documents the story of young Indian diaspora activists in the U.S. who resisted Indira Gandhi’s Emergency (1975–77) through nonviolent protest.
- The book highlights the role of Indians for Democracy (IFD), a student-led group that organized lectures, wrote articles, lobbied lawmakers, and held demonstrations against the suspension of civil liberties.
- Their methods, inspired by Gandhian satyagraha, found resonance in 1970s America amid the Vietnam War, Watergate, and civil rights movements, attracting global attention to India’s democratic crisis.
- Despite intimidation from Indian diplomats, activists stood firm, showing that diaspora patriotism could challenge state power when democratic principles were threatened.
- The book underscores how moral clarity and transnational solidarity strengthened the defence of Indian democracy abroad.

M.S. Swaminathan: The Man Who Fed India by Priyambada Jayakumar

- Priyambada Jayakumar’s biography “*M.S. Swaminathan: The Man Who Fed India*” celebrates the father of India’s Green Revolution, who made India self-sufficient in food during a time of scarcity.
- Blending history, personal anecdotes, and scientific milestones, it traces his journey from witnessing Independence and Gandhi’s assassination to becoming a global leader in agriculture
- The book recounts how Swaminathan chose science over the civil services, studying plant genetics abroad and later pioneering high-yield crop varieties.
- His interdisciplinary approach, inspired by a 1948 interaction with Jawaharlal Nehru at IARI, laid the foundation for coordinated efforts in agriculture.
- The work captures both his scientific achievements and his human values, portraying him as a visionary whose dedication fed millions and inspired future generations.

IMPORTANT DAYS

83 Years of Courage: A Tribute to the Quit India Movement

- Launched on August 8, 1942, the Quit India Movement signaled a decisive mass push against British rule that mobilized students, workers, and farmers across the country.

- Guided by Mahatma Gandhi, the call of Do or Die transformed abstract nationalist ideals into direct action through hartals, protests, and disruptions of colonial administration.
- Even after the arrest of top leaders, decentralized networks sustained civil disobedience, with figures like Aruna Asaf Ali symbolizing resilient grassroots leadership.
- Though the movement was brutally suppressed, it created irreversible momentum toward freedom and forged enduring lessons in nonviolent resistance and national unity.

World Humanitarian Day 2025: Date, Theme, Significance, and Quotes

- World Humanitarian Day is observed on August 19 to honor those who risk their lives aiding people affected by conflict, disasters, and displacement
- The 2025 theme, “Strengthening Global solidarity and Empowering local communities,” emphasizes partnership with frontline actors as equal stakeholders in response
- Commemorations include UN campaigns, NGO storytelling, community events, and digital spotlights that highlight real experiences of humanitarian workers.
- The day urges public action through volunteering, advocacy, and donations to reinforce durable support systems for vulnerable populations.

Sadbhavana Diwas 2025: Peace, Unity, and Communal Harmony

- Sadbhavana Diwas, observed on August 20, marks the birth anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi and promotes peace, goodwill, and communal harmony
- The day calls for dialogue, empathy, and civic responsibility to counter prejudice and strengthen national integration.
- Government bodies, educational institutions, and civil groups organize pledges, outreach programs, and awareness campaigns to nurture social cohesion.
- Its significance lies in reinforcing secularism and shared citizenship, especially amid contemporary social strains and misinformation.

National Space Day 2025: Aryabhata to Gaganyaan

- National Space Day on August 23 commemorates Chandrayaan-3’s 2023 soft landing near the lunar south pole at Shiva Shakti Point.
- The 2025 theme, “Aryabhata to Gaganyaan: Ancient Wisdom to Infinite Possibilities,” links India’s early space milestones with its upcoming human spaceflight.
- Celebrations included exhibitions, student outreach, and policy dialogues that showcased ISRO’s legacy from Aryabhata and PSLV to modern planetary missions.
- The observance highlights space applications for development and inspires youth to pursue STEM careers shaping India’s future in space exploration.

OBITUARIES

Tom Lehrer Passes Away at 97: A Legacy of Satire and Scholarship

- Tom Lehrer, the celebrated musical satirist and mathematician, passed away at 97 at his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, leaving a cross-disciplinary legacy in music, mathematics, and education.
- A child prodigy, he entered Harvard at 15, earned a mathematics degree by 18, and later taught at Harvard and UC Santa Cruz, even as his biting songs skewered politics, culture, and Cold War anxieties.
- His work for The Electric Company brought clever, mnemonic songwriting to children’s education, complementing stage revivals like Tomfoolery that kept his repertoire in the public ear
- In 2020 he relinquished copyright on his lyrics, opening them for free public use and underscoring his belief in broad access to knowledge and creativity.

Veteran Actor KPAC Rajendran Passes Away at 74

- KPAC Rajendran, veteran theatre and television actor from Kerala, passed away at 74 in Alappuzha, remembered for a five-decade career rooted in progressive people’s theatre.
- A stalwart of the Kerala Peoples Arts Club (KPAC), he achieved iconic status through the landmark play “Ningalenne Communistakki.”

- He later became a household name on television, notably as Padavalam Kuttanpillai in the popular serial Uppum Mulakum.
- Beyond acting, he mentored younger artists and helped sustain KPAC's tradition of art with social conscience.

Renowned Economist and Author Meghnad Desai Passes Away at 85

- Lord Meghnad Desai (1940–2025), eminent economist, writer, and House of Lords peer, passed away at 85, leaving a rich legacy spanning academia and public life
- A University of Pennsylvania PhD and long-time LSE professor (later Emeritus), he influenced generations through teaching, research, and commentary
- Nominated to the House of Lords in 1991, he resigned the Labour whip in 2020 to sit as a crossbencher, underscoring his independent stance.
- A prolific author, his works ranged from *The Poverty of Political Economy* (2022) to *Nehru's Hero*, and he received India's Padma Bhushan in 2008 for contributions to literature and education.

Double Olympic Champion Laura Dahlmeier Dies at 31 in Pakistan Mountaineering Accident

- Laura Dahlmeier, Germany's double Olympic champion and seven-time world champion in biathlon, died at 31 during a climb on Laila Peak in Pakistan's Karakoram range.
- Caught in a rockfall near 5,700 metres on 28 July 2025, she could not be rescued despite a rapid, multi-agency response and subsequent recovery attempt.
- Her sporting résumé includes historic PyeongChang 2018 sprint and pursuit golds, five golds and a silver at the 2017 World Championships, and the 2016–17 Overall World Cup title.
- Retiring in 2019, she pursued mountaineering passionately, recently summiting Great Trango Tower weeks before the accident.

T. N. Manoharan, IDBI Chairman and Padma Shri Awardee, Passes Away

- T. N. Manoharan, IDBI Bank Chairman and eminent Chartered Accountant, passed away on July 30, 2025, after a distinguished career in finance and corporate governance
- A former non-executive Chairman of Canara Bank and past President of the ICAI, he also served as independent director with major corporates
- He played a pivotal role in the 2009 Satyam Computers revival, restoring market confidence after one of India's biggest corporate scandals.
- Honoured with the Padma Shri, he was widely respected for stewardship across audit, risk, regulation, and depositor protection.

Dr. V. Vasanthi Devi, Former MS University Vice-Chancellor, Passes Away at 86

- Dr. V. Vasanthi Devi (1938–2025), noted academic, women's rights advocate, and former Vice-Chancellor of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, passed away in Chennai at 86.
- Educated at Presidency College and later a PhD scholar in the Philippines, she championed equitable access and reforms in higher education.
- She chaired the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women (2002–2005) and earlier led a significant 1987 teachers' agitation highlighting educators' rights
- A vocal critic of the NEP 2020, she argued against centralisation and for restoring education to the State List, reflecting her lifelong federalist, rights-based advocacy.

RANKINGS

World's Most Beautiful Airport of 2025 Revealed – Changi Misses Out!

- The Prix Versailles 2025 named Yantai Penglai International Airport Terminal 2 the world's most beautiful airport, signaling a shift away from perennial favorites like Changi Airport.
- The design references Yantai's coast with an E-shaped layout and glazed diagrid dome that improves passenger flow while maximizing sustainability and daylighting.
- Interiors evoke Maritime Silk Road shipbuilding through warm curves and wood-like finishes, merging cultural storytelling with operational efficiency.

- The award underscores a wider global move toward eco-conscious, locally rooted airport architecture that balances experience, efficiency, and environmental impact.

State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2025

- SOFI 2025 reports that 8.2% of the world faced hunger in 2024, with food price inflation eroding access even where supplies are adequate.
- About 2.3 billion people experienced moderate or severe food insecurity, and 2.6 billion could not afford a healthy diet.
- Child stunting and wasting remain stubborn, while adult obesity continues to rise, revealing a dual burden of malnutrition.
- The report urges coordinated policies in resilient agriculture, social protection, and climate adaptation to realign progress with SDG 2 targets by 2030.

India Becomes World's 5th Biggest Aviation Market

- India handled 241 million passengers in 2024, moving to the fifth largest spot globally per IATA WATS.
- The Mumbai-Delhi route ranked among the world's busiest airport pairs, reflecting dense domestic connectivity.
- Premium-class travel expanded faster than economy, indicating recovering business demand alongside leisure growth.
- India now trails only the US, China, the UK, and Spain, highlighting sustained capacity additions and network expansion.

India's Top 10 Busiest Seaports by Cargo Tonnage in 2025

- Major ports moved 855 MMT in FY 2024-25, a 4.3% YoY rise, with five ports contributing nearly 63% of throughput
- Paradip led monthly volumes, followed by Deendayal (Kandla) and JNPA, underscoring east- and west-coast trade corridors.
- Year-on-year gains were broad-based, reflecting infrastructure upgrades, improved logistics, and diversified cargo mixes.
- The performance spotlights major ports' role in export competitiveness and supply-chain resilience across core sectors.

India's Top 10 Safest Cities 2025

- Mid-2025 Numbeo Safety Index data places Mangalore as India's safest city, followed by Vadodara, Ahmedabad, and Surat.
- Southern urban centers and Gujarat cities show stronger public-safety perceptions, governance, and community discipline.
- Delhi NCR cities continue to lag, with elevated concerns on crime and perceived safety.
- India ranks 67th globally, indicating progress pockets amid a broader need for urban safety reforms and better policing.

Top 10 Strongest Currencies in the World in 2025 (Highest Valued in INR)

- The list ranks strongest currencies by INR valuation, led by the Kuwaiti Dinar, Bahraini Dinar, and Omani Rial.
- High values stem from oil-linked surpluses, currency pegs, disciplined monetary policy, and reserve buffers
- The GBP, Euro, Swiss Franc, and USD remain globally dominant by usage, even if not #1 by unit value
- Exchange-rate strength reflects macro stability, external balances, and credibility of central-bank frameworks.

Ambanis Lead 2025 Hurun India Most Valuable Family Businesses

- Hurun 2025 ranks the Ambani family first at ₹28.2 lakh crore, with Birla and Jindal families following in second and third
- Reliance's diversified footprint in energy, telecom, retail, and digital platforms sustained double-digit value growth
- Birla and Jindal gains mirror momentum in cement, metals, finance, and manufacturing tied to India's capex cycle.

- The threshold jump and sector spread signal robust wealth creation, governance continuity, and multi-generational leadership depth.

Smart City Index 2025 Rankings

- The IMD Smart City Index 2025 places Zurich at #1, with Dubai and Abu Dhabi making the biggest climbs into the global top 10.
- Swiss cities excel on citizen-centric infrastructure, services, and governance, while Singapore and Canberra slip from prior ranks.
- Indian cities remain outside the top 20, with Delhi (104), Mumbai (106), Hyderabad (109), and Bengaluru (110) reflecting infrastructure and mobility gaps.
- The rankings highlight how integrated health, mobility, activities, opportunities, and governance drive urban liveability and competitiveness.

SUMMIT's AND MOU's

India's First-Ever SHAPE 2025 Conference: A Game-Changer in Hospital Planning

- Hosted at the Army Hospital Research & Referral in New Delhi, SHAPE 2025 convened 275+ experts across medicine, engineering, and design to chart future-ready hospital infrastructure
- Organized by the Department of Hospital Administration, AHRR, the two-day meet advanced a doctrine that centers patients while integrating environment-first design principles.
- Sessions prioritized green technologies, disaster-proof layouts, and certification pathways like GRIHA/CFEES to hard-wire sustainability into new and retrofitted facilities.
- The forum positioned hospital campuses as people-centric, climate-aware systems that enhance safety, equity, and operational resilience toward Vision 2047.

IGNCA Symposium on UNESCO Recognition of the Gita and Natyashastra

- The IGNCA hosted a two-day national symposium in New Delhi to mark the inscription of two classical texts into the UNESCO Memory of the World International Register.
- Eminent dignitaries opened and closed proceedings at AIC and IGNCA Janpath, framing the recognition as both heritage preservation and living knowledge.
- Panels examined philosophical, artistic, and pedagogic lineages of the Bhagavad Gita and Natyashastra, and their relevance to contemporary ethics and performance.
- The event reinforced India's custodianship of documentary heritage while encouraging wider scholarly access and international collaboration.

First-Ever BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival in New Delhi

- India inaugurated the BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival, "SaptaSur," at Bharat Mandapam, uniting seven member nations through live performances.
- Organized by ICCR, the showcase highlighted regional musical lineages as instruments of cultural diplomacy and people-to-people ties
- The festival follows leadership pledges at the BIMSTEC Summit to deepen soft-power cooperation alongside economic initiatives.
- Open public access and ministerial participation positioned the concert as a symbolic first step toward recurring cultural exchanges.

Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative (IBRRI)

- IBRRI is a five-country platform aligned to the Ramsar Convention that coordinates wetland conservation across Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam
- Supported by IUCN, the initiative uses a steering committee, secretariat, and stakeholder forum to ensure transparent, science-based governance
- Its Strategic Plan 2025–2030 targets halting and reversing wetland loss via restoration, policy harmonization, and community engagement.
- Priority actions include climate resilience, species protection, and sustaining livelihoods tied to fisheries, farming, and eco-tourism.

India to Host WHO–IRCH Workshop on Herbal Medicine Safety and Regulations

- India will host the WHO–IRCH workshop in Ghaziabad, gathering regulators and scientists from multiple countries to align traditional-medicine oversight.
- Core tracks span regulatory convergence, evidence standards, and risk management for herbal medicine, including case reviews and lab practicums.
- Sessions cover pre-clinical research, quality control, and heavy-metal analysis with hands-on HPTLC training at PCIM&H.
- The Ayush Suraksha pharmacovigilance program will be showcased to strengthen safety monitoring and public health integration.

PM Modi Inaugurates Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Centenary Conference

- The centenary conference honored M.S. Swaminathan with the theme “Evergreen Revolution – The Path to Bio-Happiness,” convening key ministries and research bodies.
- Leaders traced India’s yield breakthroughs from the 1960s to today’s sustainability challenges, linking science, extension, and farmer welfare.
- PM’s “Lab to Land” push was highlighted through nationwide scientist-farmer outreach and village-level demonstrations.
- Discussions prioritized food security, storage expansion, and productivity in pulses and oilseeds to reduce import dependence.

PM to Inaugurate SEMICON India 2025 at Yashobhoomi

- SEMICON India 2025 at Yashobhoomi will convene 33 nations, 350 exhibitors, and 50+ global speakers across the chip design-to-manufacturing value chain.
- Program elements include CXO keynotes, technical tracks, workforce pavilions, and country/state roundtables to catalyze collaboration.
- The showcase advances domestic fabrication, packaging, and equipment ecosystems under the India Semiconductor Mission.
- Focus areas span supply-chain resilience, sustainability, and scaling talent pipelines to position India as a trusted semiconductors hub.

Lok Sabha Speaker to Lead India at the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

- Om Birla will head India’s delegation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Barbados, engaging 180 CPA branches on governance themes
- India will contribute to workshops on technology in governance, fiscal transparency, climate and public health, and separation of powers
- A Youth Roundtable will spotlight safety, cyber-bullying, and mental health, aligning with national initiatives on digital inclusion and empowerment.
- The forum strengthens inter-parliamentary cooperation and showcases India’s commitment to institutional democracy and reform.

ECONOMY**EU and US Seal Landmark Trade Deal with 15% Tariffs**

- The United States and the European Union finalized a trade agreement imposing a 15% tariff on most EU exports, replacing the previously threatened 30% rate
- While steel, aluminum, and copper tariffs remain at 50%, selected goods like aircraft parts, medical devices, and agricultural products will be exempted under reciprocal frameworks.
- The EU committed to invest \$600 billion in the U.S. economy and purchase \$750 billion in U.S. energy products by 2028, while expanding military acquisitions from America.
- Critics note asymmetry as U.S. exports face no tariffs, leading to concerns over higher U.S. consumer prices and a possible 0.2% EU GDP contraction, though leaders stress NATO-linked security benefits.
- Future disputes remain likely over pharmaceutical tariffs and investment obligations, with differing interpretations between Washington and Brussels.

India's Economic Outlook and Monetary Policy in 2025

- The RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), chaired by Governor Sanjay Malhotra, reduced the repo rate by 50 basis points to 5.50% and cut the CRR by 100 bps, while shifting its stance from “accommodative” to “neutral.”
- Retail inflation fell to 3.16% in April 2025, prompting RBI to lower its FY26 forecast to 3.7%, while GDP growth is projected at 6.5% with Finance Ministry estimates slightly higher at 6.7%.
- The CRR cut will release ₹2.5 lakh crore liquidity by year-end, supporting credit expansion, while the IMF projects 6.4% growth for India in 2025–26.
- External risks remain, as exports fell 9% in June 2025, with U.S. tariff uncertainty and global slowdown posing challenges despite India's strong fundamentals.
- The RBI also highlighted structural reforms, including the digital rupee rollout, while cautioning against risks from forex volatility and unsecured lending.

Banking Laws Amendment Act 2025

- The Banking Laws (Amendment) Act, 2025 came into force on 1 August 2025, reforming five key laws including the RBI Act 1934, Banking Regulation Act 1949, and the SBI Act 1955.
- The Act redefines “substantial interest” from ₹5 lakh to ₹2 crore, extends co-operative bank board tenures to 10 years, and allows up to four nominees for deposit accounts.
- PSBs must now transfer unclaimed financial assets to the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF), improving depositor security and transparency.
- Statutory audits are strengthened by permitting PSBs to pay auditors directly, while CRR/SLR reporting is streamlined under a revised fortnight definition.
- By modernising governance, reducing related-party conflicts, and enhancing depositor protection, the Act aligns India's banking framework with global best practices.

RBI Approves Merger of New India Co-operative Bank with Saraswat Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved the merger of New India Co-operative Bank (NICB) with Saraswat Bank, effective 4 August 2025, under Section 44A(4) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- Saraswat Bank will assume all of NICB's assets, liabilities, and customers, ensuring depositors' and borrowers' interests are fully protected.
- The merger followed approvals at shareholder meetings of both banks before final RBI sanction.
- NICB had been placed under an RBI moratorium in February 2025 after governance failures and a ₹122 crore embezzlement scandal, leading to board supersession.
- With a business volume of ₹91,814 crore and strong capital adequacy (17%), Saraswat Bank is well-positioned to absorb NICB's ₹3,560 crore operations, strengthening cooperative banking stability.

India's Business Confidence Index Rises to 149.4 in April–June

- India's Business Confidence Index (BCI) rose to 149.4 in Q1 FY26 (Apr–Jun 2025), compared to 139.3 in the previous quarter, according to NCAER's Business Expectations Survey.
- The index measures expectations across economic conditions, firm finances, investment climate, and capacity utilisation, all of which reflected stronger optimism.
- Over 78% of firms expected higher production and domestic sales, while 61% projected profit growth, signalling healthy corporate margins.
- However, the survey noted muted sentiment in the labour market, with limited expectations for hiring or wage increases despite robust sales forecasts.
- Conducted in June 2025, the survey covered 479 firms across six cities, reflecting broad-based corporate sentiment.

RBI Monetary Policy Statement 2025–26

- The RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) maintained the repo rate at 5.50% with a Neutral stance, following cumulative cuts of 100 bps since February 2025.
- GDP growth forecast for FY26 was retained at 6.5%, supported by rural demand, consumption recovery, and a favourable monsoon outlook.
- The inflation forecast was lowered from 3.7% to 3.1%, citing easing food and retail prices, with wholesale inflation falling to a six-year low of 2.1% in June.

- Liquidity will expand as the CRR cut (4% → 3%) takes effect from September 2025, while other rates like SDF (5.25%) and MSF (5.75%) remain unchanged.
- Analysts suggest this pause could signal the end of the easing cycle, as space for further cuts narrows amid global trade risks and tariff pressures.

Trump's Additional 25% Tariff on India

- U.S. President Donald Trump imposed an additional 25% tariff on Indian imports, raising total tariffs to 50%, the highest on any U.S. trading partner
- The move, effective 21 days from 6 August 2025, was justified as a penalty for India's continued imports of Russian oil, under U.S. IEEPA powers.
- India strongly condemned the decision as "unfair and selective", stressing that its imports are market-driven and essential for domestic energy needs.
- Economists warn the tariff could cut India's GDP growth by 80 bps, with sectors like textiles, gems, and pharmaceuticals facing steep export challenges.
- With India's exports to the U.S. valued at \$87 billion in 2024, the hike risks weakening bilateral trade ties while intensifying global economic tensions.

Tata Motors Acquires Iveco for €3.8 Billion

- Tata Motors announced its acquisition of Italy's Iveco Group's commercial vehicle division in an all-cash deal worth €3.8 billion, its largest global deal since Corus.
- The acquisition, excluding Iveco's defence arm sold to Leonardo, will create a €22 billion revenue entity with 540,000 annual sales across Europe, India, and the Americas.
- Financing will be supported by a bridge loan from Morgan Stanley and MUFG, with Tata planning to raise €1 billion in equity and divest Tata Capital stakes for repayment.
- Tata will maintain Iveco's workforce and brand for at least two years, under Italy's golden power safeguards, ensuring continuity.
- Analysts view the acquisition as strategically sound, enhancing Tata's electric mobility and ADAS capabilities, with an expected 16% return on capital.

AU Small Finance Bank Gets Nod for Universal Bank Status

- On 7 August 2025, the RBI granted in-principle approval to AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB) to transition into a universal bank, the first such upgrade since Bandhan Bank in 2015.
- This allows AU to expand into larger loans, subsidiaries, and new customer segments, removing constraints of the small finance bank model.
- In Q1 FY26, AU posted a 16% YoY rise in profit (₹581 crore) with a gross NPA ratio of 2.47%, demonstrating financial resilience.
- As part of regulatory conditions, promoter Sanjay Agarwal must transfer his 22% stake into a Non-Operative Financial Holding Company (NOFHC) within 18 months, and the bank will shift its headquarters from Jaipur to Mumbai.
- The approval is seen as a milestone in Indian banking, reflecting trust in AU's governance, growth potential, and financial discipline.

KSFE Becomes First Miscellaneous NBFC in India to Cross ₹1 Lakh Crore Turnover

- Kerala State Financial Enterprises (KSFE) became the first miscellaneous NBFC in India to cross a turnover of ₹1 lakh crore, doubling from ₹50,000 crore in just four years.
- The achievement was celebrated at Central Stadium, Kerala, with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurating and Finance Minister K. N. Balagopal presiding.
- KSFE launched the Onam Samridhi Gift Card, with brand ambassador Suraj Venjaramoodu attending as guest of honour.
- Over the past four years, KSFE contributed ₹920 crore to the state government, provided ₹504 crore in financial assistance, and posted a profit of ₹512 crore in 2024–25, reflecting its strong public trust.
- The new brand tagline "KSFE: The Courage of Kerala" was unveiled, signifying its resilience and identity as a key state financial institution.

IBC Amendment Bill 2025

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025, after three years of consultations with stakeholders. The amendments aim to streamline insolvency resolution, reduce delays, and empower creditors
- The Bill enables a creditor-initiated process with debtor-in-possession, limits misuse of withdrawals, and mandates CoC approval for early exits.
- It strengthens asset recovery, expands liquidation oversight, and allows revival of viable companies under special provisions.
- New features include group insolvency, a cross-border framework, and digitalization of IBC processes, aligning India's insolvency regime with global best practices.

US National Debt Hits \$37 Trillion

- The U.S. national debt crossed \$37 trillion, years ahead of projections that expected this level only after 2030. The U.S. is adding nearly \$1 trillion every five months, double the long-term average.
- Drivers include pandemic relief packages under Trump and Biden and a new tax-cut and spending bill, projected to add \$4.1 trillion in the next decade.
- Rising debt raises interest payments, crowding out public investment, while the GAO warns of costlier loans, higher prices, and lower wages.
- Economists highlight the risks of escalating debt levels for taxpayers, households, and economic stability.

Foxconn's Bengaluru Plant Begins iPhone 17 Production

- Foxconn's Devanahalli plant in Bengaluru has begun small-scale iPhone 17 production, making it the company's second-largest facility outside China with an investment of \$2.8 billion (₹25,000 crore).
- The plant supplements Chennai operations, helping Apple scale up production to 60 million units in 2025, compared to 35–40 million the previous year.
- After initial disruption when Chinese engineers left abruptly, Foxconn deployed Taiwanese experts and others to stabilize operations.
- Apple assembled \$22 billion worth of iPhones in India during FY 2024–25, with CEO Tim Cook confirming most U.S. iPhones in June 2025 were India-made.
- Karnataka Minister M. B. Patil highlighted the state's rise as an electronics hub, with Apple's share of the Indian smartphone market rising to 7.5% in early 2025.

Ambanis Top 2025 Hurun India Most Valuable Family Businesses List

- The Ambani family leads the Hurun India Family Businesses List 2025 with a valuation of ₹28.2 lakh crore, roughly one-twelfth of India's GDP.
- They are followed by the Bajaj family in second place and Kumar Mangalam Birla in third, with the Jindal family also among the top.
- Collectively, the top 300 families control businesses worth ₹134 lakh crore (\$1.6 trillion), exceeding the GDP of Turkey and Finland combined.
- These firms generate ₹7,100 crore daily in value, employ over 2 million people, and contributed ₹1.8 lakh crore in taxes, about 15% of corporate tax revenue.
- About 74% are publicly listed, and 62 are run by professional CEOs, with leadership spanning second to fourth generations across diverse sectors like automobiles, petrochemicals, and consumer goods.