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IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

Why the Chicken's Neck Is a Perennial Security Challenge

In the News: The Siliguri Corridor, commonly referred to as the "Chicken's Neck," has reemerged as a focal point in India's national security discourse. Recent developments, including Bangladesh's growing ties with China and the revival of the Lalmonirhat airbase near the Indian border, have heightened concerns over the corridor's vulnerability. These events underscore the strategic significance of this narrow land strip that connects mainland India to its northeastern states.

What Is the Siliguri Corridor?

- **Geographical Overview:** The Siliguri Corridor is a slender stretch of land in West Bengal, approximately 20–22 kilometers wide at its narrowest point. It serves as the sole terrestrial link between India's northeastern states—collectively known as the "Seven Sisters"—and the rest of the country.
- **Strategic Importance:** This corridor is flanked by Nepal to the west, Bhutan to the north, and Bangladesh to the south. Its geographical position makes it a critical conduit for military logistics, trade, and civilian movement.

Why Is It a Security Challenge?

- **Geopolitical Vulnerability:** The corridor's narrowness makes it susceptible to potential blockades or **disruptions**, which could isolate the northeastern states from the rest of India.
- **External Threats:** China's expanding influence in the region, exemplified by its support for reviving **Bangladesh's** Lalmonirhat airbase near the corridor, raises strategic concerns. Such developments could enable surveillance or military operations close to the corridor.
- **Internal Security Issues:** The area has witnessed activities like smuggling, infiltration, and radicalization, necessitating enhanced surveillance and intelligence-sharing mechanisms.

India's Strategic Responses

- **Military Enhancements:** India has fortified the corridor by deploying advanced defense systems, including the S-400 air defense system and Rafale fighter jets, to deter potential threats.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Efforts are underway to improve road and rail connectivity within the corridor to ensure rapid mobilization and supply chain resilience.
- **Diplomatic Measures:** India is exploring alternative routes, such as the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project through Myanmar, to reduce dependence on the Siliguri Corridor.

Delhi High Court Protects Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev's Personality Rights

In the News: On May 30, 2025, the Delhi High Court issued an ex-parte interim order safeguarding the personality and publicity rights of Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, founder of the Isha Foundation. The court restrained various rogue websites and unknown entities from misusing his personality traits through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in any medium or platform.

Nature of the Case

- **Petition Filed:** Sadhguru filed a petition seeking protection against the unauthorized use of his name, image, voice, and other personality traits by various online platforms. The misuse included AI-generated content and the sale of **products** falsely attributed to him.
- **Examples of Misuse:** Instances cited involved AI-generated videos, morphed images depicting false events such as **Sadhguru's** arrest, and misleading advertisements promoting financial investments, all exploiting his popularity.

Court's Observations and Orders

- **Unique Personality Rights:** Justice Saurabh Banerjee acknowledged Sadhguru's distinctive personality traits, **including** his voice, name, signature, image, likeness, vocal articulation style, and unique attire.
- **Dynamic+ Injunction:** The court issued a 'dynamic+' injunction, a form of injunctive relief designed to address **rapidly** developing online infringement platforms.
- **John Doe Order:** A 'John Doe' order was passed, restraining unknown entities from misusing Sadhguru's personality traits through AI on any platform.

- **Takedown and Suspension:** The court ordered the suspension of accounts and the takedown of YouTube channels exclusively containing content infringing upon Sadhguru's personality rights. It also directed that their basic subscriber information be disclosed.
- **Government Directives:** The Department of Telecommunications and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology were instructed to issue notifications or directions to social media platforms to block or suspend various websites, social media accounts, and channels infringing upon Sadhguru's exclusive rights.

NDA Makes History as First Batch of 17 Female Cadets Graduates

In the News: On May 30, 2025, the National Defence Academy (NDA) in Pune celebrated a historic milestone as its first cohort of 17 female cadets graduated alongside 319 male counterparts during the 148th Passing Out Parade. This event marked a significant step toward gender inclusivity in India's armed forces.

Key Points:

- **Historic Graduation:** The 17 female cadets, who joined the NDA in 2022 following a Supreme Court directive allowing women to appear for the NDA entrance exam, completed three years of rigorous military and academic training.
- **Passing Out Parade:** The ceremony was held at the Khetrapal Parade Ground and reviewed by General V.K. Singh, former Army Chief and current Governor of Mizoram. Academy Cadet Captain Udayveer Singh Negi led the parade.
- **Academic Achievements:** Cadet Shriti Daksh topped the Bachelor of Arts stream, while Cadet Ishita Sharma, from a non-military background, was appointed Division Cadet Captain, reflecting the diverse backgrounds and excellence of the female cadets.
- **Integration and Training:** The female cadets underwent the same training regimen as their male counterparts, participating in all activities without segregation, symbolizing a fully integrated and gender-neutral environment at the NDA.
- **Future Assignments:** Post-graduation, the cadets will proceed to their respective service academies for a year of pre-commission training: the Indian Military Academy (IMA) in Dehradun, the Indian Naval Academy (INA) in Ezhimala, and the Air Force Academy (AFA) in Dundigal.

India Launches Unit-1 of Ghatampur Thermal Power Project

In the News: On May 30, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Unit-1 (660 MW) of the Ghatampur Thermal Power Project in Kanpur Nagar district, Uttar Pradesh. This marks a significant advancement in India's energy infrastructure, particularly in the thermal power sector.

- **Project Overview:** The Ghatampur Thermal Power Project is a joint venture between NLC India Limited (51%) and Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (UPRVUNL) (49%), operating under Neyveli Uttar Pradesh Power Ltd (NUPPL). The project comprises three supercritical thermal power units of 660 MW each, totaling an installed capacity of 1,980 MW. The total project cost is estimated at ₹21,780.94 crore.
- **Commissioning Timeline:** Unit-1 commenced commercial operations in December 2024 and was officially dedicated in May 2025. The remaining two units are scheduled for commissioning by the financial year 2025–26.
- **Power Allocation:** A Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) has been signed to allocate 1,487.28 MW (75.12%) of the generated power to Uttar Pradesh. The remaining 492.72 MW (24.88%) is earmarked for Assam, contingent upon the transfer of a 20% equity share of UPRVUNL in NUPPL to the Government of Assam.
- **Operational Features:** The plant utilizes supercritical boilers with a boiler efficiency of 88.81%, enhancing fuel efficiency and reducing emissions. It includes a captive coal block with a production capacity of 9 million tonnes per annum (MTPA), ensuring a steady fuel supply. The coal stockyard has a capacity to store 10.165 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of coal, sufficient for 30 days of operation at full load for all three units. The plant's raw water reservoirs have a combined capacity of approximately 46 lakh cubic meters, split between two compartments. A 765 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) system is employed for efficient power evacuation.

Lok Sabha Speaker Nominates Three MPs to Press Council of India

In the News: On May 27, 2025, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla nominated three Members of Parliament to the Press Council of India (PCI):

- **Dr. Sambit Patra** (Bharatiya Janata Party, Puri, Odisha)
- **Shri Naresh Ganpat Mhaske** (Shiv Sena, Thane, Maharashtra)
- **Shri Kali Charan Munda** (Indian National Congress, Khunti, Jharkhand)

These appointments aim to enhance the PCI's role in upholding press freedom and journalistic standards in India.

Key Points:

- **Press Council of India (PCI):** Established under the Press Council Act of 1978, the PCI is a statutory, quasi-judicial body responsible for preserving the freedom of the press and maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India.
- **Composition:** The Council comprises a Chairman and 28 members, including:
 - 13 working journalists (6 editors and 7 other journalists)
 - 6 representatives from newspaper management (2 each from big, medium, and small newspapers)
 - 1 representative from news agencies
 - 5 Members of Parliament (3 nominated by the Lok Sabha Speaker and 2 by the Rajya Sabha Chairman)
 - 3 nominees representing the fields of education, law, and literature, selected by the University Grants Commission (UGC), Bar Council of India, and Sahitya Akademi, respectively.
- **Recent Nominations:** Prior to these appointments, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar nominated BJP members Sudhanshu Trivedi and Brij Lal to the Council.
- **Significance:** The inclusion of members from diverse political backgrounds—BJP, Shiv Sena, and Congress—ensures a balanced representation of viewpoints within the Council. This diversity is crucial for the PCI's mandate to address issues pertaining to press freedom and ethical journalism.
- **Tenure:** Members of the Press Council serve a term of three years.

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

In the News: On June 3, 2025, the Government of India introduced a comprehensive set of regulations for the Union Territory of Ladakh. These measures aim to address longstanding demands from Ladakhi residents concerning employment opportunities, cultural preservation, and regional autonomy. The new policies encompass job reservations, domicile criteria, language recognition, and enhanced representation for women in local governance.

Key Points:

- **85% Job Reservation for Locals:** The Union Territory of Ladakh Reservation (Amendment) Regulation, 2025, reserves 85% of government jobs and seats in professional educational institutions for local residents. This significant reservation aligns with Ladakh's demographic composition, where over 90% of the population belongs to Scheduled Tribes (STs). The reservation excludes the existing 10% quota for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), which remains applicable.
- **Domicile Criteria Defined:** The Ladakh Civil Services Decentralization and Recruitment (Amendment) Regulation, 2025, establishes clear domicile eligibility for government employment. An individual qualifies as a domicile if they have resided in Ladakh for 15 years, or have studied for seven years and appeared in Class 10 or 12 examinations within the UT. Children of Central Government employees who have served in Ladakh for at least 10 years are also eligible.
- **Domicile Certification Process:** The Ladakh Civil Services Domicile Certificate Rules, 2025, outline the procedure for obtaining domicile certificates. Tehsildars are designated as the issuing authorities, with Deputy Commissioners serving as appellate authorities. Applications can be submitted both physically and electronically.
- **Women's Representation in Local Governance:** The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (Amendment) Regulation, 2025, mandates that not less than one-third of the total seats in the Leh and Kargil Hill Development Councils be reserved for women. These reserved seats will be rotated among different constituencies to ensure equitable representation.
- **Official Language Recognition:** The Ladakh Official Languages Regulation, 2025, designates English, Hindi, Urdu, Bhoti, and Purgi as the official languages of Ladakh. Additionally, the regulation emphasizes the promotion and development of other regional languages such as Shina, Brokskat, Balti, and Ladakhi through institutional support.

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

In the News: On June 3, 2025, the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, approved a significant policy to provide a 20% horizontal reservation for former Agniveers in the state's police recruitment. This initiative aims to facilitate the reintegration of Agniveers into civilian life by offering them meaningful employment opportunities in law enforcement.

Key Points:

- **20% Horizontal Reservation for Ex-Agniveers:** The reservation applies to direct recruitment for positions such as police constables, members of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), mounted police, and firemen. This horizontal reservation

ensures that ex-Agniveers compete within their respective categories (General, SC, ST, OBC), providing equitable opportunities across all social groups.

- **Three-Year Age Relaxation:** In addition to the reservation, former Agniveers are granted a three-year relaxation in the upper age limit for these positions. This concession acknowledges their service duration and aligns with provisions available to ex-servicemen.
- **Implementation Timeline:** The policy is set to take effect with the first batch of Agniveers completing their four-year tenure under the Agnipath scheme in 2026. This timing ensures a seamless transition for these individuals into state police roles.
- **Pioneering Initiative:** Uttar Pradesh becomes the first state in India to offer a 20% reservation to ex-Agniveers in police recruitment. Other states like Haryana and Odisha have implemented similar policies but with a 10% reservation.

Assam and Meghalaya Joint Hydropower Project Initiative: Kulsi Multipurpose Project

In the News: On June 2, 2025, the Chief Ministers of Assam and Meghalaya—Himanta Biswa Sarma and Conrad K. Sangma—announced a collaborative effort to develop the Kulsi Multipurpose Project. This initiative aims to harness the Kulsi River's potential for hydroelectric power generation and irrigation, marking a significant step in inter-state cooperation and regional development.

Key Points:

- **Project Overview:** The Kulsi Multipurpose Project is designed to generate 55 megawatts (MW) of hydroelectric power and provide irrigation benefits, particularly to Assam's Kamrup and Goalpara districts.
- **Environmental Considerations:** The Kulsi River is a known habitat for the endangered Gangetic river dolphin. Both states have committed to conducting thorough environmental assessments and engaging with local communities to address ecological concerns before project implementation.
- **Flood Management Collaboration:** To address urban flooding in Guwahati, the states plan to commission a study by the North Eastern Space Application Centre (NESAC) using satellite imaging to identify flood-prone areas. Subsequently, institutions like IIT Roorkee will develop actionable mitigation strategies based on the study's findings.
- **Boundary Dispute Resolution:** In a move towards resolving a 52-year-old boundary dispute, both governments have agreed to install boundary pillars in five of the six mutually agreed-upon sectors by August 15, 2025. Discussions continue for the remaining disputed areas.
- **Community Engagement:** The project emphasizes the importance of community consent. Both governments have pledged to conduct extensive consultations with local populations to ensure that their concerns and suggestions are incorporated into the project's planning and execution phases.
- **Economic and Tourism Potential:** Beyond energy and irrigation, the project is expected to boost eco-tourism and enhance livelihoods in the region, aligning with Meghalaya's vision of promoting sustainable development.

Justice Hema Committee Report: Reasons Behind Police Dropping Sexual Assault Cases in Malayalam Cinema

In the News: In June 2025, the Kerala Police announced the closure of nearly all sexual assault cases initiated following the Justice Hema Committee Report. This decision has sparked widespread concern, particularly among women's rights advocates and members of the Malayalam film industry, who question the systemic barriers that hinder justice for survivors.

Key Points:

- **Background of the Hema Committee:** Established in July 2017 by the Kerala government in response to the 2017 abduction and assault of a prominent actress in Kochi. Chaired by retired Justice K. Hema, with members including actress Sharada and former IAS officer K.B. Vatsalakumari. Tasked with investigating issues of sexual harassment and gender inequality in the Malayalam film industry. Submitted a comprehensive 300-page report in December 2019, highlighting systemic issues such as sexual exploitation, lack of grievance redressal mechanisms, and the existence of an all-male "power group" controlling industry dynamics.
- **Police Investigation and Case Closures:** Following the public release of the report in August 2024, the Kerala Police formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the allegations. The SIT registered approximately 120 First Information Reports (FIRs), with 35 cases directly based on survivors' testimonies to the committee. As of June 2025, 34 of these 35 cases have been closed due to survivors' reluctance to proceed with legal action. Only 26 cases, where survivors were willing to testify, have progressed to the chargesheet stage.

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

In the News: On June 4, 2025, the Government of India announced that the long-delayed national population census will be conducted in two phases, commencing in April 2026 and concluding by March 1, 2027. Significantly, this census will include comprehensive caste enumeration for the first time since 1931, marking a pivotal shift in India's demographic data collection practices.

Key Points:

- **Two-Phase Census Schedule:**
 - **Phase I – House Listing:** Scheduled from April to September 2026, this phase involves enumerators collecting information about households, including housing conditions and basic amenities.
 - **Phase II – Population Enumeration:** Set for February 2027, this phase will gather detailed demographic data on individuals, such as age, sex, occupation, and education.
 - **Reference Dates:**
 - **March 1, 2027:** For most parts of the country.
 - **October 1, 2026:** For snow-bound regions like Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Ladakh.
- **Inclusion of Caste Enumeration:** This census will collect data on all castes, including Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and General category castes. The decision aims to provide updated and comprehensive data to inform policies on affirmative action, resource allocation, and social justice initiatives.
- **Digital Data Collection:** For the first time, the census will employ digital tools, allowing enumerators to use mobile applications and tablets for data collection, enhancing efficiency and accuracy.
- **Impact on Policy and Representation:** The collected data will be instrumental in redrawing parliamentary and state legislative constituencies to reflect population changes. It will also support the implementation of the 2023 Women's Reservation Bill, which mandates reserving one-third of seats for women in legislatures.
- **Political and Social Implications:** The inclusion of caste data is expected to influence debates on reservation policies, with potential demands to reassess the current 50% cap on quotas. Political leaders, such as Tejashwi Yadav in Bihar, have called for increasing reservation limits based on updated caste data.

India's New National Policy for Senior Citizens in Draft Stage

In the News: On June 4, 2025, the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment announced the drafting of a new National Policy for Senior Citizens. This initiative aims to address the evolving needs of India's rapidly growing elderly population, ensuring their welfare, dignity, and inclusion in society.

Key Points:

- **Demographic Imperative:** As per the 2011 Census, senior citizens (aged 60 and above) constituted 8.6% of India's population. Projections estimate this figure will rise to 12.16% by 2026 and 20% by 2047, highlighting the urgency for comprehensive policy measures.
- **Policy Development:**
 - The policy is being formulated under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, incorporating inputs from various stakeholders, including NGOs, senior citizen associations, and experts.
 - The fourth meeting of the National Council for Senior Citizens served as a platform for discussing key areas of focus for the policy.
- **Core Focus Areas:**
 - **Digital Inclusion:** Bridging the digital divide by enhancing digital literacy among seniors to facilitate access to essential services.
 - **Elder Abuse Redressal:** Establishing robust mechanisms to prevent and address instances of elder abuse and neglect.
 - **Standards for Care Facilities:** Setting and enforcing minimum standards for old age homes and senior care institutions to ensure quality care.
 - **Community Engagement:** Promoting intergenerational bonding and community participation to combat social isolation among the elderly.

- **Review of Existing Schemes:**
 - **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY):** Provides free assistive devices to economically weaker senior citizens suffering from age-related disabilities.
 - **Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC):** Offers financial assistance to NGOs for running senior citizen homes and providing essential services.
 - **Elderline (14567):** A national helpline launched in 2021 for grievance redressal and support for senior citizens.
 - **Seniorcare Ageing Growth Engine (SAGE):** Supports startups in developing products and services tailored for the elderly.
- **Legal Framework:** The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, mandates children and legal heirs to provide maintenance to senior citizens, with provisions for legal recourse in cases of neglect.

PM Modi Launches 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0' on World Environment Day

In the News: On June 5, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the second phase of the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, emphasizing environmental conservation and honoring motherhood. The initiative aims to plant 10 crore trees across India by September 30, 2025.

Key Points:

- **Campaign Launch:** PM Modi launched 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0' on World Environment Day, June 5, 2025. The campaign encourages individuals to plant a tree in honor of their mothers, symbolizing love and environmental responsibility.
- **Tree Plantation Drive:** The goal is to plant 10 crore trees nationwide between June 5 and September 30, 2025. PM Modi planted a Banyan sapling at Bhagwan Mahavir Vanasthali Park in New Delhi as part of the campaign.
- **Integration with Environmental Projects:** The tree plantation is part of the 'Aravalli Green Wall Project,' aiming to reforest the 700-km Aravalli range across four states.
- **Public Engagement:** Citizens are encouraged to plant a tree in their mother's name and share a selfie with the planted sapling on the dedicated portal.
- **Educational Initiatives:** Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched special modules for schools under the campaign, promoting environmental consciousness among students.
- **Previous Achievements:** Since its inception in 2024, over 5.5 crore trees have been planted under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' initiative.

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

In the News: On June 6, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Chenab Rail Bridge in Jammu and Kashmir, marking the completion of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project. This milestone connects the Kashmir Valley to India's national railway network for the first time, fulfilling a vision over a century old.

Key Points:

- **Historic Inauguration:** PM Modi inaugurated the Chenab Rail Bridge, the world's highest railway arch bridge, standing at 359 meters above the riverbed, surpassing the Eiffel Tower in height. The bridge is a part of the ₹43,780 crore USBRL project, which spans 272 km and includes 36 tunnels and 943 bridges.
- **Engineering Marvel:** Constructed using 30,000 tonnes of steel, the bridge is designed to withstand seismic activity up to magnitude 8 and wind speeds of 266 km/h. The structure is blast-resistant, ensuring safety and durability in the challenging Himalayan terrain.
- **Anji Khad Bridge:** Alongside the Chenab Bridge, PM Modi also inaugurated the Anji Khad Bridge, India's first cable-stayed railway bridge, enhancing connectivity in the region.
- **Vande Bharat Express Launch:** Two Vande Bharat Express trains were flagged off between Katra and Srinagar, reducing travel time to approximately three hours. These trains are equipped to operate in extreme winter conditions, featuring heated windshields and advanced heating systems.
- **Economic and Strategic Impact:** The rail link is expected to boost tourism, facilitate troop movement, and promote economic integration in the region. It provides all-weather connectivity, crucial during winter months when road access is often blocked due to snowfall.
- **Historical Significance:** The vision for a railway link to Kashmir dates back to 1892, proposed by Maharaja Hari Singh. The completion of the USBRL project realizes this long-standing dream, integrating Kashmir more closely with the rest of India.

Udhampur–Srinagar–Baramulla (USBRL) Rail Link Fully Operational After 28 Years

In the News: On June 6–7, 2025, after nearly **28 years** since its inception in 1997, the 272 km USBRL project became fully operational, marking the first time Kashmir Valley is seamlessly connected to India's railway network throughout the year.

Key Points:

- **Project Timeline & Completion:** The project was launched in 1997 and completed in multiple phases: Jammu–Udhampur (2005), Anantnag–Mazhom (2008), Qazigund–Baramulla (2009), Udhampur–Katra (2014), Banihal–Sangaldan (2024), and final Katra–Banihal section (2025). The final stretch was inaugurated by PM Modi alongside the opening of the Chenab and Anji Khad bridges
- **Engineering Feats:** The line features India's longest railway tunnel (Pir Panjal Tunnel, 11.2 km), 36 tunnels totaling ~119 km, and 943 bridges—highlighting exceptional engineering in Himalayan terrain. Major structures include the **Chenab Bridge** (1.3 km long, 359 m high, world's tallest railway arch bridge) and **Anji Khad Bridge** (first cable-stayed railway bridge in India)
- **Materials & Construction:** The Chenab Bridge required 30,000 tonnes of steel, with 12,000 tonnes supplied by SAIL's Bhilai Steel Plant. These structures are built to withstand 266 km/h winds, seismic activity, and harsh mountainous weather
- **Vande Bharat Express & Connectivity:** Alongside the inauguration, **two Vande Bharat Express trains** were flagged off between Katra and Srinagar, reducing travel time from around 7 hours (by road) to approximately **3 hours**. This rail link provides **all-weather connectivity**, particularly vital during winters when road routes are blocked

INTERNATIONAL

Sheikh Hasina Charged with Crimes Against Humanity

In the News: On June 1, 2025, Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) formally charged former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with crimes against humanity. The charges stem from her alleged role in the violent suppression of student-led protests in July and August 2024, which resulted in significant loss of life and numerous human rights violations.

Background of the Charges

- **Nature of the Protests:** In mid-2024, Bangladesh witnessed widespread student-led demonstrations demanding reforms in the government's quota system for public sector jobs. These protests escalated into a broader movement against the ruling Awami League government.
- **Alleged Government Response:** According to the charges, Hasina's administration responded with a coordinated crackdown involving security forces and affiliated groups. The ICT's investigation report accuses Hasina of ordering actions that led to mass killings, injuries, and targeted violence against civilians, including women and children.
- **Casualties and Human Rights Concerns:** The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported that up to 1,400 individuals were killed during the protests, with many more injured or subjected to arbitrary detention and torture.

Legal Proceedings

- **Tribunal's Actions:** The ICT accepted the charges against Hasina and two former senior officials: ex-Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and former police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun. Arrest warrants were issued, and the tribunal directed that the accused be produced before the court on June 16, 2025.
- **Hasina's Status:** Sheikh Hasina has been in exile in India since August 5, 2024, following her resignation amid the protests. Bangladesh formally requested her extradition in December 2024.

Political Context

- **Change in Leadership:** After Hasina's resignation, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus assumed the role of interim leader. His administration banned the Awami League party and initiated legal actions against its members.
- **Revival of the ICT:** The International Crimes Tribunal, originally established by Hasina in 2009 to prosecute war crimes from the 1971 independence war, is now being used to try her and her associates for alleged crimes committed during her tenure.

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

In the News: Since the initiation of Operation Sindoor on May 7, 2025, Indian authorities have deported over 2,000 alleged illegal Bangladeshi immigrants across the border. This large-scale operation, directed by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), follows the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack and aims to address national security concerns by identifying and removing undocumented migrants from the country.

Operation Sindoor: Background and Scope

- **Launch and Objective:** Operation Sindoor was launched in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, with the goal of enhancing national security by deporting illegal immigrants, particularly from Bangladesh and Myanmar.
- **Geographical Focus:** The operation has been active along the Bangladesh border in Tripura, Meghalaya, and Assam. Gujarat initiated the round-up, accounting for nearly half of the deportations. Other states involved include Delhi, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan.

Deportation Process

- **Identification and Verification:** Authorities conducted a nationwide verification exercise to identify undocumented migrants.
- **Transportation and Handover:** Identified individuals were transported to border areas using Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft and handed over to the Border Security Force (BSF).
- **Temporary Detention and Repatriation:** Deportees were held in makeshift camps along the border, provided with food and, if necessary, Bangladeshi currency, before being sent back to Bangladesh after a few hours.

Voluntary Returns

- **Fear-Induced Departures:** Approximately 2,000 undocumented migrants voluntarily approached the India-Bangladesh border to return to Bangladesh, driven by fears of detention amid the crackdown.

Ukraine's Operation Spider's Web: A Game-Changer in Drone Warfare

In the News: On June 1, 2025, Ukraine executed a bold and unprecedented drone assault, codenamed *Operation Spider's Web*, targeting five Russian military airbases deep within Russian territory. This meticulously planned operation marked a significant shift in modern warfare, showcasing Ukraine's innovative use of drone technology and strategic planning.

Key Points:

- **Strategic Targets:** The operation focused on five key Russian airbases: Olenya, Dyagilevo, Ivanovo Severny, Belaya, and Ukrainka. These bases housed significant assets of Russia's Long-Range Aviation forces, including strategic bombers like the Tu-95, Tu-22M3, and A-50 aircraft.
- **Scale of the Attack:** A total of 117 drones were deployed, resulting in the destruction or damage of approximately 41 Russian military aircraft. Ukrainian officials estimate that this accounts for about 34% of Russia's strategic bomber fleet, with damages estimated at \$7 billion.
- **Innovative Tactics:** The drones were covertly transported into Russia concealed within wooden structures mounted on trucks. Once positioned near the targeted airbases, the drones were launched remotely, catching Russian defences off guard. This "Trojan Horse" strategy allowed Ukraine to bypass traditional air defence systems effectively.
- **Technological Advancements:** The operation utilized First-Person View (FPV) drones equipped with AI-assisted navigation systems, enabling precise strikes on high-value targets. The integration of AI played a crucial role in flight stability and targeting, enhancing the effectiveness of the drones.
- **Extended Reach:** Targets included airbases located up to 4,300 kilometers from Ukraine, marking the longest-range strike by Ukrainian forces to date. This demonstrated Ukraine's capability to project power deep into Russian territory.
- **Strategic Implications:** The success of Operation Spider's Web highlighted a significant vulnerability in Russia's defence infrastructure and showcased the potential of low-cost, improvised unmanned systems to achieve strategic impact. It also underscored a shift in warfare paradigms, emphasizing the growing importance of drone technology in modern conflicts.
- **Political Context:** The operation coincided with peace talks in Istanbul, complicating diplomatic efforts. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy emphasized that the operation was independently executed by Ukrainian forces, signaling a message of resilience and self-reliance.

Annalena Baerbock Elected President of 80th UN General Assembly Session

In the News: On June 2, 2025, Annalena Baerbock, former German Foreign Minister, was elected President of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). She is set to assume office on September 9, 2025, succeeding Philemon Yang of Cameroon. Baerbock becomes the fifth woman to hold this prestigious position in the UN's history.

Key Points:

- **Election Outcome:** Annalena Baerbock secured 167 votes out of 193 member states in a secret ballot, surpassing the required simple majority of 88 votes. Her only opponent, Helga Schmid, received 7 votes, while 14 countries abstained from voting.
- **Significance of the Role:** The presidency of the UNGA rotates annually among five regional groups. For the 80th session, the position was designated for the Western European and Others Group, facilitating Baerbock's nomination and subsequent election.
- **Theme and Vision:** In her acceptance speech, Baerbock introduced the theme "Better Together," emphasizing unity and cooperation to address global challenges such as armed conflicts, climate change, poverty, and institutional inadequacies.
- **Historical Context:** Baerbock's election marks a significant milestone as she becomes only the fifth woman to preside over the UNGA since its inception. The last woman to hold this position was María Fernanda Espinosa of Ecuador in 2018.
- **Background:** Annalena Baerbock served as Germany's Foreign Minister from December 2021 to May 2025. She was also the co-leader of the Alliance 90/The Greens party from 2018 to 2022 and was the party's candidate for Chancellor in the 2021 federal elections.

Bangladesh Introduces New Currency Notes Without Mujib, Showcasing Cultural Heritage

In the News: On June 1, 2025, Bangladesh's central bank unveiled newly designed currency notes in denominations of Taka 1,000, Taka 50, and Taka 20. Notably, these notes omit the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the nation's founding father, marking a significant departure from a longstanding tradition. Instead, the new designs feature prominent cultural and historical landmarks, reflecting a shift towards depoliticizing national symbols.

Key Points:

- **Redesigned Currency Notes:** The newly issued banknotes exclude any human portraits. The Taka 20 note features the 18th-century Kantajew Temple on the obverse and the Paharpur Buddhist Monastery on the reverse. The Taka 50 note showcases Ahsan Manzil and a painting by Zainul Abedin, while the Taka 1,000 note depicts the National Martyrs' Memorial and the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.
- **Historical Context:** Since Bangladesh's independence in 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's image has been a consistent feature on its currency. The removal of his portrait aligns with broader efforts to move away from political iconography in national symbols.
- **Political Climate:** The redesign follows significant political changes, including the ousting of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024 after widespread protests. The interim government, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, has initiated several reforms aimed at depoliticizing state institutions and symbols.

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

In the News: On June 4, 2025, the United States exercised its veto power in the United Nations Security Council to block a resolution calling for an "immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire" in Gaza. The resolution, supported by the other 14 council members, also demanded unrestricted humanitarian aid access and the release of all hostages held by Hamas.

Key Points:

- **U.S. Justification for Veto:** Acting U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Dorothy Shea, stated that the resolution failed to condemn Hamas, did not call for its disarmament or withdrawal from Gaza, and could potentially embolden the group. The U.S. emphasized that any ceasefire must be linked to the release of hostages and should not draw a false equivalence between Israel and Hamas.
- **International Response:** The veto drew criticism from several countries, including China and Pakistan, which accused the U.S. of obstructing efforts to end the conflict and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. France's ambassador expressed frustration over the Security Council's inability to act, while the U.K. criticized Israel's military operations and aid restrictions as "unjustifiable" and "counterproductive."
- **Humanitarian Situation in Gaza:** The resolution highlighted the "catastrophic" humanitarian conditions in Gaza, where over 2 million residents face severe shortages of food, water, and medical supplies. Recent Israeli military actions have resulted in significant civilian casualties, including incidents where Palestinians were killed while queuing for food at aid distribution centers.
- **Implications of the Veto:** This marks the fifth time the U.S. has vetoed a Security Council resolution related to the Gaza conflict since its onset in October 2023. The veto has intensified global scrutiny of the U.S.'s stance, with human rights

organizations and several nations calling for reforms to the Security Council's veto power to prevent obstruction of humanitarian efforts.

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

In the News: On June 4, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump signed a presidential proclamation instituting a travel ban on nationals from 12 countries, citing national security concerns. The ban, set to take effect on June 9, 2025, marks a significant reinstatement and expansion of similar measures from Trump's first term.

Key Points:

- **Countries Affected:**
 - *Full Entry Ban:* Afghanistan, Myanmar (Burma), Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen.
 - *Partial Restrictions:* Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela.
- **Justification for the Ban:** The administration cited inadequate security vetting procedures, high visa overstay rates, and lack of cooperation on deportations among the listed countries. The decision was influenced by a recent attack in Boulder, Colorado, allegedly carried out by an Egyptian national who had overstayed his visa. Although Egypt is not on the banned list, the incident was used to underscore the perceived risks of insufficient vetting.
- **Exemptions and Exceptions:** The proclamation includes exemptions for lawful permanent residents, individuals with existing valid visas, certain visa categories, and those whose entry is deemed to serve U.S. national interests.
- **Historical Context:** This move echoes the controversial travel bans implemented during Trump's first term, which targeted several majority-Muslim countries and faced numerous legal challenges. The Supreme Court upheld a version of the previous ban in 2018, providing a potential legal precedent for the current proclamation.

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

In the News: On June 3, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order increasing tariffs on imported steel and aluminum from 25% to 50%, effective June 4. The United Kingdom received a temporary exemption, maintaining the previous 25% tariff rate pending the finalization of a bilateral trade agreement.

Key Points:

- **Tariff Increase Details:** The tariff hike applies to nearly all U.S. trading partners, including Canada, Mexico, and **members** of the European Union. The United Kingdom is temporarily exempted, continuing under the 25% tariff rate until at least July 9, 2025, contingent upon the ratification of the U.S.-UK Economic Prosperity Deal.
- **Justification for Tariffs:** The administration cites national security concerns, aiming to counteract the influx of low-priced, excess steel and aluminum that undermines U.S. industries. The move is intended to bolster domestic production capacity and reduce dependency on foreign imports.
- **Impact on U.S. Industries and Consumers:** Industries reliant on steel and aluminum, such as automotive, construction, and manufacturing, may face increased production costs. Consumers could experience higher prices on goods ranging from household appliances to vehicles due to the increased tariffs.
- **International Reactions:** Canada and Mexico have expressed strong opposition, highlighting the potential negative effects on their economies and trade relations. The European Union is considering countermeasures in **response** to the tariff escalation.
- **UK's Temporary Exemption:** The UK's exemption is tied to the pending U.S.-UK Economic Prosperity Deal, which **aims** to eliminate tariffs on British steel and aluminum exports. Failure to finalize the agreement by July 9 could result in the UK being subjected to the 50% tariff rate.

Nicaragua Becomes 101st WTO Member to Accept Fisheries Subsidies Agreement

In the News: On June 2, 2025, Nicaragua formally accepted the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, becoming the 101st member to do so. This milestone brings the agreement closer to its implementation, requiring just 10 more acceptances to reach the necessary threshold for entry into force.

Key Points:

- **Historic Agreement Overview:** Adopted at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference in 2022, the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies is the first WTO accord with a primary focus on environmental sustainability. It aims to curb harmful subsidies that contribute to overfishing and the depletion of global fish stocks.

- **Prohibited Subsidies Under the Agreement:**
 - Subsidies for illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities.
 - Subsidies for fishing overfished stocks.
 - Subsidies for fishing in unregulated high seas areas beyond national jurisdictions.
- **Nicaragua's Commitment:** Ambassador Rosalía Bohorquez Palacios presented Nicaragua's instrument of acceptance to WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in Geneva. Nicaragua's acceptance underscores its dedication to sustainable marine resource management, crucial for the nation's food security, employment, and economic development.
- **WTO Fisheries Funding Mechanism:** With the agreement nearing implementation, the WTO plans to activate the Fisheries Funding Mechanism, also known as the WTO Fish Fund. This fund will support developing and least-developed countries in meeting their obligations under the agreement, including enhancing legal frameworks, monitoring systems, and enforcement capabilities.
- **Next Steps:** The agreement requires acceptance by two-thirds (111) of WTO members to enter into force. With Nicaragua's acceptance, only 10 more are needed. Ongoing negotiations aim to expand the agreement's scope, addressing subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, with discussions expected to conclude at the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference in February 2026.

Bangladesh Drops 'Father of the Nation' Title for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

In the News: On June 3, 2025, Bangladesh's interim government, led by Muhammad Yunus, enacted the National Freedom Fighters Council (Amendment) Ordinance-2025. This legislation removed the title "Father of the Nation" for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from official documents and redefined the criteria for recognizing freedom fighters, sparking significant national and international discourse.

Key Points:

- **Legislative Changes:** The amendment to the National Freedom Fighters Council Act eliminated references to "Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" and revised the definition of the Liberation War, omitting mentions of Rahman's leadership.
- **Redefinition of Freedom Fighters:** Individuals who served as members of the national and provincial assemblies associated with the Mujibnagar government-in-exile are now categorized as "associates of the Liberation War" rather than as freedom fighters.
- **Currency Redesign:** On June 2, 2025, Bangladesh's central bank released new currency notes in denominations of Taka 1,000, Taka 50, and Taka 20, which notably do not feature Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's image, marking a significant departure from previous designs.
- **Educational Revisions:** Earlier in 2025, new school textbooks were introduced that credit Ziaur Rahman, a former army major and sector commander during the Liberation War, with declaring Bangladesh's independence, replacing previous versions that attributed this role to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

UN Elects Five Non-Permanent Members to Security Council for 2026–27 Term

In the News: On June 3, 2025, the United Nations General Assembly elected Bahrain, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Latvia, and Liberia as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council for two-year terms starting January 1, 2026. These countries will replace Algeria, Guyana, South Korea, Sierra Leone, and Slovenia.

Key Points:

- **Election Details:** The elections were held during the 79th session of the UN General Assembly. Each candidate required a two-thirds majority vote from the 193-member General Assembly. Vote counts: Bahrain (186), DRC (183), Liberia (181), Colombia (180), Latvia (178).
- **Regional Representation:** Africa: DRC and Liberia, Asia-Pacific: Bahrain, Eastern Europe: Latvia & Latin America and the Caribbean: Colombia.
- **Historical Context:** Latvia will serve on the Security Council for the first time. Colombia has previously served seven times, most recently in 2011–2012. DRC has served twice before, while Bahrain and Liberia have each served once.

- **Council Composition:** The Security Council comprises 15 members: five permanent members with veto power (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and ten non-permanent members elected for staggered two-year terms.

PM Modi to Attend G-7 Summit in Canada, Signaling Thaw in Bilateral Ties

In the News: On June 6, 2025, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney extended a formal invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the G-7 Summit scheduled from June 15 to 17, 2025, in Kananaskis, Alberta. PM Modi confirmed his participation, marking his first official visit to Canada since 2015. The invitation is widely viewed as a diplomatic reset following years of strained relations, especially after the fallout from the 2023 Hardeep Singh Nijjar case.

Key Points:

- **Diplomatic Thaw with New Canadian Leadership:** The invitation marks a shift in Indo-Canadian ties under the new leadership of PM Mark Carney, following tensions that escalated during former PM Justin Trudeau's tenure. The decision reflects a desire to reengage India diplomatically and economically.
- **India's Global Role Acknowledged:** Canada emphasized India's position as the world's fifth-largest economy and its importance in shaping global agendas on energy security, critical minerals, supply chains, and infrastructure. Carney highlighted that India's participation was essential to reflect contemporary geopolitical realities.
- **Revival of Law-Enforcement Dialogue:** Alongside the invitation, Canada expressed interest in reviving stalled law-enforcement cooperation with India, even as the investigation into the 2023 Nijjar killing continues. This indicates a willingness to compartmentalize differences while focusing on mutual interests.
- **First Visit in a Decade:** PM Modi's attendance will be his first trip to Canada since 2015, symbolizing renewed engagement at the highest level. The visit is expected to pave the way for formal diplomatic normalization between the two countries.
- **Bilateral and Multilateral Agenda:** Modi's presence will offer an opportunity for high-level engagements with G-7 leaders on trade, technology, climate resilience, and counter-terrorism. Side meetings with Quad partners and Western allies are also likely.

Starlink Gets Green Light to Launch Satellite Internet in India

In the News: On June 6, 2025, India's Department of Telecommunications issued a key satellite-communication licence (GMPCS/DoT) to Elon Musk's Starlink, marking a major regulatory breakthrough in its efforts to introduce commercial satellite internet services in the country.

Key Points:

- **Licence Approval:** Starlink has become the **third satellite internet provider in India** — after Reliance Jio and Bharti OneWeb — to secure a licence from India's DoT. The licence follows the **Letter of Intent issued in May 2025** and clears a major regulatory hurdle. Final rollout depends on additional approvals from IN-SPACe, spectrum allocation, and security clearances, likely taking a few months.
- **Partnerships:** In March 2025, Starlink formalised distribution partnerships with **Reliance Jio** and **Bharti Airtel**, which will retail Starlink user terminals alongside their own broadband services.
- **Connectivity Aim:** With over **40% of India's 1.4 billion population lacking internet access**, particularly in remote and mountainous regions, Starlink aims to bridge this gap using its constellation of over **6,700 low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellites**.
- **Security & Regulatory Compliance:** The company must comply with India's strict security and data-localisation regulations, include lawful interception capabilities, and set up domestic ground-stations.
- **Spectrum and Fees:** India plans to grant satellite spectrum via **administrative assignment** (aligned with Musk's preference), rather than public auction; However, **Jio and Airtel have raised concerns**, arguing that the proposed **4% annual revenue fee** for satcom firms unfairly advantages Starlink, as terrestrial spectrum fees are much higher.
- **Market Potential & Competition:** Analysts project India's satellite broadband market could reach **\$1.9 billion by 2030**, attracting global players like Amazon Kuiper. Starlink is expected to launch with **introductory unlimited plans under US \$10/month (around ₹850)** and target rural, remote, and under-served areas.

SPORTS

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

In the News: On June 3, 2025, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) secured their first-ever Indian Premier League (IPL) title by defeating Punjab Kings (PBKS) by 6 runs in a thrilling final at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. This victory marked the end of an 18-year quest for the elusive trophy, with Virat Kohli playing a pivotal role in the team's success.

Key Points:

- **Match Summary:** RCB posted a total of 190/9 in their allotted 20 overs, with Virat Kohli top-scoring with 43 runs off 35 balls. In response, PBKS managed 184/7, falling short by 6 runs despite a valiant unbeaten 61 off 30 balls by Shashank Singh.
- **Bowling Performances:** RCB's bowlers delivered under pressure, with Krunal Pandya taking 2 wickets for 17 runs and Bhuvneshwar Kumar claiming 2 wickets for 38 runs. Their disciplined bowling in the death overs was instrumental in securing the win.
- **Emotional Aftermath:** Virat Kohli was visibly emotional after the victory, shedding tears of joy as he embraced his wife, Anushka Sharma. The moment was widely shared on social media, symbolizing the culmination of years of dedication and perseverance.
- **Citywide Celebrations:** Bengaluru erupted in celebrations, with fireworks lighting up the sky and fans chanting "Ee Sala Cup Namde" (This year, the cup is ours). Former RCB players like AB de Villiers and Chris Gayle joined the festivities, highlighting the significance of the triumph.
- **Season Awards:**
 - *Orange Cap (Most Runs):* Sai Sudharsan, with 759 runs in the season.
 - *Purple Cap (Most Wickets):* Prasidh Krishna, with 25 wickets.
 - *Most Valuable Player:* Suryakumar Yadav, recognized for his consistent performances.
 - *Fair Play Award:* Chennai Super Kings, acknowledged for their exemplary conduct.

Magnus Carlsen Clinches Norway Chess 2025 Title After Dramatic Finale

In the News: On June 6, 2025, GM Magnus Carlsen secured his record-extending **seventh Norway Chess title** in Stavanger following a nerve-wracking final round where rival Gukesh Dommaraju stumbled—losing to Fabiano Caruana—while Carlsen drew his game against Arjun Erigaisi with seconds to spare.

Key Points:

- **Historic Seventh Title:** Carlsen finished with **16 points**, just ahead of Caruana (15.5) and Gukesh (14.5), demonstrating exceptional resilience to claim his seventh championship at this event.
- **Dramatic Final Round:** Ultimately, Carlsen held a **drawing position** against Erigaisi in classical time control—only to lose the Armageddon tiebreak. The draw was enough, however, due to Gukesh's unexpected loss to Caruana.
- **Psychological Turnaround:** Carlsen recovered from an emotional outburst in round 6, where he slammed the table after losing to Gukesh in time pressure. He later apologized and demonstrated remarkable composure to win the title.
- **Gukesh's Rise:** Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh achieved his first classical win over Carlsen in round 6, marking a major milestone in his career—even though a late queen blunder cost him a chance at the title.
- **Tournament Stature & Format:** Held from May 26 to June 6, 2025, in Stavanger, the tournament featured six of the world's top players, including Hikaru Nakamura and Wei Yi. Its format includes classical matches followed by Armageddon tiebreakers in the case of draws.
- **Carlsen's Future in Classical Chess:** Despite the victory, Carlsen expressed uncertainty about the future of his classical career, citing his preference for faster formats but did not rule out participation in similar events in 2026.

ECONOMICS

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

In the News: India's industrial production growth decelerated to 2.7% year-on-year in April 2025, marking the slowest pace in eight months. This slowdown was primarily attributed to contractions in the mining sector and subdued performances in electricity generation and consumer non-durable goods. The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data, released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), reflects emerging challenges in sustaining industrial momentum at the start of the fiscal year.

Sectoral Performance

- **Manufacturing:** Expanded by 3.4% in April, up from 3.0% in March. Notable growth was observed in:
 - Machinery and equipment: 17.0%
 - Motor vehicles, trailers, and semi-trailers: 15.4%
 - Basic metals: 4.9%
- **Mining:** Contracted by 0.2%, the first decline since August 2024, reflecting operational bottlenecks and regulatory challenges.
- **Electricity:** Growth slowed to 1.1%, down from 7.5% in March, due to weakened industrial demand and seasonal factors.

Use-Based Classification

- **Capital Goods:** Surged by 20.3%, indicating robust investment activity, albeit on a low base from the previous year.
- **Consumer Durables:** Grew by 6.4%, driven by increased demand for items like automobiles and electronics.
- **Consumer Non-Durables:** Declined by 1.7%, signaling subdued demand for everyday goods such as food items and toiletries.
- **Primary Goods:** Contracted by 0.4%, reflecting reduced output in basic materials industries.
- **Intermediate Goods:** Increased by 4.1%, showing moderate growth in goods used as inputs in the production process.
- **Infrastructure/Construction Goods:** Expanded by 4.0%, down from 8.5% in April 2024, indicating a slowdown in construction-related activities.

Contributing Factors

- **High Base Effect:** The elevated growth rate of 5.2% in April 2024 created a challenging comparison, **contributing** to the perceived slowdown.
- **Global Economic Headwinds:** Weak external demand and trade uncertainties, including tariff-related issues, have impacted export-oriented industries.
- **Domestic Demand Weakness:** Subdued consumer spending, particularly in rural areas, has affected sectors like consumer non-durables.

RBI's Draft Guidelines for Gold Loans and the Finance Ministry's Push for Small Borrower Exemption

In the News: In April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released draft guidelines aimed at tightening regulations on gold loans to enhance risk management and standardize lending practices. However, the Union Finance Ministry has recommended exemptions for small borrowers and a deferred implementation timeline to mitigate potential adverse effects on low-income individuals.

Key Points:

- **RBI's Proposed Guidelines:**
 - **Loan-to-Value (LTV) Ratio:** Capped at 75% for consumption gold loans, including those offered by Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs).
 - **Collateral Restrictions:** Loans permitted only against gold jewellery and bank-issued coins; primary gold forms like bars and bullion are excluded.
 - **Valuation Standards:** Mandatory standardized procedures for assessing gold purity, with valuations based on 22-carat gold prices.
 - **Ownership Verification:** Borrowers must provide proof of ownership or a declaration if original purchase documents are unavailable.
 - **Loan Purpose Monitoring:** Differentiation between consumption and income-generating loans, with specific monitoring requirements for each.

- **Renewal and Repledge Restrictions:** Prohibition on concurrent loans using the same collateral and restrictions on loan renewals without full repayment.
- **Collateral Return Timeline:** Mandate for lenders to return pledged gold within seven working days post-loan closure, failing which a compensation of ₹5,000 per day is applicable.
- **Rationale Behind RBI's Proposals:**
 - A significant surge in gold loan disbursements, with outstanding amounts reaching ₹1.78 lakh crore by January 2025, marking a 76.9% year-on-year increase.
 - Rising Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) in the gold loan segment, with banks and NBFCs reporting NPAs of ₹2,040 crore and ₹4,784 crore respectively as of December 2024.
 - Identified irregularities in lending practices, including inadequate loan appraisal mechanisms and lack of transparency in gold auctions post-default.
- **Finance Ministry's Recommendations:**
 - **Exemption for Small Borrowers:** Proposed exclusion of loans below ₹2 lakh from the stringent provisions to ensure timely and accessible credit for low-income individuals.
 - **Deferred Implementation:** Suggested postponing the enforcement of new guidelines to January 1, 2026, allowing lenders adequate time for field-level adjustments and compliance.

RBI Annual Report 2024–25: Key Highlights of India's Economic and Financial Landscape

In the News: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released its Annual Report for the fiscal year 2024–25, providing a comprehensive overview of the nation's economic performance, financial stability, and policy initiatives.

Key Points:

- **Economic Growth and Inflation:** India's real GDP growth moderated to **6.5%** in FY25, down from 9.2% in the **previous** year, yet it remained the fastest-growing major economy globally. Headline inflation eased by **73 basis points** to **4.6%** in FY25, with the RBI expressing confidence in sustaining inflation below the 4% target in FY26, aided by favorable monsoon forecasts and declining global commodity prices.
- **Financial Performance:** The RBI's net income surged by **27.5%** to ₹2.69 lakh crore, driven by a 33% increase in foreign exchange transaction gains and higher interest income from foreign securities. A record surplus of ₹2.69 lakh crore was transferred to the central government, supported by an adjustment in the economic capital framework, setting the contingency risk buffer at 6% ±1.5%.
- **Balance Sheet Expansion:** The RBI's balance sheet expanded by **8.2%** to ₹76.25 lakh crore, with significant increases in gold holdings (52.09%), domestic investments (14.32%), and foreign investments (1.70%).
- **Currency Management and Digital Initiatives:** The RBI ceased printing ₹2, ₹5, and ₹2000 notes, with the ₹500 note now comprising 40.9% of all notes in circulation. Coin usage, particularly ₹1, ₹2, and ₹5 denominations, saw a steady rise. The digital rupee (e₹) witnessed a **334%** increase in value, reaching ₹1,016.5 crore, with the RBI expanding pilots for both retail and wholesale transactions and exploring cross-border payment applications.
- **Digital Payment Innovations:** The RBI introduced the 'UPI Circle' feature, allowing delegated payments, and increased transaction limits for UPI123Pay and UPI Lite, enhancing digital payment adoption across diverse user segments.

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

In the News: In 2024, Germany surpassed Japan to become the world's largest creditor nation, ending Japan's 34-year reign since 1991. This shift was driven by Germany's substantial current account surplus and favorable currency movements, reflecting broader changes in global trade and investment dynamics.

Key Points:

- **Germany's Net External Assets:** Germany's net external assets reached ¥569.7 trillion (approximately \$3.99 trillion) by the end of 2024, overtaking Japan's ¥533.05 trillion (\$3.73 trillion).
- **Current Account Surplus:** Germany recorded a current account surplus of €248.7 billion in 2024, primarily driven by strong exports.
- **Currency Exchange Impact:** The euro appreciated by about 5% against the yen in 2024, enhancing the yen-denominated value of Germany's euro-based assets.
- **Japan's Record Assets:** Despite losing the top spot, Japan's net external assets grew by 12.9% in 2024, reaching a record high, aided by a weaker yen and robust overseas investments.

- **Investment Strategies:** Japan's overseas investments are largely in direct acquisitions, such as company purchases and establishing foreign operations, which are less liquid compared to Germany's preference for portfolio investments like stocks and bonds.
- **Global Rankings:** China remained the third-largest creditor nation with net external assets of ¥516.3 trillion (\$3.6 trillion) at the end of 2024.

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

In the News: On June 6, 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) concluded its 55th Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, unveiling significant policy measures aimed at stimulating economic growth amid global uncertainties and easing inflation.

Key Points:

- **Repo Rate Cut:** The RBI reduced the repo rate by 50 basis points, bringing it down to 5.50%. This marks the third consecutive rate cut in 2025, totaling a 100 basis point reduction since February. The decision was made with a majority vote of 5-1 within the MPC.
- **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) Reduction:** The CRR was cut by 100 basis points to 3%, implemented in four tranches starting September 2025. This move is expected to inject approximately ₹2.5 lakh crore into the banking system, enhancing liquidity and encouraging credit growth.
- **Policy Stance Shift:** The RBI shifted its monetary policy stance from 'accommodative' to 'neutral', indicating a balanced approach between supporting growth and controlling inflation.
- **Inflation Outlook:** The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation forecast for FY26 was revised downward to 3.7% from the earlier estimate of 4%. Quarterly projections are as follows: Q1 at 2.9%, Q2 at 3.4%, Q3 at 3.9%, and Q4 at 4.4%.
- **GDP Growth Forecast:** The real GDP growth projection for FY26 remains unchanged at 6.5%. Quarterly estimates are: Q1 at 6.5%, Q2 at 6.7%, Q3 at 6.6%, and Q4 at 6.3%.
- **Market Impact:** The rate cuts led to a positive response in the stock market, with the Nifty 50 and BSE Sensex rising by 0.94% and 0.9%, respectively. Sectors such as real estate and financials saw significant gains, reflecting increased investor optimism.
- **Implications for Borrowers:** The reduction in the repo rate is expected to lead to lower lending rates, resulting in decreased EMIs for home, auto, and personal loans. For instance, a ₹50 lakh home loan could see a monthly EMI reduction of approximately ₹1,500, leading to substantial annual savings for borrowers.

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

In the News: On June 3, 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched a five-part documentary series titled *RBI Unlocked: Beyond the Rupee* on JioHotstar. This initiative aims to provide the public with an in-depth understanding of the RBI's functions and its pivotal role in India's economy over the past 90 years.

Key Points:

- **Purpose and Vision:** The docuseries is designed to demystify the operations of India's central bank, offering insights into its responsibilities such as currency management, monetary policy formulation, regulation and supervision of banks and NBFCs, and ensuring financial inclusion. It aims to bridge the knowledge gap between the RBI and the general public, highlighting the institution's significance in the nation's financial stability.
- **Production Details:** Produced by Mumbai-based Chalkboard Entertainment, the series was commissioned by the RBI to visually document its 90-year history. Each episode runs for approximately 25–30 minutes, providing a concise yet comprehensive look into various facets of the RBI's operations.
- **Content Highlights:** The series offers unprecedented access to the RBI's inner workings, including glimpses into gold vaults and currency presses. It features interviews with prominent economists, policy experts, and both former and current RBI Governors, providing diverse perspectives on the institution's evolution and challenges.

At World Bank's Raised Poverty Line of \$3 a Day, India's Extreme Poverty Rate Falls from 27.1% to 5.3% (2011–12 to 2022–23)

In the News: On June 7–8, 2025, the World Bank released updated data showing that India's extreme poverty rate—based on the newly raised global poverty benchmark of **\$3 per person per day (2021 PPP)**—plunged from **27.1% in 2011–12 to 5.3% in 2022–23**. The number of individuals in extreme poverty decreased dramatically from about **344.5 million to 75.2 million**, marking a transformational socio-economic development.

Key Points:

- **Revised Poverty Line Context:** The World Bank raised the international poverty threshold from **\$2.15 to \$3 per day**, adjusting for updated 2021 PPP and inflation. Despite the increased benchmark, India's extreme poverty rate still fell to **5.3%**, highlighting notable progress.
- **Magnitude of Impact:** The absolute number of people living in extreme poverty decreased from approximately **344 million in 2011–12 to 75 million in 2022–23**, indicating nearly **269 million individuals** moving out of extreme poverty based on the \$3/day line.
- **Deeper Decline at Original \$2.15 Benchmark:** When measured against the previous \$2.15/day threshold, India's extreme poverty rate stood even lower at **2.3% in 2022–23**, compared to **16.2% in 2011–12**—reflecting a decline of over 13 percentage points.
- **Drivers of Decline:** Government sources attribute this sharp decline to improved consumption data methods (modified recall period), the expansion of subsidised food transfers, targeted welfare schemes, economic growth, and increased access to education and services—even amidst stricter global benchmarks.
- **Rural-Urban and Income Group Dynamics:** Rural extreme poverty dropped from **18.4% to 2.8%**, and urban poverty from **10.7% to 1.1%**, narrowing the urban-rural gap. Additionally, the lower-middle-income poverty rate (at \$4.20/day) saw a decline from **57.7% to 23.9%** in the same period.

ECONOMY

Flipkart Secures NBFC Licence from RBI: Enters Direct Lending Space

In the News: On June 5, 2025, Flipkart, India's leading e-commerce platform owned by Walmart, announced that it has received a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) licence from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This approval allows Flipkart to directly offer loans to its customers and sellers, marking a significant expansion into the financial services sector.

Key Points:

- **Regulatory Approval:** The RBI granted the NBFC licence to Flipkart Finance Private Limited on March 13, 2025. This is the first instance of a major Indian e-commerce company obtaining such a licence, enabling direct lending without relying on third-party financial institutions.
- **Direct Lending Capabilities:** With the NBFC status, Flipkart can now extend credit directly from its own financial resources to both consumers and sellers on its platform. Previously, Flipkart facilitated loans through partnerships with banks and NBFCs like Axis Bank, IDFC Bank, and Credit Saison.
- **Fintech Expansion:** Flipkart plans to offer these lending services via its e-commerce platform and its fintech application, Super.money. This move aligns with Flipkart's broader strategy to deepen its presence in the digital financial services sector.
- **Operational Preparations:** Before commencing lending operations, Flipkart aims to complete internal processes, including appointing key management personnel and finalizing its business model. The company anticipates launching its lending services in the coming months.

MISCELLANEOUS

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

In the News: From May 31 to June 13, 2025, India and Mongolia are conducting the 17th edition of their joint military exercise, *Nomadic Elephant*, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. This annual exercise alternates between the two nations and focuses on enhancing interoperability for counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations under a United Nations mandate.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Overview:** *Nomadic Elephant* is a bilateral military exercise initiated in 2004, aimed at strengthening defence cooperation between India and Mongolia. The exercise facilitates the sharing of best practices and experiences in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations, particularly in semi-urban and mountainous terrains.
- **Participating Forces:** The Indian Army is represented by 45 personnel from the Arunachal Scouts battalion. The Mongolian Armed Forces have deployed a 150-member Special Forces unit for the exercise.

- **Training Activities:** The exercise includes a range of training modules such as endurance training, reflex shooting, room intervention, small team tactics, and rock craft training. This edition also incorporates aspects of cyber warfare to enhance the complexity and realism of the training scenarios.

ENVIRONMENT

Telangana Notifies Kumram Bheem Conservation Reserve to Strengthen Tiger Corridor

In the News: In May 2025, the Government of Telangana officially declared the Kumram Bheem Conservation Reserve, encompassing a critical tiger corridor that connects the Kawal Tiger Reserve in Telangana with the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra. This designation, made under Section 36(A) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, aims to enhance tiger conservation efforts by ensuring habitat connectivity and facilitating safe movement for tigers across state boundaries.

Key Points:

- **Geographical Scope:** The Kumram Bheem Conservation Reserve spans an area of 1,492.88 square kilometers, covering 78 forest blocks across the Kagaznagar and Asifabad forest divisions in the Kumram Bheem Asifabad district. This area serves as a vital link between the Kawal Tiger Reserve and several protected areas in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, including the Tadoba-Andhari, Kanhargao, Tippeshwar, and Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuaries, as well as the Indravati Tiger Reserve.
- **Biodiversity Significance:** The reserve is home to a rich array of wildlife, including apex predators such as tigers, leopards, wild dogs, sloth bears, wolves, and hyenas. It also supports a diverse herbivore population comprising gaur, sambar, nilgai, chital, four-horned antelope, and Indian gazelle. Additionally, the area hosts over 240 bird species, notably the Malabar Pied Hornbill and the Long-Billed Vulture, for which it serves as a crucial nesting site.
- **Conservation Management:** To oversee the management of the reserve, the state government has established a 12-member Conservation Reserve Management Committee. This committee includes the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Kumram Bheem Asifabad as the member secretary, representatives from three Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), including the Hyderabad Tiger Conservation Society and WWF-India, and the sarpanches of Karji, Motlaguda, Murliguda, and Kammergaon panchayats. The committee also comprises the District Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Officer, the District Agricultural Officer, and the DFOs of Asifabad and Kagaznagar.
- **Legal Framework:** Section 36(A) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, empowers state governments to declare any government-owned area, particularly those adjacent to national parks and sanctuaries or serving as corridors between protected areas, as conservation reserves. This provision aims to protect landscapes, flora, fauna, and their habitats while promoting sustainable coexistence with local communities.

Climate Change Performance Index 2025: Where Does India Stand?

In the News: The 2025 edition of the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), released by Germanwatch, the NewClimate Institute, and Climate Action Network International, evaluates the climate actions of 63 countries and the European Union. India has secured the 10th position, maintaining its status among the high-performing nations in global climate efforts.

Key Points:

- **India's Overall Ranking:** India ranks 10th in the CCPI 2025, with an overall score of 67.99. This places India among the top performers, alongside countries like Denmark (4th), the Netherlands (5th), and the United Kingdom (6th).
- **Category-wise Performance:**
 - *Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions:* High rating, attributed to India's relatively low per capita emissions despite being the world's most populous country.
 - *Energy Use:* High rating, reflecting efficient energy consumption patterns.
 - *Climate Policy:* Medium rating, indicating room for improvement in policy formulation and implementation.
 - *Renewable Energy:* Low rating, suggesting the need for accelerated adoption and integration of renewable energy sources.
- **Strengths:**
 - Rapid expansion of renewable energy, particularly in large-scale solar power projects.
 - Introduction of energy efficiency standards and promotion of electric vehicle deployment.
 - Low per capita emissions and energy use, aligning with sustainable development goals.
- **Global Context:**

- No country achieved a "very high" rating across all CCPI categories; thus, the top three positions remain unoccupied.
- Denmark leads the index at 4th place, followed by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.
- Among G20 nations, only India and the United Kingdom are categorized as high performers.

India to Build First-Ever Polar Research Vessel in Collaboration with Norway: Advancing Scientific and Maritime Capabilities

In the News: On June 3, 2025, India marked a significant milestone in its maritime and scientific endeavors by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd. (GRSE) of Kolkata and Norway's Kongsberg Maritime**. This collaboration aims to construct India's first indigenous Polar Research Vessel (PRV), enhancing the nation's capabilities in polar research and oceanography.

Key Points:

- **Strategic Collaboration:** The MoU was formalized in Oslo during the Nor-Shipping 2025 maritime trade fair, with Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, in attendance. The agreement signifies a fusion of India's shipbuilding expertise with Norway's advanced maritime technology.
- **Construction and Design:** GRSE will undertake the construction of the PRV at its Kolkata shipyard, leveraging its experience in building complex maritime platforms. Kongsberg Maritime will provide design and technological support, ensuring the vessel meets international standards for polar research.
- **Scientific Capabilities:** The PRV will be equipped with state-of-the-art scientific instruments, enabling researchers to conduct in-depth studies of oceanic depths, marine ecosystems, and climate change in polar and southern ocean regions.
- **Operational Management:** The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) will operate the vessel, facilitating India's research missions in the Arctic and Antarctic, and reducing reliance on foreign-chartered vessels.
- **Timeline and Investment:** The construction of the PRV is projected to be completed within five years, with an estimated investment of ₹2,600 crore.
- **Alignment with National Initiatives:** This project aligns with India's 'Make in India' initiative and the Maritime Vision 2047, aiming to bolster indigenous capabilities and establish India as a global maritime leader.

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

In the News: On June 4, 2025, just before World Environment Day, the wetlands of Khichan in Phalodi and Menar in Udaipur, Rajasthan, were designated as Ramsar Sites. This recognition elevates India's total to 91 Ramsar Sites, the highest in Asia, and underscores the country's commitment to wetland conservation.

Key Points:

- **Significance of the Ramsar Designation:** The Ramsar Convention, established in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. India became a signatory in 1982. Ramsar Sites are wetlands of international importance, recognized for their ecological significance, biodiversity, and role in supporting human life.
- **Khichan Wetland, Phalodi:** Khichan is renowned for hosting thousands of migratory Demoiselle cranes each winter, making it a significant site along the Central Asian Flyway. The local community has played a pivotal role in bird conservation, with traditions that protect and feed these migratory birds.
- **Menar Wetland, Udaipur:** Known as the "Bird Village," Menar comprises two primary lakes—Brahma Talab and Dhand Talab—and supports over 200 species of migratory and resident birds, including the Eurasian coot, spot-billed duck, and various herons. Community-driven conservation efforts have been central to Menar's ecological preservation, with locals enforcing bans on hunting and fishing.
- **Rajasthan's Enhanced Ramsar Portfolio:** With the inclusion of Khichan and Menar, Rajasthan now boasts four Ramsar Sites, joining the ranks of Sambhar Salt Lake and Keoladeo Ghana National Park.
- **National Recognition and Support:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded the development, emphasizing India's vigorous strides in environmental conservation powered by public participation. Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav highlighted the addition as a testament to India's commitment to a greener future.

World Environment Day 2025: Uniting to Beat Plastic Pollution

In the News: On June 5, 2025, the global community observed World Environment Day with the theme “Beat Plastic Pollution,” emphasizing the urgent need to address the escalating plastic waste crisis. The Republic of Korea hosted the international celebrations, highlighting its commitment to sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.

Key Points:

- **Theme and Global Focus:** The 2025 theme, “Beat Plastic Pollution,” underscores the pervasive impact of plastic waste on ecosystems, wildlife, and human health. The campaign calls for collective action to reduce plastic consumption, promote recycling, and develop sustainable alternatives.
- **Host Country – Republic of Korea:** South Korea, serving as the host for the second time since 1997, showcased its advancements in waste management and eco-friendly technologies. Jeju Province, known for its environmental initiatives, was the focal point of the celebrations, reflecting the nation's dedication to a plastic-free future.
- **Significance of the Day:** Established in 1972 by the United Nations, World Environment Day serves as a platform to raise awareness and prompt action on pressing environmental issues. In 2025, the focus on plastic pollution aligns with global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to responsible consumption and environmental conservation.
- **Global Initiatives and Events:** Around the world, various activities marked the day:
 - In Nagpur, India, the Maharashtra State Biodiversity Board organized awareness campaigns and cleanliness drives to combat plastic pollution.
 - The Nagpur Municipal Corporation launched the “Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0” tree plantation initiative, promoting green spaces and environmental consciousness.
 - In Geneva, Switzerland, the Geneva Environment Network hosted dialogues focusing on multilateral actions to address plastic pollution, emphasizing international cooperation.