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# IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

## NATIONAL

### 130 Takedown Notices Issued via Sahyog Portal Under Section 79(3)(b) of IT Act

- Between October 2024 and April 8, 2025, the Indian government issued **130 content removal notices** through the Ministry of Home Affairs' **Sahyog portal**, targeting major platforms like Google, YouTube, Amazon, Apple, and Microsoft.
- These notices were issued under **Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000**, which allows the government to direct intermediaries to take down unlawful content without requiring oversight mechanisms.
- The **Sahyog portal**, launched by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) in 2024, streamlines takedown requests by connecting authorized agencies and digital platforms on a single interface.
- A total of **426 notices were sent under Section 79(3)(b)** between March 2024 and March 2025, targeting over **100,000 content pieces**, including deepfakes, obscenity, and election-related misinformation.
- Elon Musk-owned **X (formerly Twitter)** has refused to join the portal and has filed a legal challenge in the Karnataka High Court, calling it a "**copyright portal**," though the court has denied interim relief.

### India Completes Longest Transport Tunnel in Himalayan Rail Project

- On **April 16, 2025**, Rail Vikas Nigam Limited completed the breakthrough of **Tunnel No. 8**, a **14.57 km tunnel** between Devprayag and Janasu, making it the **longest transport tunnel** in India.
- This achievement is part of the **Rishikesh-Karnaprayag Broad Gauge Rail Link Project**, a **125 km line** connecting five Himalayan districts and featuring over **213 km of tunnels**.
- Tunnel No. 8 was constructed using '**Shakti**', a **9.11-meter diameter Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM)**—the first successful TBM deployment by Indian Railways in the **Himalayan region**.
- Around **4.11 km** of the tunnel was excavated using the **New Austrian Tunnelling Method (NATM)**, with the TBM averaging **413 meters of progress per month**.
- This marks a critical step in enhancing **rail connectivity in Uttarakhand**, improving access to remote areas while showcasing advanced engineering capabilities in difficult terrain.

### PM Modi Inaugurates Bihar's First Namo Bharat Rapid Rail Between Jaynagar and Patna

- On **April 24, 2025**, PM Modi inaugurated the **Namo Bharat Rapid Rail** connecting **Jaynagar to Patna**, a semi-high-speed, fully air-conditioned rail service enhancing connectivity in **Mithilanchal, Bihar**.
- The **267 km route** includes key stations like **Madhubani, Darbhanga, and Barauni**, reducing travel time from 8 hours to **5.5 hours**.
- Operating six days a week, the 18-coach train can seat over **2,000 passengers** and reaches speeds of up to **130 km/h**, with driver cabins at both ends for greater efficiency.
- It features modern amenities such as **Kavach anti-collision tech, CCTV surveillance, Divyang-friendly facilities, and vacuum-based toilets** to ensure comfort and safety.
- The launch is part of a broader **₹13,480 crore infrastructure package** that includes **new trains, power projects, and an LPG bottling plant**, aimed at regional development ahead of state elections.

### Kumar Mangalam Birla Receives 2025 Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award for Nation-Building Contributions

- On **April 24, 2025**, **Kumar Mangalam Birla**, Chairman of the **Aditya Birla Group** and **Padma Bhushan** awardee, was presented the **Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award** at a ceremony in Mumbai by **RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat**.
- Instituted in **2022** by the **Mangeshkar family trust**, the award honors individuals for **exemplary contributions** to the nation, society, or the arts.
- Birla was recognized for his **visionary leadership and role in India's economic development**, stating the honor was special due to its connection with **Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar**.
- The event, held on the **83rd Memorial Day of Pandit Deenanath Mangeshkar**, also honored **Shraddha Kapoor, Sunil Shetty, Sonali Kulkarni, and Dr. N Rajam** for their contributions in cinema and classical music.
- Past awardees include **PM Narendra Modi, Asha Bhosale, and Amitabh Bachchan**, reflecting the award's national significance.

### Payal Kapadia Conferred French Honour for Excellence in Cinema

- On **April 24, 2025**, acclaimed filmmaker **Payal Kapadia** was awarded the **Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres** by the **French government**, recognizing her contributions to cinema and cultural diplomacy.
- Known for her commitment to **independent storytelling**, Kapadia became the first Indian filmmaker in 30 years to win a major Cannes award with her debut feature, **All We Imagine As Light (2024)**.



- She also received acclaim for **A Night of Knowing Nothing (2021)** and **Afternoon Clouds (2017)**, both screened at **Cannes Film Festival**.
- Her collaborations with French producers like **Thomas Hakim** and **Julien Graff** reflect her role in strengthening **France-India cultural ties** through cinema.
- She now joins a prestigious group of Indian honorees including **Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Deepika Padukone, and Lata Mangeshkar**, recognized by France for contributions to the arts.

#### **Action Plan 2025 Approved for River Cities Alliance to Boost Urban River Rejuvenation**

- On **April 25, 2025**, the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** approved the **Action Plan 2025** under the **River Cities Alliance (RCA)**, now consisting of **145 cities** across India.
- The plan emphasizes **Urban River Management Plans (URMPs)**, with **five cities completed** and **25 more** targeted in 2025, aiming for **60 URMPs** in the next 2–3 years.
- **River-Sensitive Master Planning (RSMP)** training has begun, starting with cities in **Tamil Nadu**, to integrate river health into **urban development plans**.
- **Delhi's URMP** is being developed as a **model for metros**, supported by state-level **Steering Committees** in states like **Uttarakhand, UP, Bihar, and West Bengal**.
- The plan promotes **public awareness, knowledge exchange**, and river stewardship through initiatives like **DHARA**, exposure visits, and **weekly success case studies**.

#### **Supreme Court Suggests Vote Threshold for Unopposed Election Victories**

- On **April 2025**, the **Supreme Court of India** proposed that candidates in **uncontested elections** must secure at least **10–15% of votes** to be declared elected, reinforcing the principle of **majority support in democracy**.
- The suggestion arose during the hearing of a **PIL by Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy**, challenging **Section 53(2)** of the **Representation of the People Act, 1951**, which currently allows automatic wins in unopposed elections.
- The Court noted that lack of voter endorsement and absence of a **NOTA option** undermines **Article 19(1)(a)**, which guarantees freedom of expression.
- The **Election Commission** confirmed such uncontested wins are rare, while the **Attorney General** and EC advised Parliament should deliberate any legal reforms.
- The Union government has been asked to respond within **four weeks**, and the case will be heard again in **July 2025**.

#### **India's NSM Achieves Major Milestones in Supercomputing Infrastructure**

- As of March 2025, under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM), India has deployed 34 supercomputers with a combined compute capacity of 35 Petaflops across institutions like IISc, IITs, C-DAC, and several Tier-II and Tier-III research centers.
- These systems have achieved over 85% utilization rates, with many operating at more than 95%, reflecting their high efficiency and demand.
- C-DAC has developed "Trinetra", an indigenous high-speed communication network to enhance node connectivity. Trinetra-A (100 Gbps) is operational at C-DAC Pune, while Trinetra-B (200 Gbps) will power the upcoming 20PF PARAM Rudra in Bangalore.
- In 2024, three PARAM Rudra supercomputers were dedicated to researchers and deployed in Pune, Delhi, and Kolkata. Built with indigenously developed "Rudra" HPC servers and software, they mark a significant leap in India's self-reliant computing capabilities.

#### **India Releases Draft GEI Target Rules 2025 to Cut Industrial Emissions**

- On **April 23, 2025**, the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** released the **Draft Greenhouse Gases Emission Intensity (GEI) Target Rules, 2025**, to enforce emission reduction in **energy-intensive industries**.
- The rules apply to **282 industrial units** in **aluminium, cement, chlor-alkali, and pulp & paper sectors**, using **2023–24 as the baseline year** with phased targets for **2025–26 and 2026–27**.
- Compliance is tied to the **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) 2023**; non-compliant industries face penalties, while compliant ones can **earn and trade carbon credits**.
- The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** will penalize defaulters with **environmental compensation** equal to **twice the average carbon credit price**.
- The draft is open for **60 days of public consultation**, aligning with India's Paris Agreement pledge to reduce **GDP emission intensity by 45% by 2030** from 2005 levels.

#### **NMCG Receives Income Tax Exemption Under Section 10(46A)**

- On **April 22, 2025**, the **CBDT** granted **income tax exemption** to the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** under **Section 10(46A)** of the **Income Tax Act, 1961**.

- The exemption is valid from the **assessment year 2024–25** and recognizes NMCG as a statutory authority under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- The benefit applies as long as NMCG continues operations with **objectives aligned** to those outlined in the said section, ensuring financial autonomy for Ganga rejuvenation efforts.

#### India Ranks 4th in Global Optimism in Ipsos April 2025 Survey

- In the **April 2025 wave** of the Ipsos “What Worries the World” survey, India retained the **4th spot globally** in citizen optimism, with **62% believing** the country is headed in the right direction.
- This positive sentiment places India just behind **Singapore (85%), Malaysia (70%), and Indonesia (67%)**, all leading the global optimism index.
- The survey, conducted across **29 countries**, highlights a trend of **greater optimism in Global South nations**, especially in the **Asia-Pacific region**.
- In contrast, many Western countries exhibited **lower public confidence**, reflecting regional disparities in economic and social sentiment.
- India’s sustained optimism is attributed to **growth expectations, policy momentum, and tech-driven development**.

#### PM Modi Inaugurates Vizhinjam Port, Elevating Kerala's Global Maritime Standing

- On May 2, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially inaugurated the Vizhinjam International Seaport in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. This event marks the commissioning of India's first deep-water transshipment port, strategically located just 10 nautical miles from major international shipping routes.
- Developed through a public-private partnership between the Government of Kerala and Adani Ports, the ₹8,867 crore project aims to position India as a significant player in global maritime trade.

#### 7th-Century Vikramaditya I Inscription Found in Karnataka's Davangere District

- A **7th-century CE stone inscription** from the reign of **Vikramaditya I** of the **Badami Chalukya dynasty** was discovered during **lake desilting** at **Madapura Lake, Nyamati taluk, Davangere, Karnataka**.
- The **five-foot-long stone slab** contains **17 lines in Old Kannada (Halegannada)**, detailing a **land grant of six mattaru** to village elders for their contribution to lake construction.
- The inscription mentions **tax exemptions** for villagers, showcasing a **welfare-oriented administration** during the Chalukyan era.
- An official named **Singhavenna** is cited as administering the region called ‘**Ballavi 70**’, indicating governance over a **cluster of 70 villages**.
- The discovery sheds light on the **administrative, social, and fiscal systems** of early medieval Karnataka.

#### Supreme Court Declares Digital Access a Fundamental Right Under Article 21

- On **April 30, 2025**, the **Supreme Court of India** ruled that **digital access** is an essential part of the **right to life and liberty** under **Article 21** of the Constitution.
- The Court ordered revision of **digital KYC norms** to ensure accessibility for persons with **disabilities**, including those with **visual impairments and facial disfigurements**.
- It emphasized the need for a **proactively inclusive digital ecosystem** to serve the **marginalized**, not just the privileged.
- The judgment aligns digital inclusion with **constitutional values of dignity and equality**, affirming **universal digital rights**.
- This landmark ruling sets a precedent for embedding **accessibility in digital governance frameworks**.

#### Military Exercise DUSTLIK 2025 Enhances India-Uzbekistan Defence Cooperation

- The **sixth edition** of the **India-Uzbekistan joint military exercise DUSTLIK-VI** was held from **April 16 to April 28, 2025**, at the **Foreign Training Node in Aundh, Pune**.
- Launched in **2019**, the **annual exercise alternates** between the two countries, with the **2024 edition** conducted in **Termez, Uzbekistan**.
- The **Indian contingent** included **60 personnel** from the **JAT Regiment** and the **Indian Air Force**, while the **Uzbekistan Army** represented the visiting side.
- The drill focused on **Joint Multi-Domain Sub-Conventional Operations** in **semi-urban environments**, simulating coordinated responses to **terrorist threats and territorial incursions**.
- **DUSTLIK 2025** strengthens **bilateral military ties**, enhances **interoperability**, and reflects growing **strategic cooperation** between India and Uzbekistan in regional security efforts.

#### Domestic Violence Tops Complaints to National Commission for Women in Early 2025

- In early **2025**, the **National Commission for Women (NCW)** received **7,698 complaints**, with **domestic violence** leading at **1,594 cases**, accounting for nearly **20%** of the total.



- Other major complaints included **criminal intimidation (989)**, **assault (950)**, **dowry harassment (916)**, and **rape or attempt to rape (394)**.
- **Uttar Pradesh** recorded the **highest number of complaints (3,921)**, followed by **Delhi (688)** and **Maharashtra (473)**.
- April 2025 saw a sharp increase with **2,123 complaints**, the **highest monthly figure** for the first quarter.
- An additional **881 cases** remain **uncategorized**, indicating ongoing efforts in classification and analysis by NCW.

#### Maharashtra Launches 'One State, One Registration' Policy for Property Documents

- On **May 1, 2025**, the **Maharashtra government** rolled out the **'One State, One Registration' policy**, allowing citizens to **register property documents at any of the state's 519 sub-registrar offices**, regardless of the property's location.
- The system introduces a **faceless and digital Aadhaar-authenticated process**, eliminating the need for physical presence and promoting transparency.
- Following successful pilots in **Mumbai, Pune, and Thane**, the policy has now been expanded **statewide**, aiming to reduce **congestion and waiting times**.
- The initiative is expected to boost **state revenue** through increased **compliance and stamp duty collections**.
- The reform is supported by **technical upgrades** via the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** to enable seamless digital processing.

#### Telangana Hosts Miss World 2025, Boosting Tourism and Global Engagement

- **Telangana** is hosting the **72nd Miss World pageant** from **May 7 to May 31, 2025**, with the **grand finale scheduled at Hyderabad's HITEC Centre** on **May 31**.
- The event features **over 120 global contestants**, and the **opening ceremony** on **May 10** included **Telangana folk and tribal dances** at the **Gachibowli Indoor Stadium**.
- Cultural activities include **heritage walks**, visits to the **Ramappa Temple (UNESCO site)**, and showcases of **local crafts in Pochampally**.
- The pageant is expected to significantly **boost tourism, hospitality, and international visibility**, driving **potential investments** into the state.
- **India's representative, Nandini Gupta** (Femina Miss India World 2023), will compete, aiming to bring the crown back to India.

#### INS Arnala Delivered to Indian Navy: Boost to Indigenous Anti-Submarine Warfare Capabilities

- On **May 8, 2025**, the Indian Navy received **INS Arnala**, the first of eight **Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Crafts (ASW SWCs)** built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE)**, in partnership with **Larsen & Toubro** at Kattupalli, Tamil Nadu.
- Designed for **coastal sub-surface surveillance**, **coordinated anti-submarine missions**, and **search and attack operations**, the ship features **88% indigenous content**, aligned with the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative**.
- It is equipped with **lightweight torpedoes**, **anti-submarine rockets**, and a **combat management system**, enhancing **maritime security** and replacing **aging Abhay-class corvettes**.
- **INS Arnala** is part of a fleet of **16 ASW crafts**, with **GRSE and L&T** each building eight. **GRSE** won the **Raksha Mantri's Award (2022)** for its low-noise design, making it the **most silent ship** in its class.

#### Supreme Court Upholds Free Speech in Wikimedia-ANI Defamation Dispute

- On **May 9, 2025**, the **Supreme Court of India** **overturned** a **Delhi High Court** order that had directed the **Wikimedia Foundation** to remove a **Wikipedia** page critical of **ANI**.
- The case originated from a **defamation suit filed by ANI in July 2024**, objecting to its portrayal as a "propaganda tool" on **Wikipedia**.
- The **Delhi High Court** had **ordered content removal and identification of editors**, threatening a potential block on **Wikipedia in India** for non-compliance.
- The **Supreme Court quashed this order**, citing that such actions could **chill free expression** and restrict the **right to information**.
- The Court reaffirmed that **judicial proceedings must be open to public scrutiny**, and online platforms like **Wikipedia** play a crucial role in promoting **transparency and debate**.

#### Centre Authorizes Army Chief to Mobilize Territorial Army Units Amid Border Tensions

- On **May 6, 2025**, the Government of India authorized the **Chief of Army Staff (COAS)** to mobilize **Territorial Army personnel** under **Rule 33 of the Territorial Army Rules, 1948**.
- The order enables the **COAS** to **embody TA units for active duty**, particularly in light of heightened **border tensions**.
- Out of **32 TA Infantry Battalions**, **14 have been designated for deployment** across various commands, including **ARTRAC** and **Andaman & Nicobar**.

- The **financial responsibility** for TA deployments requested by ministries other than Defence will be **borne by the respective ministries**.
- This authorization will remain in force for **three years, from February 10, 2025, to February 9, 2028**, reinforcing the TA's role in **support and internal security duties**.

#### Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra Launch World's Largest Groundwater Recharge Project

- On **May 10, 2025**, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra signed an **MoU** to jointly implement the **₹19,244 crore Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project**, aiming to enhance water security and boost sustainable irrigation.
- The project will utilize **31.13 TMC of water**, with **11.76 TMC allocated to Madhya Pradesh** and **19.36 TMC to Maharashtra**, focusing on groundwater recharge through three Tapti River streams.
- It is expected to **irrigate over 3.5 lakh hectares**, benefitting key districts like **Burhanpur, Khandwa, Jalgaon, Akola, and Amravati**, thereby strengthening agricultural resilience.
- The project adopts a **non-displacing, eco-friendly recharge-based model**, replacing earlier plans that risked displacing **14,000 people** and affecting **17,000 hectares of land**.
- Both states seek **national scheme status** for the project, paralleling the Ken-Betwa project, to ensure **central funding and strategic support**.

#### India's Total Fertility Rate Stable at 2.0, Indicating Demographic Transition

- As per the **2021 Sample Registration System (SRS)** report, India's **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** remains steady at **2.0**, reflecting a continuing trend toward **population stabilization**.
- A **TFR of 2.1 is considered the replacement level**; India's current rate signals a potential long-term **decline in population growth**.
- State-wise, **Bihar** reported the **highest TFR at 3.0**, while **Delhi and West Bengal** recorded the lowest at **1.4**, with **Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Maharashtra** also reporting low fertility levels at **1.5**.
- India's **working-age population (15–59 years)** has grown to **66.2%**, while the **child population** has declined to **24.8%**, and the **elderly population** increased to **9%**, with **Kerala highest at 14.4%**.
- The **mean age of female marriage** rose to **22.5 years in 2021**, driven by **education, employment, and reproductive health awareness**, contributing to reduced fertility rates.

#### Bhuvan Ribhu Receives World Law Congress Honour for Championing Child Rights

- On **May 6, 2025**, child rights lawyer **Bhuvan Ribhu** was awarded the '**Medal of Honour**' by the **World Jurist Association** at the **World Law Congress** in the **Dominican Republic**.
- Ribhu has filed over **60 PILs** since 2005, leading to **landmark rulings** on child trafficking, marriage, and abuse, and helped criminalize trafficking by aligning Indian law with **UN Protocol standards**.
- He founded **Just Rights for Children (JRC)**, the **world's largest legal child protection network**, operating across India and internationally in **Nepal, Kenya, and the U.S.**
- His **PICKET strategy** (Policy, Institutions, Capacity-building, Knowledge, Economics, Technology) has guided national campaigns like **Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat** to end child marriage by 2030.
- The award places him among global legal luminaries such as **Nelson Mandela and Ruth Bader Ginsburg**, recognizing his enduring contribution to justice and child welfare.

#### Supreme Court Ends Point-Based Senior Advocate Designation System, Emphasizes Inclusivity

- On **May 13, 2025**, the **Supreme Court of India** abolished the **point-based system** introduced in 2017 for designating **Senior Advocates**, calling it irrational and unfit to assess legal merit.
- A bench of **Justices Abhay S. Oka, Ujjal Bhuyan, and SVN Bhatti** issued new guidelines directing **all High Courts** to amend their rules within **four months** to align with the revised framework.
- The **designation process** will now be handled by the **full court**, based on reviewed applications and consensus voting, while **secret ballots remain optional**.
- **Eligibility criteria**, including a **minimum of 10 years of legal practice**, remains unchanged, and **individual judge recommendations are disallowed**.
- The Court emphasized **annual designation rounds** and **inclusive consideration** of lawyers from **trial courts and tribunals**, promoting **diversity in recognition**.

#### Operation Keller: Indian Forces Eliminate TRF Chief and Militants in Shopian

- On **May 13, 2025**, Indian security forces launched **Operation Keller** in **Shopian, Jammu & Kashmir**, eliminating **three militants**, including **Shahid Kuttay**, chief of **The Resistance Front (TRF)**.
- The operation followed **specific intelligence inputs** and escalated into a gunfight after militants opened fire during a **cordon-and-search** mission.

- **Shahid Kuttay**, also linked to **Lashkar-e-Taiba**, was the **mastermind of the recent Pahalgam attack** that killed **26 civilians** and had been a high-value target.
- Conducted in the **early hours**, the operation was executed using a **'search and destroy' strategy**, ensuring **zero civilian casualties**.
- The elimination of Kuttay is a **major counter-terror success**, likely to weaken the **TRF-LeT network** and disrupt future terrorist operations in the valley.

#### India Rejects China's Fifth Attempt to Rename Places in Arunachal Pradesh

- On **May 14, 2025**, India **rejected China's renaming of 27 locations** in **Arunachal Pradesh**, calling the act **"vain and preposterous"**, reinforcing that the state is an **integral part of India**.
- The renamed list released by **China's Ministry of Civil Affairs** includes **15 mountains, 5 villages, 4 passes, 2 rivers, and 1 lake**, part of Beijing's effort to assert claims over **"Zangnan" (South Tibet)**.
- India's **Ministry of External Affairs** condemned the move, stating that **"invented names do not change reality"**, and affirmed Arunachal Pradesh's **undeniable sovereignty**.
- This marks **China's fifth renaming attempt**—following efforts in **2017, 2021, 2023, and 2024**, with a growing number of renamed sites each time.
- The move reflects **ongoing border tensions**, but India maintains that such unilateral actions hold **no legal validity or diplomatic weight**.

#### India Prioritizes Myanmar Route for Northeast-Kolkata Connectivity Over Bangladesh

- On **May 16, 2025**, India accelerated work on the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project** and **Shillong-Silchar Highway** to link the Northeast directly to Kolkata via **Myanmar**, reducing reliance on the narrow **Siliguri Corridor**.
- The **Kaladan Project** includes a **539 km sea route** to Sittwe Port, a **158 km river segment** to Paletwa, and a **110 km road** to the India-Myanmar border, ultimately connecting to **Mizoram and the Northeast**.
- The **Shillong-Silchar Highway**, a **166.8 km four-lane corridor**, will cut travel time between Shillong and Silchar by over 3 hours, enhancing access to **Tripura, Manipur, and the Barak Valley**.
- Strategically, this corridor **reduces dependence on Bangladesh**, responding to **recent geopolitical remarks and vulnerabilities of the Siliguri Corridor**, which is India's only narrow land link to the Northeast.
- Economically, the project boosts **regional trade, infrastructure growth**, and aligns with the **Act East Policy**, reinforcing India's **connectivity with Southeast Asia**.

#### India to Launch Samudrayaan, First Manned Deep Ocean Mission, by 2026

- India plans to launch **Samudrayaan**, its first **manned deep-sea mission**, by **end of 2026**, deploying the **indigenously developed submersible MATSYA 6000** to depths of **6,000 meters**.
- Built by the **National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)**, MATSYA 6000 can carry **three people**, has a **titanium hull**, and offers **12 hours of mission endurance** with **96 hours emergency support**.
- The mission is part of the **Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)**, launched in 2021 with a **₹4,077 crore budget**, and includes components like **biodiversity mapping, seabed mining, and marine climate services**.
- The submersible will be deployed using **Sagar Nidhi**, India's oceanographic research vessel, and is expected to significantly enhance **ocean resource exploration** and India's **Blue Economy** goals.
- Samudrayaan symbolizes India's commitment to **sustainable marine exploration**, technological self-reliance, and leadership in **deep ocean science**.

#### Haryana YouTuber Jyoti Rani Booked for Espionage Under Official Secrets Act

- On **May 17, 2025**, travel vlogger **Jyoti Malhotra**, also known as **Jyoti Rani**, was arrested in **Hisar, Haryana**, for allegedly sharing **sensitive information** with **Pakistani intelligence operatives**.
- She has been charged under **Sections 3 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923**, and **Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)** for acts **endangering India's sovereignty and integrity**.
- Authorities allege she **transmitted army movement details** in **Haryana and Punjab** and promoted a **pro-Pakistan narrative** through social media platforms like **WhatsApp, Telegram, and Snapchat**.
- Preliminary interrogation revealed her contact with a Pakistani national, **Ahsan-ur-Rahim alias Danish**, and her **two visits to Pakistan** after meeting him at the **Pakistan High Commission in Delhi** in 2023.
- Her case highlights growing concerns around **digital espionage and national security breaches** through **social media influencers**.

#### Supreme Court Strikes Down Retrospective Green Clearances as Unconstitutional

- On **May 16, 2025**, the **Supreme Court** invalidated the Centre's **2017 and 2021 notifications** allowing **retrospective environmental clearances**, calling them **illegal and violative of Article 21**.



- The Court ruled such ex post facto clearances **contravene the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) 2006** and undermine the **precautionary principle** of environmental law.
- While already-granted clearances will remain valid, the Court **barred future retrospective approvals**, affecting numerous **non-compliant projects** across sectors.
- The judgment emphasized that **development must not override environmental safety**, reaffirming **citizens' right to a clean and healthy environment**.
- It came in response to a **petition by NGO Vanashakti**, setting a precedent for **strict environmental accountability**.

#### India Forms Seven All-Party Delegations to Build Global Consensus Against Terrorism

- On **May 17, 2025**, India announced **seven all-party delegations**, comprising **51 MPs**, to visit **over 30 countries** and build **international support against terrorism** post the **Pahalgam attack** and **Operation Sindoor**.
- Notably, **three delegations** are headed by **Opposition leaders: Shashi Tharoor (Congress), Supriya Sule (NCP), and Kanimozhi (DMK)**, reflecting **bipartisan unity**.
- Delegations aim to convey India's **zero-tolerance policy on terrorism**, engage with **foreign governments and think tanks**, and counter disinformation.
- These teams, supported by diplomats, will travel between **May 22–23** for a **10-day diplomatic outreach**.
- The initiative signals India's **cohesive national stance on counterterrorism** and effort to build **global solidarity**.

#### PM Modi to Launch 'Gyan Bharatam Mission' to Digitize India's Manuscript Heritage

- On **June 9, 2025**, **PM Narendra Modi** will launch the **Gyan Bharatam Mission**, aimed at **digitizing and conserving over one crore manuscripts** across India.
- This initiative **revamps the National Manuscripts Mission (NMM)** and creates a **standalone institutional framework** for large-scale documentation and preservation.
- A **central digital repository** will be established with **AI-driven archiving, metadata tagging, and translation tools** to aid research and public access.
- The Union Budget allocated **₹60 crore annually**, with a **total outlay of ₹482.85 crore** for 2024–31 to implement the mission.
- The project aligns ancient knowledge with **modern educational technology**, supporting India's **cultural and intellectual revival**.

#### Sharp Decline in Government School Enrolment and PM-POSHAN Coverage Alarms Centre

- The **Ministry of Education** reported a major **drop in enrolment** in government schools across **23 states and UTs** during 2024–25, raising concerns over **education and nutrition access**.
- **Uttar Pradesh** led with a decline of **21.83 lakh students**, followed by **Bihar, Rajasthan, and West Bengal**, with similar drops seen in **PM-POSHAN meal coverage**.
- Contributing factors include **post-COVID return to private schools**, **stricter data verification**, and **students bringing their own meals** due to issues in midday meal delivery.
- The Centre has requested **remedial action plans** from states by **June 30, 2025**, to address the decline and improve outreach.
- The trend reflects systemic challenges in **public education and welfare delivery**, especially in **rural and low-income regions**.

#### Amaravati Set to Become World's First Fully Renewable-Energy-Powered City

- Amaravati, the planned capital of Andhra Pradesh, aims to meet its entire **2,700 MW energy demand** by 2050 using **100% renewable sources**, including solar, wind, and hydropower.
- The **₹65,000-crore greenfield project** spans **217 sq km** along the Krishna River and forms part of the **8,352 sq km Andhra Pradesh Capital Region**.
- Renewable infrastructure includes **mandatory rooftop solar installations**, green building codes, and solar power integration in public institutions and complexes.
- The city will feature a **renewable-powered public transport system**, including the Amaravati Metro, electric buses, and widespread EV charging infrastructure.
- As part of early implementation, **415 kW of rooftop solar** has been installed on Anganwadis, health centers, schools, and a funeral center, with **net metering** mandated across public and commercial buildings.

#### Cheetah Nirva Gives Birth to Five Cubs in Kuno, Marking Major Conservation Milestone

- On **April 25, 2025**, Nirva, a **5-year-old cheetah from South Africa**, gave birth to **five cubs** at **Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh**, under India's **Project Cheetah**.
- The cubs are genetically significant as they are the **first offspring** of a **South African mother** and a **Namibian father (Gaurav)**, enhancing **genetic diversity** in the park's cheetah population.



- With this addition, **Kuno now hosts 29 cheetahs** (10 adults and 19 cubs), while **two others were shifted to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary**, raising India's total to **31 cheetahs**.
- This birth is a critical **conservation milestone**, supporting efforts to **reintroduce cheetahs** to India after more than **70 years of extinction**.
- The successful breeding reflects the growing **stability and adaptability** of cheetahs in India's ecosystems, strengthening long-term rewilding efforts.

#### India's First Inter-State Cheetah Conservation Corridor Launched

- India has initiated its first **inter-state cheetah conservation corridor**, connecting **Madhya Pradesh** and **Rajasthan**, to facilitate the free movement and breeding of reintroduced cheetahs.
- This corridor spans approximately 17,000 square kilometers, linking **Kuno National Park** and **Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary** in Madhya Pradesh with **Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve** in Rajasthan.
- The corridor is part of a 25-year plan under Project Cheetah, aiming for phased releases and habitat development.

#### Lakkundi Monuments in Karnataka Proposed for UNESCO Tentative List

- The **Lakkundi group of monuments**, located in **Gadag district, Karnataka**, has been proposed for inclusion in **UNESCO's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites**.
- This initiative is jointly led by the **Karnataka government** and **INTACH**, highlighting Lakkundi's **10th–12th century** heritage under the **Kalyana Chalukya (Western Chalukya)** dynasty.
- The monuments are renowned for their use of the **Vesara style**, blending **Nagara, Dravida, and Bhumiya** architectural elements.
- Lakkundi features over **50 ancient temples, wells, and inscriptions**, showcasing intricate carvings and advanced stone craftsmanship.
- The nomination aims to secure **global recognition and conservation support** for this **architectural treasure of South India**.

#### Bombay High Court Declares Kanjurmarg Land a 'Protected Forest'

- On **May 2, 2025**, the **Bombay High Court** reinstated the **protected forest status** of approximately **120 hectares in Mumbai's Kanjurmarg area**, nullifying a **2009 state government de-notification** that had allowed its use as a landfill.
- The land was originally declared protected in **2008** in compliance with a **2005 High Court directive** to safeguard mangroves, but the **2009 reversal** was found to **violate the Forest Conservation Act** due to improper legal procedure.
- The bench of **Justices Girish S. Kulkarni and Somasekhar Sundaresan** held that the **original 2008 notification** was based on valid surveys and satellite imagery, and not a clerical error as claimed by the state.
- The court observed that **landfill construction stunted mangrove growth**, highlighting **environmental degradation** as a major concern influencing its decision.

## INTERNATIONAL

#### Kuwait Endorses India's Bid for Permanent Seat in UN Security Council

- On April 18, 2025, Kuwait's UN envoy **Tareq Albanai** publicly supported India's bid for a **permanent seat** on the **UN Security Council**, calling India a key global player.
- As Co-Chair of the **Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN)** on UNSC reform, Albanai emphasized the need for a more representative Council and cited high-level talks held during a recent visit to India.
- He stated that if the UNSC is expanded to **21–27 members**, India would be a leading contender, although final decisions rest on consensus among all **193 UN member states**.
- France reaffirmed its support for India's permanent membership on **April 1, 2025**, highlighting it as a priority during its presidency of the Security Council.
- India has long advocated for reform of the UNSC to reflect **contemporary global power dynamics** and better represent the interests of **developing countries**.

#### Trump Lifts All U.S. Sanctions on Syria, Signaling Major Foreign Policy Shift

- On **May 13, 2025**, President **Donald Trump** announced the **complete lifting of U.S. sanctions on Syria** during a speech at the **Saudi-U.S. Investment Forum in Riyadh**, citing the end of their strategic purpose.
- The decision, encouraged by **Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman** and **Turkish President Erdoğan**, is aimed at **facilitating Syria's reconstruction** following the ousting of **Bashar al-Assad**.
- Trump is scheduled to meet **Syria's interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa**, formerly known as **Abu Mohammad al-Jolani**, who cut ties with al-Qaeda in 2016.

- The move aligns with **Gulf-led stabilization efforts** and mirrors the **EU's partial easing of Syria sanctions** for humanitarian reasons.
- This marks a **significant reversal of prior U.S. policy**, potentially paving the way for **greater diplomatic engagement and foreign investment** in Syria's post-conflict recovery.

#### UN Releases World Social Report 2025 Highlighting Rising Global Insecurity and Inequality

- On **April 24, 2025**, UN DESA, in collaboration with **UNU-WIDER**, released the **World Social Report 2025**, warning of deepening **economic insecurity, inequality, and institutional distrust** worldwide.
- Over **2.8 billion people** live on **\$2.15–\$6.85/day**, and the **top 1%** now control more than **95% of global wealth**, reflecting widening income inequality in **two-thirds of all countries**.
- Over **50% of the global population** lacks trust in their national governments, exacerbated by **misinformation**, while **informal and insecure employment** dominates in **Africa and South Asia**.
- In **2024**, one in **five people** faced **climate disasters**, and one in **seven experienced conflict**, reversing decades of **development progress**.
- The report advocates a new **global policy consensus** built on **equity, economic security, and solidarity**, ahead of the **Second World Summit for Social Development** in Doha, Qatar (Nov 4–6, 2025).

#### BRICS Labour Ministers Adopt Declaration on AI, Climate Change, and Employment in Brasília

- On **April 25, 2025**, BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers met in **Brasília, Brazil**, and adopted a declaration on **AI governance, climate change, and inclusive employment**, under the theme of **Global South cooperation**.
- The declaration promotes **human-centered AI policies** aligned with **ILO labour standards**, ensuring that technology fosters **decent work** and protects **workers' rights**.
- BRICS nations committed to **just transitions** by investing in **green jobs, reskilling, and social protections** to support those impacted by environmental changes.
- India highlighted programs like **Future Skills Prime, National AI Strategy, and Namo Drone Didi**, reaffirming its commitment to **ethical AI and climate-responsive employment**.
- The declaration proposed a **BRICS Social Protection Observatory**, supported **OSH cooperation**, and strengthened engagement through the **BRICS Virtual Liaison Office**.

#### Russia Declares Ceasefire in Ukraine from May 8–10 for WWII Victory Day

- On **April 28, 2025**, President Vladimir Putin announced a **72-hour unilateral ceasefire** in Ukraine from **May 8 to May 10**, marking the **80th anniversary of Victory Day**.
- The Kremlin termed it a **humanitarian gesture**, urging **Ukrainian reciprocity**, while warning of swift retaliation against ceasefire violations.
- **Ukraine rejected** the limited truce, with **President Zelenskyy** and **Foreign Minister Sybiha** calling for a **30-day ceasefire** to enable meaningful peace talks.
- Zelenskyy criticized the ceasefire's **symbolic timing**, asserting that **human lives** should take precedence over ceremonial commemorations.
- **U.S. President Donald Trump** welcomed the pause but stressed the need for a **permanent solution**, while **Secretary of State Marco Rubio** warned of a possible shift in U.S. mediation if no progress is made.

#### Trump Signals Potential U.S. Recognition of Crimea as Russian Territory

- On **April 25, 2025**, U.S. President **Donald Trump** told *Time* magazine that "**Crimea will stay with Russia**," suggesting a potential **shift in U.S. policy** regarding Russia's 2014 annexation of the peninsula.
- The proposal forms part of a broader **peace plan** involving U.S. recognition of **Russian control over Crimea**, acceptance of **Russian-occupied territories in eastern Ukraine**, and a **commitment to keep Ukraine out of NATO**.
- **Ukrainian President Zelenskyy** rejected the proposal, stating any surrender of Crimea would **violate Ukraine's constitution** and require a **national referendum**.
- The statement drew criticism from **European allies**, with **Germany** warning that such a policy would **legitimize territorial aggression** and undermine international law.
- The move signals a possible **recalibration of U.S. foreign policy** on the Russia–Ukraine conflict under the Trump administration, raising diplomatic tensions with NATO allies.

#### Mark Carney Elected Canada's 24th Prime Minister in Federal Elections

- **Mark Carney**, former governor of the **Bank of Canada** and **Bank of England**, led the **Liberal Party** to victory, becoming **Canada's 24th Prime Minister** following the **2025 federal election**.
- The Liberals won **168 seats**, falling just short of the **172-seat majority mark**, indicating Carney will likely lead a **minority government**.

- Carney assumed party leadership in **March 2025** after **Justin Trudeau's resignation**, bringing technocratic credibility and economic expertise to the campaign.
- His election campaign gained momentum due to growing **Canadian nationalism**, partly in response to **President Trump's trade policies** and controversial suggestion that **Canada become the 51st U.S. state**.
- Carney's leadership marks a **transition to pragmatic, economically driven governance**, likely to focus on **trade, fiscal policy**, and **Canada's independent foreign relations stance**.

#### EU Court Declares Malta's Golden Passport Scheme Illegal

- On **April 2025**, the **European Court of Justice (ECJ)** struck down **Malta's golden passport scheme**, ruling it **violates EU law** and must be terminated.
- The scheme, launched in **2013**, offered **EU citizenship** to wealthy investors contributing **€600,000–€750,000** plus property and charity investments.
- The ECJ ruled that **selling EU citizenship** undermines **mutual trust** and the **principle of sincere cooperation** among member states.
- Despite reforms and the **2022 suspension of Russian and Belarusian applicants**, the court found Malta's measures insufficient to comply with **EU treaties**.
- The **European Commission**, which initiated legal action in 2020, **welcomed the judgment**, affirming that **EU citizenship is not a commodity**.

#### Angola Joins ISA, Signs Key MoUs with India During Historic Visit

- During President **João Lourenço's** visit to India (May 2–4, 2025), **Angola became the 123rd member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, strengthening global solar cooperation.
- **MoUs were signed in Ayurveda, agriculture, cultural exchange, and defence**, including a **\$200 million line of credit** for modernizing Angola's armed forces.
- Discussions included expanding the **energy partnership**, especially in **refining and oil field exploration**, as India remains a major **importer of Angolan oil**.
- India also offered support in **digital infrastructure, space tech, healthcare, and diamond processing**.
- A **youth exchange programme** and **counter-terrorism cooperation** were also initiated to deepen bilateral ties.

#### Israel Approves Plan to Reoccupy Gaza Amid Mounting Global Criticism

- In **May 2025**, **Israel's security cabinet** approved a controversial plan to **reoccupy the Gaza Strip**, deploying **tens of thousands of reservists** to secure territory and control humanitarian aid delivery.
- The **IDF plans phased incursions into northern and southern Gaza** to dismantle **Hamas infrastructure**, including its extensive **tunnel network**.
- Humanitarian agencies and the **UN have criticized** Israel's aid control efforts, warning it violates neutrality and worsens the humanitarian crisis.
- Several **European nations**—including **France, Germany, and the Netherlands**—condemned the move, calling it a **breach of international law**.
- Within Israel, families of hostages and political leaders raised **concerns about escalation risks**, potentially endangering civilians still held by Hamas.

#### Quad Launches Indo-Pacific Logistics Network (IPLN) for Disaster Response

- From **April 28 to May 2, 2025**, the **Quad nations (India, US, Japan, Australia)** conducted a simulation exercise in **Honolulu** to operationalize the **Indo-Pacific Logistics Network (IPLN)** aimed at enhancing regional disaster relief capabilities.
- The IPLN is designed to **coordinate logistics resources for swift humanitarian response** across the Indo-Pacific during natural disasters.
- The simulation tested **interoperability and coordination mechanisms**, ensuring readiness for real-world contingencies among Quad partners.
- This initiative complements other Quad efforts like **maritime domain awareness**, reinforcing commitment to a **free, open, and resilient Indo-Pacific**.
- The IPLN boosts the Quad's ability to address **non-traditional security threats**, further strengthening regional cooperation.

#### U.S. to Officially Use 'Arabian Gulf,' Prompting Iranian Objection

- The U.S. under **President Donald Trump** is set to **formally adopt "Arabian Gulf"** in official nomenclature, aligning with **Arab Gulf nations' preference**, marking a shift from the long-standing term **"Persian Gulf"**.
- The term **"Persian Gulf"** has been historically recognized globally, but Arab countries have promoted the **alternative name** for political and cultural reasons.



- Iran strongly **condemned the change**, calling it a **political provocation** and warned of **diplomatic fallout**, especially amid nuclear deal tensions.
- The U.S. military has informally used “Arabian Gulf,” but this is the **first formal governmental endorsement** of the terminology.
- The move may **impact U.S.-Iran relations** and influence **Gulf Cooperation Council alliances**, adding complexity to Middle East diplomacy.

#### La Prensa Wins UNESCO Press Freedom Prize; Nicaragua Announces UNESCO Exit

- On **May 3, 2025**, **La Prensa**, Nicaragua’s oldest newspaper, was awarded the **UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize** for its resilience amid **severe governmental repression**.
- Established in **1997**, the prize honours journalists and institutions defending **press freedom under threat**, and is named after **Guillermo Cano Isaza**, assassinated in 1986.
- Despite **ensorship, asset seizures, and staff arrests**, including a **2021 raid and the detention of its manager**, La Prensa continues publishing online from **exile across five countries**.
- The Nicaraguan government **condemned the award**, accused the paper of promoting foreign intervention, and announced its **withdrawal from UNESCO effective December 31, 2026**.
- The recognition has intensified international scrutiny of the Ortega regime’s **authoritarian crackdown on press freedoms**.

#### Trump-Led Push for Ukraine-Russia Peace Talks Gains Momentum Amidst Ceasefire Demand

- On **May 9, 2025**, former U.S. President **Donald Trump** urged **direct peace talks between Ukraine and Russia** in Turkey to end the prolonged war, citing the urgency to stop ongoing bloodshed.
- Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** agreed to a meeting with Russian President **Vladimir Putin** in Istanbul on **May 15**, but demanded a **full ceasefire starting May 12** as a precondition.
- While Russia expressed willingness for **unconditional talks**, it did not **formally agree to Ukraine’s ceasefire demand**, instead focusing on resolving core conflict issues.
- **European leaders** backed Ukraine's call, warning of **further sanctions on Russia** if it failed to honor the May 12 ceasefire proposal.
- **Turkey's President Erdoğan** confirmed Istanbul as the venue for the talks, supporting diplomatic efforts for an **immediate resolution** to the conflict.

#### U.S.-China Trade Talks Yield Major Tariff Reduction Deal in Geneva

- On **May 11, 2025**, the **U.S. and China concluded key trade negotiations in Geneva**, reaching an agreement to significantly **reduce tariffs** and de-escalate trade tensions.
- The U.S. will lower tariffs on Chinese goods from **145% to 30%**, while China will reduce tariffs on American imports from **125% to 10%**, both for an initial **90-day period**.
- A **joint statement** issued by both countries highlighted the importance of their **economic partnership** and announced a **mechanism for ongoing trade discussions**.
- The deal is seen as a **pivotal step toward stabilizing global trade relations**, especially between the **world's two largest economies**.
- Global markets reacted **positively**, with **stock indices rising** across the U.S., Europe, and Asia, and the **U.S. dollar gaining strength** against major currencies.

#### U.S. and Saudi Arabia Sign \$142 Billion Arms Deal, Deepening Strategic Partnership

- On **May 13, 2025**, President **Donald Trump** announced a **\$142 billion arms deal** with **Saudi Arabia** in **Riyadh**, marking the **largest defence agreement** in U.S. history.
- The deal includes **advanced air and missile defence systems, maritime security upgrades, and modern communications infrastructure**, involving multiple **U.S. defence contractors**.
- It is part of a broader **\$600 billion Saudi investment package** in U.S. sectors like **energy, technology, and infrastructure**, reflecting deepening **economic ties**.
- The agreement supports **Saudi Vision 2030**, aimed at **diversifying the Kingdom’s economy** and strengthening its **defence and tech sectors**.
- This surpasses the **2017 \$110 billion arms deal**, reaffirming the U.S. commitment to **Saudi regional security and Middle East stability**.

#### India Extends \$50 Million Treasury Support to Maldives Amid Debt Crisis

- On **May 12, 2025**, India rolled over a **\$50 million interest-free Treasury Bill** for **Maldives**, reinforcing bilateral support during a period of **economic hardship**.



- Since **March 2019**, India has been renewing the Treasury Bill annually via the **State Bank of India (SBI)** as **emergency financial aid**.
- Maldives is grappling with **\$9.4 billion in public debt** (134% of GDP), dwindling **foreign reserves**, and **credit downgrades** by Fitch and Moody's.
- The aid aligns with India's '**Neighbourhood First**' and **Vision MAHASAGAR** policies, strengthening ties with **strategic maritime neighbors**.
- Maldivian Foreign Minister **Abdulla Khaleel** thanked India for the **timely support**, which complements previous initiatives like the **\$400 million currency swap** and **developmental aid**.

#### U.S. Supreme Court Reviews Trump's Executive Order on Birthright Citizenship

- On **May 15, 2025**, the **U.S. Supreme Court** heard **Trump v. CASA**, a case challenging **Executive Order 14160**, which denies **automatic citizenship to children of non-citizen parents**.
- The order, issued on Trump's first day of his second term, contradicts the **14th Amendment** and was blocked by **federal judges** in four states, calling it "blatantly unconstitutional."
- The Court is also evaluating the legitimacy of **nationwide injunctions**, with the Trump administration arguing for case-specific relief only.
- If upheld, the order could affect **255,000 births annually**, disrupting the settled understanding from **United States v. Wong Kim Ark (1898)**.
- The outcome could reshape **citizenship rights** and redefine **judicial limits** on federal policy enforcement.

#### Brazilian Microbiologist Mariangela Hungria Wins 2025 World Food Prize

- On **May 13, 2025**, **Dr. Mariangela Hungria** won the **2025 World Food Prize** for her pioneering work in **biological nitrogen fixation** and **sustainable agriculture**.
- Over 40 years at **Embrapa**, she developed **rhizobia inoculants** for soybeans and **Azospirillum** treatments for corn, reducing dependence on chemical fertilizers.
- Her innovations boosted **Brazil's soybean output** from **15 million to 170 million tons**, establishing Brazil as the **world's top soybean exporter**.
- Her methods now cover **over 40 million hectares**, significantly improving **soil health, yield, and environmental sustainability**.
- The award, worth **\$500,000**, recognizes her lifelong contribution to **global food security and eco-friendly farming**.

#### Russia and Ukraine Resume Peace Talks with Landmark Prisoner Exchange Agreement

- On **May 16, 2025**, **Russia and Ukraine** held their **first direct peace talks since 2022** in **Istanbul**, resulting in a mutual agreement to exchange **1,000 prisoners of war** each.
- The **prisoner swap** marks the **largest exchange since the war began** and is seen as a **confidence-building measure**, though no ceasefire was agreed upon.
- Ukraine proposed a **30-day unconditional ceasefire**, but talks stalled after **Russia demanded Ukrainian withdrawal from annexed territories**, which Kyiv rejected.
- The **absence of Presidents Zelenskyy and Putin** drew criticism, with Ukraine and Western nations questioning the **authority of Russia's delegation** to negotiate substantive terms.
- Despite its brevity, the dialogue represents a **tentative step toward de-escalation**, though major differences remain unresolved.

#### Iran and European Powers Reopen Nuclear Talks Amid Sanctions Threats

- On **May 16, 2025**, **Iran and the E3 (UK, France, Germany)** resumed **nuclear negotiations in Istanbul**, reaffirming their commitment to diplomatic engagement on the **2015 nuclear deal**.
- Talks focused on the **status of indirect negotiations with the U.S.** and the potential **lifting of sanctions**, while **concerns over reimposing UN sanctions** under the "snapback" clause intensified.
- Iranian officials warned that activating the snapback mechanism could trigger "**irreversible consequences**" and escalate **nuclear proliferation risks**.
- **U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio** met separately with E3 security advisors in Istanbul, and **President Trump urged Iran** to finalize a **new nuclear agreement**, warning of unspecified repercussions.
- The talks occurred amid rising tensions and reflect the **complex diplomacy** required to prevent further regional instability.

#### Israel Launches Operation Gideon's Chariots in Gaza Amid Escalating Conflict

- On **May 17, 2025**, Israel initiated **Operation Gideon's Chariots**, a major **ground and aerial offensive** in the **Gaza Strip** aimed at **dismantling Hamas's military and administrative infrastructure**.
- The operation, approved on **May 4** by Israel's **Security Cabinet**, targets the **recovery of hostages** taken during the **October 7, 2023 attacks** and aims to **assert control over northern and southern Gaza**.

- The IDF has destroyed over 670 Hamas targets, including tunnels, arms depots, training camps, and communication hubs, with support from air and naval forces.
- The offensive has worsened humanitarian conditions, with over 53,000 deaths reported and critical infrastructure like the Indonesian Hospital inoperable, prompting global calls for ceasefire and aid access.
- The operation's name, "Gideon's Chariots," alludes to the biblical figure Gideon, symbolizing strategic resilience and precision in Israel's continued campaign against terrorism in Gaza.

## APPOINTMENTS

### Anant Ambani Appointed Executive Director of Reliance Industries Ltd.

- On April 25, 2025, Anant Ambani was appointed Executive Director of Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) for a five-year term starting May 1, 2025, marking a key move in the company's succession planning.
- Previously a Non-Executive Director since August 2023, Anant's elevation was approved by RIL's Board of Directors and awaits shareholder approval.
- He holds directorships in major RIL subsidiaries, including Jio Platforms, Reliance Retail Ventures, Reliance New Energy, and Reliance New Solar Energy Ltd.
- A graduate in Business Management from Brown University, he has driven RIL's focus on renewable energy and sustainability, aligned with the company's net-zero 2035 goal.
- He also founded 'Vantara', a 3,000-acre animal welfare center in Jamnagar, awarded the 'Prani Mitra' National Award, reflecting his engagement in philanthropy and conservation.

### Alok Joshi Appointed Chairman of Reconstituted National Security Advisory Board

- The Union Government has reconstituted the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and appointed former R&AW chief Alok Joshi as its new Chairman.
- The reconstitution follows the Pahalgam terror attack, reflecting a renewed emphasis on strategic national security oversight.
- The NSAB, established in 1998, advises the National Security Council (NSC) through multi-disciplinary analyses and policy recommendations.
- Alok Joshi brings extensive intelligence and operational experience to the role, strengthening long-term national security planning.
- The board's restructuring signals a more proactive and comprehensive security strategy in a changing geopolitical environment.

### Greg Abel Named Successor as Warren Buffett Announces Retirement from Berkshire Hathaway

- Warren Buffett announced he will retire as CEO of Berkshire Hathaway at the end of 2025, concluding a 60-year legacy at the helm.
- Greg Abel, currently Vice Chairman handling non-insurance operations, has been named as Buffett's successor.
- Aged 62, Abel is a Canadian executive with over two decades at Berkshire, having led companies like BNSF Railway, Dairy Queen, and Berkshire Hathaway Energy.
- His appointment signals continuity and confidence in Berkshire's leadership and long-term strategy.
- Buffett will continue to serve as Chairman, while Abel takes over daily operations and strategic management.

### Justice Surya Kant Appointed Executive Chairman of NALSA Ahead of CJI Elevation

- On May 11, 2025, President Droupadi Murmu appointed Justice Surya Kant as the Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), effective from May 14, succeeding Justice B.R. Gavai.
- The appointment was made under Section 3(2)(b) of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, with the official notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice on May 9.
- Justice Kant will lead NALSA's mission of providing free legal aid, reinforcing Article 39-A of the Constitution that ensures justice for the socially and economically weaker sections.
- He has a distinguished background as Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee, and is expected to serve as NALSA chief until November 23, 2025, before likely becoming the 53rd Chief Justice of India.
- NALSA, established in 1987, functions with the CJI as Patron-in-Chief, and the second senior-most judge of the Supreme Court as Executive Chairman, to ensure equitable access to justice.

### Anita Anand Becomes Canada's First Hindu Woman Foreign Minister

- On May 13, 2025, Anita Anand was appointed as Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs by Prime Minister Mark Carney, making her the first Hindu woman and Indian-origin woman to hold the post.

- She took her **oath on the Bhagavad Gita**, reflecting her **Hindu faith** and Canada's commitment to **multiculturalism and inclusion**.
- Born in **Nova Scotia** to Indian immigrant parents, Anand had a distinguished career as a **law professor** at the University of Toronto before entering politics.
- Since becoming **MP for Oakville in 2019**, she has served in key ministerial roles including **National Defence, Public Procurement, and Transport**.
- Her appointment symbolizes both **historic representation** and a continued commitment to **diverse leadership in Canadian governance**.

#### Kashish Chaudhary Becomes First Hindu Woman Assistant Commissioner in Balochistan

- On **May 13, 2025**, **Kashish Chaudhary**, age 25, became the **first Hindu woman Assistant Commissioner** in **Balochistan, Pakistan**, after clearing the **BPSC examination**.
- Hailing from **Noshki in Chagai district**, her achievement marks a **historic step for minority and gender representation** in Pakistan's civil services.
- She studied rigorously for **three years**, dedicating nearly **eight hours daily** to prepare for the examination, demonstrating resilience and discipline.
- Chaudhary was congratulated by **Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti**, and she pledged to work for the **upliftment of women and marginalized communities**.
- Her journey serves as a **powerful inspiration** for young women and minorities across Pakistan, highlighting **possibilities through hard work and commitment**.

## SPORTS

#### Virat Kohli Sets IPL Record with Most Fifty-Plus Scores

- On **April 20, 2025**, Virat Kohli scored an unbeaten **73 runs** against Punjab Kings, registering his **67th fifty-plus score**, the highest in **IPL history**, surpassing **David Warner's 66**.
- Kohli's knock came off **54 balls** with **7 fours and 1 six**, leading **RCB to a seven-wicket win** in their chase of 158 runs.
- As of this match, Kohli has scored **8,326 runs in 190 IPL matches**, with an average of **39.27** and a strike rate of **132.26**; his highest score remains **113 not out\***.
- Kohli has consistently performed against **Punjab Kings**, scoring **1,104 runs in 34 innings**, including **1 century and 6 half-centuries**.
- The milestone further solidifies Kohli's status as one of the **most consistent and dominant batters** in IPL history.

#### Oscar Piastri Wins 2025 Saudi Arabian GP, Leads F1 Championship

- On **April 20, 2025**, **Oscar Piastri** won the **Saudi Arabian Grand Prix** in Jeddah, claiming his **third win in five races** and becoming the **first Australian since 2010** to lead the F1 Drivers' Championship.
- Piastri began from **second position**, capitalizing on **Max Verstappen's five-second penalty** for gaining an advantage off-track in Turn 1.
- With a strategic pit stop, Piastri overtook Verstappen and secured a crucial lead, while **Charles Leclerc** finished third for **Ferrari's first podium of the season**.
- The updated championship standings show **Piastri at 99 points**, ahead of **Lando Norris (89)** and **Verstappen (87)**, while **McLaren** leads the Constructors' table with **188 points**.
- The race saw a **safety car deployment** following a crash between **Yuki Tsunoda and Pierre Gasly**, marking the fifth consecutive Saudi GP with a safety car incident.

#### PM Modi Inaugurates 2025 Khelo India Youth Games in Bihar

- On **May 4, 2025**, **PM Narendra Modi** virtually inaugurated the **7th Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG)** in **Patna, Bihar**, marking the state's **first time hosting** the event.
- Over **6,000 athletes** from **36 states/UTs** are competing in **27 medal sports** and **one demonstration event**, including **new entries like esports and sepaktakraw**.
- Events are held across **Patna, Rajgir, Gaya, Bhagalpur, Begusarai, and New Delhi**, promoting **regional inclusivity**.
- Modi praised **14-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi**, an IPL cricketer from Bihar, as an inspiration, and emphasized promoting **traditional sports like Gatka and Mallakhamb**.
- The mascot "**Gajasimha**" and theme "**Khel ke rang, Bihar ke sang**" reflect strength and local pride in youth athletics.

#### Neeraj Chopra Breaks 90m Barrier, Finishes Second at Doha Diamond League 2025

- On **May 16, 2025**, **Neeraj Chopra** achieved a career milestone by recording a **personal best throw of 90.23 meters** at the **Doha Diamond League**, breaching the **prestigious 90-meter mark** for the first time.



- With this performance, Chopra became the **25th athlete globally** and the **third Asian** to cross the 90-meter threshold in **men's javelin throw** history.
- Despite leading for most of the event, Chopra **finished second**, as **Germany's Julian Weber** threw **91.06 meters** in the final round to clinch the top spot.
- Chopra's throw sequence was: **88.44m, foul, 90.23m, 80.56m, and foul**, with his third throw marking the historic achievement.
- The result reflects Chopra's **consistent progression** in global athletics and reinforces his position among the **world's elite javelin throwers**.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### ISRO Achieves Second Autonomous Docking Under SpaDeX Mission

- On April 20, 2025, ISRO successfully completed the **second autonomous docking** of its SpaDeX satellites, **SDX-01 and SDX-02**, in low Earth orbit, marking a major milestone in India's space technology.
- The mission was launched on **December 30, 2024**, via **PSLV-C60**, with the objective of demonstrating autonomous **rendezvous and docking capabilities** using two 220 kg satellites.
- The **first docking** took place on January 16, 2025, followed by undocking on March 13, while the second docking demonstrated full autonomy from a **15-meter distance**, improving over the earlier semi-manual operation.
- On April 21, ISRO successfully demonstrated **inter-satellite power transfer**, operating a heater in one satellite using power from the other for approximately **four minutes**.
- This mission plays a vital role in developing technologies for future projects like the **Bharatiya Antariksha Station** and **Gaganyaan**, enabling advancements in **on-orbit servicing and long-duration space missions**.

### India to Launch Bharatiya Antariksh Station by 2035: ISRO Chairman Announces Roadmap

- On **March 26, 2025**, ISRO Chairman **Dr. V. Narayanan** announced that India will establish its own **space station**, named **Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS)**, by **2035**, aligning with India's long-term space exploration goals.
- The **first module, BAS-1**, will be launched in **2028** using the **LVM3 rocket**, with further modules launched via the **Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV)**.
- The station will have a total mass of **52 tonnes** and will orbit in **Low Earth Orbit** at an altitude of **400–450 km** with an inclination of **51.6°**, similar to the **ISS**.
- It will support a **crew of 3–4 astronauts** for missions ranging from **3 to 6 months**, facilitating long-duration space operations.
- The announcement was made during the **Amrita Innovation and Research Awards** at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, reflecting India's commitment to space leadership, including a future **crewed lunar mission by 2040**.

### Government Selects Sarvam AI to Build India's First Indigenous Large Language Model

- The **Government of India** has selected **Bengaluru-based start-up Sarvam AI** to develop the country's **first homegrown large language model (LLM)** under the **₹10,372 crore IndiaAI Mission**.
- Sarvam AI will be granted access to **4,000 high-end GPUs** for six months to build the LLM from scratch, focusing on **reasoning, voice-based tasks, and fluency in Indian languages**.
- The start-up plans to roll out **three model variants: Sarvam-Large** for advanced reasoning, **Sarvam-Small** for real-time applications, and **Sarvam-Edge** for on-device tasks.
- This marks a major push towards **technological sovereignty** and **AI capability** in India's digital infrastructure.
- The initiative aligns with the broader objective of creating **AI systems tailored to India's linguistic and socio-cultural context**.

### India Unveils First Genome-Edited Rice Varieties for Sustainable Agriculture

- On **May 4, 2025**, Union Agriculture Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** announced India's first **genome-edited rice varieties, DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) and Pusa DST Rice 1**, developed using **CRISPR-Cas SDN-1** technology.
- These varieties are **non-GMO**, yield **20–30% more**, are **drought and salinity tolerant**, and reduce **methane emissions and irrigation needs**.
- Developed by **ICAR institutes**, they underwent **extensive trials** across agro-climatic zones and are expected to reach **farmers in 4–5 years**.
- Their cultivation on **5 million hectares** is projected to save **7,500 million cubic meters** of water and reduce **greenhouse emissions** by **32,000 tonnes**.
- The varieties support India's goals for **climate-resilient, sustainable agriculture** without the regulatory hurdles of GMOs.

### India's Gaganyaan Human Spaceflight Mission Enters Final Phase, Crewed Launch Slated for 2027



- India's **Gaganyaan mission** has entered its **final phase**, with the **first crewed spaceflight** scheduled for the **first quarter of 2027**, aiming to make India the **fourth nation** to independently send humans into space.
- The mission will send **2–3 astronauts** into **low Earth orbit (~400 km)** for **three days**, using a **human-rated LVM3 launch vehicle** and a **safety-engineered crew module**.
- ISRO has completed key milestones like the **TV-D1 abort test** and an **uncrewed abort mission**, with **TV-D2** and **uncrewed orbital flights** planned through 2025–2026 for system validation.
- **Astronaut candidates** are undergoing **intensive training**, including simulations, physical conditioning, and technical preparation to ensure mission readiness.
- With an **increased budget of ₹20,193 crore (\$2.32 billion)**, the program plans **two crewed and six uncrewed missions by 2028**, and also supports future goals like the **Bharatiya Antariksh Station (2035)** and a **crewed Moon mission (2040)**.

#### CERN Scientists Successfully Transmute Lead into Gold at the LHC

- In **May 2025**, CERN's **ALICE experiment** at the **Large Hadron Collider (LHC)** successfully transmuted **lead into gold** through high-energy near-miss nuclear interactions.
- The process, known as **electromagnetic dissociation**, occurred when **lead nuclei traveling at 99.999993% the speed of light** lost three protons, forming **gold nuclei**.
- Scientists used **Zero Degree Calorimeters (ZDCs)** to detect and quantify these rare transmutation events with high precision.
- During the LHC's **second run**, about **86 billion gold nuclei** (29 picograms) were produced, with rates rising to **89,000 gold nuclei per second** in the third run due to increased energy.
- However, the **gold nuclei were extremely unstable**, surviving only fractions of a second before decaying or colliding, underscoring the experiment's scientific—rather than commercial—value.

#### Soviet Spacecraft Kosmos 482 Re-enters Earth's Atmosphere After 53 Years

- On **May 10, 2025**, **Kosmos 482**, a failed 1972 Soviet **Venus mission**, re-entered Earth's atmosphere after remaining in **low Earth orbit for 53 years**.
- The spacecraft was launched on **March 31, 1972**, but a **rocket malfunction** left it stranded in orbit instead of sending it toward Venus.
- It re-entered over the **Indian Ocean near Jakarta** at **2:24 a.m. EDT**, with no reported damage or injuries from the descent.
- The **lander module**, weighing around **495 kg**, was built to withstand extreme conditions and may have survived re-entry due to its **reinforced heat shield**.
- The event highlights growing **concerns over space debris**, underscoring the need for enhanced **orbital monitoring and debris mitigation efforts**.

#### India to Launch EOS-09 Earth Observation Satellite to Strengthen Surveillance and Environmental Monitoring

- On **May 18, 2025**, India will launch **EOS-09 (RISAT-1B)** aboard **PSLV-C61** from **Sriharikota**, enhancing capabilities in **border surveillance, disaster response, and environmental monitoring**.
- The **1,710 kg satellite** will be placed in a **sun-synchronous orbit at 529 km altitude** and equipped with **C-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** for **high-resolution, all-weather, day-and-night imaging**.
- Strategically, it will bolster **real-time border monitoring**, support **anti-infiltration operations**, and complement satellites like **RISAT-2B, Resourcesat, and Cartosat**.
- Civil applications include **agricultural monitoring, disaster assessment, environmental tracking, and urban planning**, offering valuable data for national development.
- A **Parliamentary Standing Committee** will witness the launch, underscoring the mission's **national and technological significance**.

#### India Successfully Tests 'Bhargavastra' Counter-Drone Defence System

- On **May 13, 2025**, India test-fired **Bhargavastra**, a **dual-layer indigenous counter-drone system**, at the **Seaward Firing Range in Odisha**.
- Developed by **Solar Defence and Aerospace Ltd.**, it combines **unguided micro-rockets** and **guided micro-missiles** to neutralize **drone swarms up to 2.5 km away**.
- The system features **advanced radar, infrared sensors, and electro-optical tracking**, capable of detecting drones with **extremely small radar signatures**.
- **AI integration** enables **autonomous operation**, improving real-time threat assessment and precision targeting in **complex environments**.
- Deployed on a **mobile 4x4 platform**, Bhargavastra is suited for **high-altitude terrains**, enhancing India's **tactical air defence readiness**.

### NASA's GRAIL Mission Maps Lunar Gravity, Unveils Moon's Inner Secrets

- NASA's **GRAIL mission** (2011–2012), using twin spacecraft **Ebb and Flow**, mapped the **Moon's gravitational field** with unmatched accuracy, uncovering major insights into the **Moon's internal structure**.
- The mission revealed that the **lunar crust is thinner and more fractured** than previously believed, suggesting a **history of intense bombardment and volcanic dike intrusions**.
- Ebb and Flow orbited the Moon from **January to December 2012**, with the science phase active from **March 7 to May 29**, and ended with a **planned impact on December 17, 2012**.
- The mission generated the **highest-resolution gravity map of any celestial body**, enhancing understanding of the **Moon's crust, mantle, and core**.
- The **MoonKAM outreach initiative**, led by **Dr. Sally Ride**, engaged **middle school students**, allowing them to request and analyze images of the **lunar surface**, promoting STEM education.

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS

### Rosie Thomas' *The Kashmir Shawl* Gains Renewed Recognition for Its Emotional Depth and Cultural Portrait of Kashmir

- *The Kashmir Shawl*, a **dual-timeline novel** by Rosie Thomas, intertwines the emotional journeys of a granddaughter in present-day Wales and her grandmother during **1940s colonial Kashmir**, triggered by the discovery of an antique shawl.
- The novel uses **Kashmir, Wales, and Ladakh** as evocative backdrops to explore **themes of identity, memory, loss, and transformation** across generations.
- The story's **renewed popularity in 2025** was sparked by its rediscovery at a second-hand book sale by a Kashmiri reader, reigniting interest in its **portrayal of Kashmiri culture and history**.
- While the novel offers **rich visual and emotional appeal**, critics note that **local Kashmiri characters lack depth**, and the **socio-political context** is lightly addressed.

### National Archives to Launch Book on Ramanujan's Life and Legacy on April 30, 2025

- The **National Archives of India**, in collaboration with **Vani Prakashan**, will launch *Ramanujan: Journey of a Great Mathematician* on **April 30, 2025**, authored by **Arun Singhal** and **Devendra Kumar Sharma**.
- The book offers an in-depth exploration of **Srinivasa Ramanujan's life**, highlighting his mathematical brilliance despite limited formal education and personal hardships.
- It is based on **rare documents and personal letters**, providing unique insights into Ramanujan's **thought process, challenges, and legacy** in the global mathematical community.
- The launch also celebrates India's **archival heritage**, positioning the National Archives as a key contributor in preserving the stories of India's intellectual icons.
- Through this work, the authors aim to rekindle public appreciation for **Ramanujan's lasting impact** on mathematics and the cultural and historical contexts that influenced his journey.

### Himanshu Roy's New Book Traces the Evolution of India's Prime Minister's Office

- *PMO: Prime Minister's Office Through the Years* by **Himanshu Roy**, released on **April 15, 2025**, provides a comprehensive analysis of the **institutional evolution and growing power of the PMO** since India's independence.
- The book, published by **Rupa Publications**, is a **192-page hardback** that explores how the PMO transitioned from a secretariat to the **central nerve centre of India's governance and policy execution**.
- It examines the **administrative structure, political dynamics, and influence** of the PMO under key leaders like **Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh, and Narendra Modi**.
- The book responds to rising public discourse around the **centralization of power** and sheds light on the PMO's relationship with ministries and the bureaucracy.
- Aimed at **civil services aspirants, scholars, and governance enthusiasts**, the book offers **rare insights and historical depth**, making it a significant addition to Indian political literature.

### Vice-President Unveils Bandaru Dattatraya's Autobiography 'Janta Ki Kahani' Highlighting a Life of Service

- On **May 9, 2025**, Vice-President **Jagdeep Dhankhar** released *'Janta Ki Kahani – Meri Aatamkatha'*, the autobiography of **Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatraya**, at **Maharashtra Sadan, Delhi**.
- The book chronicles Dattatraya's **personal, political, and social journey**, reflecting his commitment to **public service**, including roles as **Union Minister, MP from Secunderabad, and Governor**.
- The event honored his **values of simplicity, dedication, and humility**, and included a tribute to the **victims of the Pahalgam terror attack** through a two-minute silence.
- Dignitaries including the **Vice-President, Union Minister Manohar Lal**, and the **Haryana Chief Minister** praised the book as a **source of inspiration** and a **document of lived political experience**.

- Dattatraya credited his mother **Eshwaramma ji** for inspiring his **lifelong devotion to social work**, including slum upliftment and disaster relief initiatives.

#### Nagaland Releases PMAY-U Coffee Table Book Showcasing Urban Housing Success Stories

- On **May 16, 2025**, the **Government of Nagaland** launched a Coffee Table Book titled *"Transforming Lives: A Glance of PMAY (Urban) Mission in Nagaland"* in **Kohima**, highlighting the success of the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U)**.
- The book was released by **Advisor Zhaleo Rio** at a ceremony held at **Hotel Vivor**, and chaired by **Kekhrievor Kevichusa**, with performances and addresses celebrating the mission's urban impact.
- The publication features **beneficiary stories, visual documentation, and implementation narratives** demonstrating how the scheme has improved **housing access and urban development** across the state.
- PMAY-U, launched on **June 25, 2015**, aims to ensure **"Housing for All" in urban areas by 2022** and includes components like **CLSS, AHP, BLC, and slum redevelopment**.
- In Nagaland, the scheme has benefited **thousands**, especially women, enhanced **employment in construction**, and improved **basic amenities and living standards** for urban poor.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

#### World Press Freedom Day 2025 Highlights AI's Impact on Journalism

- Celebrated on **May 3**, **World Press Freedom Day 2025** focused on the theme: **"Reporting in the Brave New World – The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Press Freedom and the Media."**
- The day commemorates the **1991 Windhoek Declaration** and recognizes the role of a **free and pluralistic press**.
- Discussions addressed **AI's transformative effects on content creation, misinformation, ethics, and media independence**.
- A **UNESCO event** is scheduled for **May 7 in Brussels**, with plenary sessions and the **Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize** ceremony.
- The 2024 statistics revealed a grim trend: **124 journalists killed**, the **highest in over three decades**, mostly in **conflict zones**, spotlighting the continued risks faced by the press.

#### Tamil Nadu Declares May 5 as 'Traders' Day' to Honor Economic Contributors

- On **May 5, 2025**, **Chief Minister M.K. Stalin** announced that **May 5** will be officially observed as **'Traders' Day'** in **Tamil Nadu**, recognizing the trading community's contribution to the state's economy.
- The announcement was made during the **42nd Traders' Day conference** held in **Madhuranthakam**, fulfilling a long-standing demand of **traders' associations**.
- **Financial assistance** for permanent members of the **Traders Welfare Board** will be increased from **₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh**, and **free membership registration** will be extended by **six months**.
- A **self-assessment method** will ease licensing for **food businesses under 500 sq ft**, streamlining regulatory compliance.
- A **grievance redressal panel** will be formed within the **Greater Chennai Corporation** and **town panchayats** to address commercial issues effectively.

#### National Civil Service Day 2025 Celebrates Administrative Excellence and Legacy of Public Service

- **National Civil Service Day 2025** was observed on **April 21**, commemorating **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's 1947** address that hailed civil servants as the **"steel frame of India."**
- The day featured **ceremonies and awards** in New Delhi and across the country, recognising **innovative and impactful governance** by civil servants and districts.
- The celebration also recalled historical milestones like the **Indian Civil Service Act of 1861** and the **legacy of Charles Cornwallis**, regarded as the **Father of the Indian Civil Service**.
- India's civil service system, inspired by **China's Han Dynasty model**, evolved into a **merit-based structure** refined through the **UPSC Civil Services Examination**.
- The 2025 observance served to **inspire youth, encourage reforms, and reaffirm the ethical values** of transparency, service, and accountability in governance.

#### Earth Day 2025 Celebrated Globally with the Theme 'Our Power, Our Planet'

- **World Earth Day 2025** was observed on **April 22**, reaffirming global commitment to **environmental awareness and sustainable living** through activities and advocacy in 192 countries.
- The day traces its origin to **April 22, 1970**, initiated by **Senator Gaylord Nelson** in response to environmental crises like the **1969 Santa Barbara oil spill**, eventually leading to the formation of the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**.



- The **2025 theme**, “**Our Power, Our Planet**,” highlights the **collective responsibility** of individuals, communities, and governments in promoting **renewable energy, sustainability, and climate action**.
- Earth Day aims to **combat climate change**, encourage **eco-friendly practices**, and mobilize **public participation** through clean-up drives, tree planting, and environmental workshops.
- It serves as a **global platform** to influence policy, foster environmental stewardship, and unite citizens in addressing urgent ecological challenges.

#### International Labour Day 2025 Marks Global Solidarity, Reforms, and Rights of Workers

- **International Labour Day 2025** was observed globally on **May 1**, honoring workers’ contributions while spotlighting evolving labour rights amidst challenges like **automation and informal employment**.
- The day commemorates the **1886 Haymarket Affair in Chicago**, which catalyzed global advocacy for the **eight-hour workday** and laid the foundation for May 1 as **International Workers’ Day**, officially declared in **1889**.
- In India, Labour Day was first celebrated in **1923 in Chennai** by **Singaravelu Chettiar**, and it now coincides with **Maharashtra and Gujarat Day**, marking state formation in 1960.
- India’s recent **labour reforms** are structured under **four major labour codes** (Wages, Industrial Relations, Social Security, and Occupational Safety), aligned with **constitutional protections** like **Articles 23, 24, 39, 41, and 43**.
- Labour Day 2025 emphasized **workers’ dignity, legal rights, and inclusive policies**, with initiatives like **e-Shram, PM-SYM, and MGNREGA** reinforcing social protection amid modern workplace disruptions.

#### World Red Cross Day 2025 Observed Globally with Theme “Keeping Humanity Alive”

- **World Red Cross Day 2025** was observed on **May 8** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Henry Dunant**, founder of the Red Cross Movement and the first **Nobel Peace Prize laureate**.
- The **2025 theme**, “**Keeping Humanity Alive**,” recognized the **selfless humanitarian efforts** of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers in **conflict zones, disaster relief, and health services**.
- First observed in **1948**, the day honors Dunant’s legacy, whose experience at the **Battle of Solferino (1859)** led to the creation of the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** in 1863.
- Key organizations under the movement include the **ICRC, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)**, and **National Societies in 192 countries**, including the **Indian Red Cross Society**.
- Celebrations featured **blood donation camps, awareness rallies, and volunteer recognition**, promoting values of **neutrality, compassion, and humanitarian service** worldwide.

#### National Anti-Terrorism Day 2025 Reaffirms India’s Commitment to Peace and Unity

- **National Anti-Terrorism Day** was observed on **May 21, 2025**, marking the **34th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi**, who was assassinated in **1991 by LTTE militants** in Tamil Nadu.
- The day serves to **raise awareness about the impact of terrorism**, promote **non-violence, unity, and national integration**, and honor **victims of terrorist attacks** across India.
- Initiated by the **V.P. Singh government** in 1991, the observance includes **pledges, debates, peace marches, and awareness drives** by public institutions, NGOs, and educational bodies.
- Citizens participate by taking the **Anti-Terrorism Day Pledge**, reaffirming India’s tradition of **tolerance, harmony, and opposition to all forms of violence and extremism**.
- The day emphasizes India’s **resolve against terrorism**, discourages radical ideologies, and encourages the **youth to uphold the values of peace and constitutional integrity**.

## OBITUARIES

#### Dr. K. Kasturirangan, Visionary Scientist and Education Reformer, Passes Away at 84

- On **April 25, 2025**, **Dr. K. Kasturirangan**, former **ISRO Chairman** and architect of **NEP 2020**, passed away in **Bengaluru** at the age of **84**, leaving behind a transformative legacy in science and education.
- As **ISRO Chairman (1994–2003)**, he led the **PSLV’s operationalization, GSLV’s development**, and expansion of the **remote sensing satellite program**, including **INSAT, IRS, and Astrosat**.
- He chaired the **NEP 2020 drafting committee**, emphasizing **multidisciplinary education**, flexible curricula, and integration of **Indian knowledge systems** with global practices.
- He served in various policy and academic roles, including as **Member of Parliament, Planning Commission, NIAS Director, and Chancellor of JNU and NIIT University**.
- Honored with **Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan**, he authored over **200 scientific papers**, shaping India’s space journey and education policy for future generations.



## REPORT & RANKINGS

### IISc Tops Among Indian Institutions in Times Higher Education Asia Rankings 2025

- The **Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2025**, released on **April 23**, assessed **853 universities** across **35 countries**, with **IISc Bengaluru** securing **38th place**, the highest for any Indian institution.
- Despite slipping from **32nd in 2024**, IISc remains the **only Indian university in the top 100**, excelling in **research, teaching, and industry engagement**.
- Other Indian entries include **Anna University (111th)**, **IIT Indore (131st)**, and **Mahatma Gandhi University (140th)**, all of which saw minor drops from their previous rankings.
- **China dominated** the rankings with **five universities in the top 10**, including **Tsinghua** and **Peking University** at the top two positions.
- **Singapore's National University** and **Nanyang Technological University** followed in **third and fourth place**, affirming regional leadership in higher education.

### UNESCO Adds 16 New Global Geoparks in 2025, Expanding Network to 229 Sites

- On **April 17, 2025**, UNESCO designated **16 new Global Geoparks**, bringing the total to **229 across 50 countries**, marking the **10th anniversary** of the Global Geoparks program.
- New entries include the **first-ever geoparks** in **North Korea (Mt. Paektu)** and **Saudi Arabia (North Riyadh and Salma)**, expanding the network's **geographical diversity**.
- Other notable additions include **Kanbula and Yunyang (China)**, **Tungurahua and Napo Sumaco (Ecuador)**, and **Murge (Italy)**, each recognized for **geological significance and cultural value**.
- Sites such as **The Fjord Coast (Norway)**, **Costa Quebrada (Spain)**, and **Arran (UK)** highlight varied landscapes like **fjords, karst formations, and coastal erosion zones**.
- The Geoparks initiative promotes **sustainable development, geo-education, and geotourism**, fostering local and global appreciation for **earth sciences and natural heritage**.

### India Rises to Rank 130 in UNDP's 2025 Human Development Index

- On **May 6, 2025**, the UNDP released its **Human Development Report** titled *"A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI"*, revealing that **India climbed to rank 130** out of 193 countries.
- **India's HDI score** rose from **0.676 in 2022 to 0.685 in 2023**, reflecting improvements in **healthcare, education, and income**, nearing the **high development threshold** of 0.700.
- **Life expectancy** reached **72 years**, the highest in India's HDI history, while **gender inequality ranking** improved from **108 to 102**, showing gains in women's empowerment.
- The report warns of an emerging **AI-driven inequality gap**, as countries unable to adopt AI technology risk being left behind in human development progress.
- **Switzerland, Norway, and Iceland** topped the index, while **South Sudan, Somalia, and the Central African Republic** remained at the bottom, highlighting global disparities.

### UN Report Reveals Record High in Global Hunger, Driven by Conflict, Climate, and Economic Shocks

- On **May 16, 2025**, the UN's **2025 Global Report on Food Crises** reported that **295 million people** in **53 countries** faced **acute food insecurity** in 2024—the **highest on record** and the **sixth consecutive year of deterioration**.
- Key drivers include **armed conflict** (impacting 140 million), **climate extremes** like droughts and floods (affecting 96 million), and **economic shocks**, including inflation and currency collapses (pushing 59.4 million into crisis).
- **Gaza and Sudan** were most severely impacted, with **1.9 million people** facing **"catastrophic" hunger (IPC Phase 5)** and **famine declared in parts of Sudan**.
- **38 million children under five** and **10.9 million pregnant and breastfeeding women** were reported to be **acutely malnourished**, with many needing **urgent intervention**.
- Funding gaps remain critical: only **46% of the \$49.6 billion** in humanitarian aid was raised, with **USAID cutting over 80%** of its food assistance programs.

### UN Releases World Social Report 2025 Highlighting Rising Global Insecurity and Inequality

- On **April 24, 2025**, UN DESA, in collaboration with UNU-WIDER, released the **World Social Report 2025**, warning of deepening **economic insecurity, inequality, and institutional distrust** worldwide.
- Over **2.8 billion people** live on **\$2.15–\$6.85/day**, and the **top 1%** now control more than **95% of global wealth**, reflecting widening income inequality in **two-thirds of all countries**.
- Over **50% of the global population** lacks trust in their national governments, exacerbated by **misinformation**, while **informal and insecure employment** dominates in **Africa and South Asia**.

- In **2024**, one in **five people** faced **climate disasters**, and one in **seven experienced conflict**, reversing decades of **development progress**.
- The report advocates a new **global policy consensus** built on **equity, economic security, and solidarity**, ahead of the **Second World Summit for Social Development** in Doha, Qatar (Nov 4–6, 2025).

#### India Ranks 4th in Global Optimism in Ipsos April 2025 Survey

- In the **April 2025 wave** of the Ipsos “What Worries the World” survey, **India retained the 4th spot globally** in citizen optimism, with **62% believing** the country is headed in the right direction.
- This positive sentiment places India just behind **Singapore (85%), Malaysia (70%), and Indonesia (67%)**, all leading the global optimism index.
- The survey, conducted across **29 countries**, highlights a trend of **greater optimism in Global South nations**, especially in the **Asia-Pacific region**.
- In contrast, many Western countries exhibited **lower public confidence**, reflecting regional disparities in economic and social sentiment.
- India’s sustained optimism is attributed to **growth expectations, policy momentum, and tech-driven development**.

#### India Improves to 151st in 2025 World Press Freedom Index

- In the **2025 World Press Freedom Index**, India **rose eight positions** to rank **151 out of 180 countries**, up from **159 in 2024**, with a **global score of 32.96**, as per **Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**.
- The improvement is attributed to **marginal enhancements in India’s media environment** and worsening conditions in several other countries, though key concerns persist.
- India maintains a **large media ecosystem** with over **900 TV channels** and **140,000 publications**, but faces issues such as **media ownership concentration, legal intimidation, and political influence**.
- The RSF report highlights increasing **economic fragility** and **legal suppression of dissenting voices** as ongoing threats to **independent journalism** in India.
- Globally, **Norway, Estonia, and the Netherlands** top the index, while **Eritrea, North Korea, and China** occupy the bottom ranks due to **severe restrictions on press freedom**.

## SUMMIT’S AND MOU’S

#### JP Nadda Launches 'Zero Measles-Rubella' Campaign to Eliminate Diseases by 2026

- On **April 24, 2025**, Union Health Minister **JP Nadda** launched the **National 'Zero Measles-Rubella' Elimination Campaign 2025–26**, coinciding with **World Immunization Week**.
- The campaign aims to achieve **100% immunization coverage** with **two doses of the MR vaccine** and eliminate **measles and rubella** in India by **2026**.
- As of 2025, **93.7%** of children have received the first dose, and **92.2%** have received the second dose of the MR vaccine.
- Between **January and March 2025**, **332 districts reported zero measles cases**, while **487 districts reported zero rubella cases**, indicating significant progress.
- In **2024**, India recorded a **73% decline in measles** and a **17% drop in rubella cases** compared to 2023, strengthening prospects for disease elimination.

#### Government Launches AI Kiran to Empower Women in Artificial Intelligence

- On **April 21, 2025**, the Government of India launched the **AI Kiran** initiative in collaboration with **Verix** and **INK Women**, aiming to support over **250 women leaders** in AI across diverse sectors.
- The program addresses the **gender gap** in AI, where women hold only **33% of junior** and **19% of senior GenAI roles**, offering **mentorship, learning modules**, and branding support.
- Recognitions under the initiative are **digitally verified** through **Verix’s blockchain platform**, ensuring global visibility and credibility.
- Hosted on the **Manthan Platform**, AI Kiran plans to reach **one million women** in AI through summits, scholarships, and industry-academic partnerships.
- A **\$3 million fundraising goal** has been set to support programs, events, and international outreach showcasing Indian women in AI.

#### United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF20): India Highlights Forest Conservation Achievements

- The 20th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF20) was held from May 5 to 9, 2025, at the UN Headquarters in New York to review progress on the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030.

- India reported that forest and tree cover has increased to 25.17% of its geographical area, with key efforts including afforestation of over 1.55 lakh hectares under the Green India Mission and plantation of 1.4 billion seedlings under the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign
- India also reported a 7.86% increase in mangrove cover and urged global adoption of outcomes from the 2023 Dehradun Country-Led Initiative on forest fire management and certification.
- India invited UN member states to join the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) to strengthen conservation of seven big cat species.
- Additionally, India shared findings from pilot studies in Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, and tiger reserves that quantified ecosystem services like carbon sequestration and water provisioning using SESA and MEA frameworks.

## ECONOMY

### Centre Raises Sugarcane FRP by 4.41% to ₹355/Quintal for 2025-26

- On **April 30, 2025**, the **Union Cabinet** approved a **4.41% hike** in the **Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)** for sugarcane, increasing it to **₹355 per quintal** for the **2025-26 season**, starting **October 2025**.
- The revised FRP is based on a **10.25% sugar recovery rate**, with **₹3.46/quintal** added or deducted for every **0.1% variation** above or below this benchmark.
- For **recovery rates below 9.5%**, farmers will still receive a **minimum of ₹329.05/quintal**, ensuring income protection.
- With an **estimated production cost of ₹173/quintal**, the new FRP provides a **105.2% return**, benefitting **50 million farmers** and **5 lakh workers** in the sugar sector.
- While farmer income is expected to rise, **sugar mills** have expressed concern over **increased input costs**, prompting demands for revising the **minimum selling price of sugar** and **ethanol procurement rates**.

### India Sees Sharp Decline in Poverty Between 2011 and 2023

- According to the **World Bank**, **extreme poverty** in India fell from **16.2% in 2011-12** to just **2.3% in 2022-23**, with significant drops in both **rural (18.4% to 2.8%)** and **urban areas (10.7% to 1.1)**
- The **overall poverty rate**, as per **NCAER**, decreased from **21.2% in 2011-12** to **8.5% in 2022-24**, reflecting sustained socio-economic progress.
- Using the World Bank's **\$3.65/day threshold**, poverty dropped from **61.8% to 28.1%**, lifting nearly **378 million people** out of poverty.
- The **rural-urban poverty gap** narrowed significantly from **7.7 percentage points to 1.7**, indicating more balanced development.
- Factors driving this decline include **economic growth**, **targeted welfare programs**, and better access to **healthcare, education, and basic services**, along with improvements in **multidimensional poverty** metrics.

### CSR Spending in India Rises 16% in FY24, Reaches ₹17,967 Crore

- In **FY24**, India's listed companies spent **₹17,967 crore** on **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, a **16% increase** from **₹15,524 crore in FY23**, driven by an **18% rise in net profits** over the last three years.
- HDFC Bank** topped the list with a CSR spend of **₹945.31 crore**, followed by **Reliance Industries (₹900 crore)**, **TCS (₹827 crore)**, and **ONGC (₹634.57 crore)**; the **top 10 companies** contributed **34%** of total CSR spending.
- Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)** also saw a **19% rise**, spending **₹3,717 crore**, up from **₹3,136 crore** the previous year.
- Education (₹1,104 crore)** and **healthcare (₹720 crore)** were the leading sectors, while **environmental sustainability** recorded the **highest growth at 54%** year-on-year.
- CSR compliance remained strong**, with **98% of 1,394 eligible companies** fulfilling their obligations, and **49% exceeding** the mandatory **2% spending requirement** under Indian law.

### India Recalls IMF Executive Director K.V. Subramanian Six Months Ahead of Term

- On **April 30, 2025**, the **Indian government** prematurely recalled **Dr. Krishnamurthy V. Subramanian** from his post as **Executive Director at the IMF**, cutting short his **three-year term** that began in **November 2022**.
- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet** approved the **termination** of his services with immediate effect, ending his tenure **six months early**.
- Subramanian represented **India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan** at the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.
- No official reason was given, but reports suggest concerns over **alleged impropriety** related to the **promotion of his book India @ 100** and **violations of internal IMF protocols**.
- The unexpected recall marks a **rare diplomatic reshuffle**, raising questions about **protocol adherence** and **India's representation** in key global financial institutions.

### India to Become World's 4th Largest Economy in 2025: IMF Projection



- According to the **IMF**, **India's nominal GDP** is projected to reach **\$4.187 trillion** in **2025**, overtaking **Japan's \$4.186 trillion**, making India the **4th largest economy globally**, after the **U.S., China, and Germany**.
- India's **real GDP growth** is forecasted at **6.2% in 2025**, driven by **strong private consumption**, especially in **rural areas**, reaffirming its position as the **fastest-growing major economy**.
- The **IMF forecasts** that India will surpass **Germany by 2028**, ascending to the position of the **third-largest economy** in the world.
- While India's total GDP is rising, **per capita income** remains relatively **low**, reflecting continuing challenges in **income inequality and living standards**.
- This milestone highlights **India's growing global economic influence** and its central role in shaping the **future of the global economy**.

#### **Government Revamps Labour Survey to Include Rural Data, Releases First Monthly Bulletin**

- On **May 15, 2025**, the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** released the first **monthly bulletin** under the revamped **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**, marking a shift to **more frequent and inclusive employment data reporting**.
- The reform extends **quarterly estimates to rural areas** for the first time, aiming to provide **granular and timely labour data** essential for policymaking in job creation, skill development, and social protection.
- The new **rotational panel sampling design** allows households to be surveyed **four times**, with the **April 2025 sample** covering **89,434 households** and **380,838 individuals**.
- Key findings show a **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** of **55.6%**, **Worker Population Ratio (WPR)** of **52.8%**, and an **Unemployment Rate** of **5.1%**, with **urban youth unemployment** significantly higher at **13.8%**.
- **Rural female LFPR stood at 38.2%**, highlighting gendered labour gaps, while the expanded rural inclusion offers a **comprehensive national snapshot** of India's dynamic labour market.

#### **UN Lowers India's 2025 GDP Growth Forecast to 6.3% Amid Global Economic Slowdown**

- On **May 16, 2025**, the **United Nations** revised India's **GDP growth projection** for 2025 from **6.6% to 6.3%**, citing **global economic headwinds**, though India remains among the **fastest-growing major economies**.
- The revised estimate follows a **7.1% growth rate in 2024**, with **inflation projected to ease from 4.9% in 2024 to 4.3% in 2025**, staying within the **RBI's target range**.
- Responding to falling inflation, the **RBI began a monetary easing cycle in February 2025**, after holding the **policy rate at 6.5% since February 2023**.
- While **unemployment remains stable**, the report highlights **persistent gender disparities** in workforce participation, signaling the need for **inclusive employment policies**.
- Globally, GDP growth is projected to slow to **2.4% in 2025** from **2.9% in 2024**, impacting both **advanced and developing economies** alike.

#### **India and New Zealand Resume FTA Talks After a Decade, First Round Concludes Successfully**

- On **May 9, 2025**, India and New Zealand concluded the **first round of Free Trade Agreement negotiations** in New Delhi, marking a major breakthrough after talks resumed in March following a **10-year hiatus**.
- Discussions were held from **May 5-9, 2025**, focusing on **trade in goods, services, and economic cooperation**, building upon earlier virtual sessions.
- Bilateral trade surged to **USD 1.3 billion in FY 2024-25**, registering a **48.6% growth**, indicating rising commercial engagement.
- Key hurdles include **tariff disparities**—with New Zealand's average import tariff at **2.3%** versus India's **17.8%**—and **market access to Indian dairy**, a traditionally protected sector.
- Both sides aim to **conclude the FTA by the end of 2025**, with the **next negotiation round scheduled for July 2025**.