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IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

Lucknow Enters UNESCO List as 'Creative City of Gastronomy'

In the News: The city of Lucknow has been officially designated by UNESCO as a "Creative City of Gastronomy", recognising its rich culinary heritage and vibrant food culture. The announcement was made during the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Lucknow thus becomes India's second city to receive this honour in the gastronomy category, joining the elite global list of cities celebrated for their gastronomy. The accolade highlights the city's heritage in Awadhi cuisine and signals a boost for food-led tourism and cultural identity.

Key Points:
- Lucknow's nomination was submitted by India's Ministry of Culture following a dossier prepared by the Uttar Pradesh Tourism and Culture Department, and the UNESCO designation was formalised on 31 October 2025.
- The title "City of Gastronomy" is part of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (UCCN), which recognises cities excelling in creativity in fields like gastronomy, music, literature, design, and film.
- This status places Lucknow among about 70 gastronomy-cities worldwide and makes it the second Indian city after Hyderabad to be awarded this tag.
- Lucknow's nomination emphasised its legendary Awadhi cuisine — slow-cooked kebabs, biryanis, kormas, sweets and street-food traditions that trace back to its Nawabi heritage.
- Officials expect the status to strengthen culinary tourism in the city and state, supporting food-based entrepreneurship, sustainable food practices and global outreach.
- The recognition ties into broader state-level goals of promoting cultural-tourism and heritage industries in Uttar Pradesh.

150 Years of Arya Samaj

In the News: The Arya Samaj is commemorating its 150th year since foundation, marked prominently by the International Arya Mahasammelan 2025 in New Delhi, where the Prime Minister highlighted that this anniversary is not just a community milestone but part of the nation's wider Vedic and reformist identity. The celebrations are being held alongside the 200th birth anniversary of its founder, Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, and include an exhibition entitled "150 Golden Years of Service".

Key Points:
- The Arya Samaj was founded in 1875 by Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, with the aim to reform Hindu society by returning to the Vedas as the supreme source of knowledge and rejecting idol-worship, superstitions and social evils.
- Over its 150 years, the Arya Samaj has championed social reforms such as women's education, widow-remarriage, inter-caste marriages, and the eradication of untouchability and child marriage.
- The movement has also established numerous institutions in education (like the DAV school system and Gurukuls), and been active in relief work — for example aiding refugees during the Partition, as noted by the Prime Minister.
- A special commemorative coin and postal stamp were released to mark the 150th year of the Arya Samaj, reflecting its national significance.
- The Arya Samaj's motto "Krinvanto Vishwam Aryam" ("Let us ennoble the entire world by noble thoughts") remains central, and the organisation is being called upon to participate in national missions such as digitising ancient manuscripts under the "Gyan Bharatam" mission.
- The 150-year celebrations include the Jyāna Jyoti Festival and the exhibition "150 Golden Years of Service", showcasing the reformist and educational legacy of the Arya Samaj.

India Crosses 500 GW Power Capacity Mark

In the News: India's power sector achieved a significant milestone with its total installed electricity capacity surpassing **500 GW**, reaching 500.89 GW as of 30 September 2025. The share of non-fossil fuel sources such as renewables, hydro and nuclear stood at over **51 %**, marking a major stride in the country's transition to clean energy. This accomplishment

means India has met one of its key goals under the COP26 "Panchamrit" commitment — 50 % of installed electric capacity from non-fossil fuels by 2030 — **five years ahead of schedule**. The progress reflects sustained policy push, investment flows and sectoral reforms driving the expansion of green energy.

Key Points:

- India's total installed electricity capacity reached **500.89 GW** by 30 September 2025.
- Non-fossil fuel capacity — including renewables (solar, wind), hydro and nuclear — stood at **256.09 GW**, representing **about 51 %** of the total capacity.
- Fossil-fuel-based capacity accounted for approximately **244.80 GW**, or about **49 %** of the total.
- In the first half of FY 2025-26, India added **28 GW** of non-fossil capacity and **5.1 GW** of fossil capacity, underlining the shift towards cleaner energy sources.
- Within the renewable segment, installed capacities were: solar about **127.33 GW** and wind about **53.12 GW**.
- This achievement places India ahead of its target timeline by meeting the COP26 non-fossil capacity goal of 50 % by 2030 **five years early**.

Swachh Survekshan 2025: Madurai Tops the List of India's Dirtiest Cities

In the News: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) released the results of **Swachh Survekshan 2025**, the world's largest urban cleanliness survey. This year's rankings revealed that **Madurai** topped the list of **India's dirtiest cities**, highlighting critical sanitation challenges and waste management lapses in the region.

Key Points:

- **Survey Overview:** Swachh Survekshan 2025 covered over **4,400 cities** across India, assessing cleanliness, waste segregation, public sanitation, and citizen feedback under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban).
- **Dirtiest City Ranking: Madurai**, Tamil Nadu, was ranked the dirtiest city, primarily due to poor solid waste segregation, inadequate drainage management, and low public participation in sanitation drives.
- **Top Performers:** On the other hand, Indore retained its record as India's cleanest city for the eighth consecutive year, followed by Surat and Navi Mumbai.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Cities were evaluated on service-level progress (40%), citizen voice (30%), and certification for garbage-free status (30%).Government Action: The ministry has directed local urban bodies to submit action plans for improving waste treatment and community-led cleanliness initiatives in low-performing cities.
- **Broader Context:** The 2025 edition aligns with the Swachh Bharat Mission's next phase—"Garbage-Free Cities 2.0", emphasizing circular economy practices and 100% waste processing by 2026.

Indian Army Conducts VAYU SAMANVAY-II in Desert Sector

In the News: The **Indian Army** conducted **VAYU SAMANVAY-II**, a large-scale joint exercise in the **Desert Sector**, demonstrating integrated air-land battle coordination and synergy between the **Indian Army and Indian Air Force (IAF)**. The exercise focused on validating joint operations, air support tactics, and rapid mobility in desert warfare scenarios.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Objective:** VAYU SAMANVAY-II aimed to strengthen coordination between air and ground forces for seamless execution of integrated operations in semi-arid and desert terrains.
- **Joint Participation:** The exercise featured participation from key Army formations, frontline IAF fighter aircraft, attack helicopters, and airborne assault units.
- **Operational Focus:** Drills included close air support, battlefield interdiction, logistics sustenance from the air, and precision strikes on simulated enemy positions.
- **Technology Integration:** The exercise showcased the use of advanced surveillance systems, network-centric communication, and AI-enabled command-and-control tools for real-time decision-making.
- **Strategic Importance:** Conducted in the western front's desert region, the exercise reinforced India's readiness to counter potential threats in high-temperature, low-visibility environments.

- **Outcome:** VAYU SAMANVAY-II reaffirmed the Indian Armed Forces' commitment to achieving full-spectrum joint operational capability, enhancing interoperability, and strengthening deterrence posture along India's western borders.

How Ayushman Bharat Became the World's No. 1 Health Scheme

In the News: India's flagship health insurance program, Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), was recognized as the world's No. 1 health assurance scheme by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank for its scale, inclusivity, and digital transformation in public healthcare delivery.

Key Points:

- **Recognition:** The WHO–World Bank joint assessment ranked Ayushman Bharat as the largest fully government-funded health assurance program globally, covering **over 60 crore beneficiaries** across India.
- **Scheme Overview:** Launched in 2018, the scheme provides cashless health insurance of ₹5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary hospital care through a vast network of over 28,000 empaneled hospitals.
- **Digital Transformation**: Integration with the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) has enabled seamless patient data, e-health records, and portability across states — a milestone in India's digital health ecosystem.
- **Impact:** Over 7.5 crore hospital admissions have been authorized since inception, saving beneficiaries an estimated ₹1.2 lakh crore in out-of-pocket expenditure.

Inclusivity: The program ensures equitable access for women, senior citizens, and rural populations, with over 49% of beneficiaries being women.Global Recognition: International agencies hailed Ayushman Bharat as a model for universal health coverage (UHC), citing its scale, efficiency, and digital innovation as benchmarks for other developing nations.

Scindia Confers Bhupen Hazarika Awards Celebrating Northeast Icons

In the News: Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia conferred the Bhupen Hazarika Awards, celebrating exceptional individuals and institutions from India's Northeast who have made significant contributions to culture, public service, and community development. The ceremony paid tribute to the legendary musician Bhupen Hazarika's legacy of unity through art and social reform.

Key Points:

- **Award Ceremony:** The Bhupen Hazarika Awards 2025 were presented in New Delhi by Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, recognizing distinguished achievers from the eight Northeastern states for their contributions in music, literature, social service, and innovation.
- **Honourees:** Recipients included artists, educators, and grassroots leaders promoting indigenous languages, traditional crafts, and inclusive education across the region.
- **Cultural Significance:** The awards honor the enduring influence of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika — a cultural icon whose music championed themes of harmony, justice, and regional pride.
- **Government Support:** The event was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the North Eastern Council (NEC), as part of efforts to promote cultural diplomacy and regional empowerment.
- **Regional Development Focus:** Scindia emphasized the government's commitment to the Northeast's holistic development through improved connectivity, tourism promotion, and youth skill initiatives.

India to Resume Approvals for Chinese Imports After Five-Year Freeze

In the News: India announced plans to resume approvals for Chinese imports after a five-year freeze imposed following the 2020 border tensions in Ladakh. The move marks a cautious step toward normalizing trade relations between the two major Asian economies.

Key Points:

- **Background:** Approvals for Chinese imports were halted in mid-2020 after the Galwan Valley clashes, which strained diplomatic and economic ties between India and China. The suspension affected electronics, telecommunications, and auto components.

- **Policy Decision:** The Indian government will now allow phased resumption of clearances for selected Chinese imports, focusing first on non-sensitive sectors such as consumer electronics and machinery.
- **Regulatory Oversight:** The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and the Ministry of Commerce will implement strict scrutiny protocols to ensure compliance with national security standards
- **Economic Rationale:** The decision comes amid rising input costs for Indian manufacturers, who rely on Chinese components for critical supply chains in smartphones, solar modules, and electric vehicles.
- **Diplomatic Context:** The policy shift reflects a pragmatic recalibration rather than a full normalization of ties; border disengagement and security dialogue remain ongoing priorities.

MNRE to Host International Conference on Green Hydrogen

In the News: The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) will host the International Conference on Green Hydrogen (ICGH-2025) from **6–7 November 2025** at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. This two-day global platform will convene scientists, industry leaders and policymakers to advance India's green hydrogen economy.

Key Points:

- **Event Timing & Venue:** The conference will be held on **6–7 November 2025** at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- **Mission Context:** The event is aligned with India's National Green Hydrogen Mission, launched on 4 January 2023, with targets such as producing 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030.
- **Scope & Agenda:** The conference covers the full green hydrogen value-chain: production (electrolysis, biological routes), storage, transport, downstream applications, export potential, green financing, start-up innovation, workforce up-skilling, and regulatory frameworks.
- **India's Progress:** India has installed over 223 GW of renewable capacity (including 108 GW solar, 51 GW wind) and has allocated 862,000 tonnes per annum production capacity to 19 firms and 3,000 MW annual electrolyser manufacturing to 15 firms.
- **Global Ambition:** India aims to capture nearly 10 % of global green hydrogen demand by 2030, projecting export-oriented growth and annual investments of approximately USD 100 billion.

India Sends Humanitarian Aid to Jamaica and Cuba

In the News: The Government of India dispatched 20 tonnes of humanitarian aid each to Jamaica and Cuba in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa. The aid was transported via an Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft and underscored India's solidarity with fellow Global South nations in times of crisis.

Key Points:

- **Aid Deployment:** India dispatched **20 tonnes of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) materials** each to Jamaica and Cuba. The consignment included the **"Aarogya Maitri BHISHM Cube"**, food and daily-utilities, medicines, power generators, shelter materials and hygiene kits..
- **Logistics & Delivery:** The consignment was carried out via an Indian Air Force flight out of New Delhi, demonstrating India's evolving capability to deploy rapid humanitarian assistance abroad.
- **Context of Crisis:** The relief was sent following Hurricane Melissa, which made landfall in Jamaica as a Category 5 storm and subsequently severely impacted eastern Cuba. The storm caused widespread infrastructure damage, including power outages affecting over 60 % of Jamaica's population, and forced mass evacuations in Cuba.
- **Diplomatic Significance:** The aid underscores India's role as a responsive global partner and its commitment to the "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" ethos "the world is one family" by extending assistance to vulnerable island nations in the Caribbean.

Amul Ranks as the World's Top Cooperative in GDP Per Capita

In the News: According to the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) World Cooperative Monitor 2025 rankings, Amul (operated by Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd, GCMMF) has been ranked as the **world's number-one cooperative**, based on GDP per-capita performance. The announcement was made during the ICA CM50 conference held in Doha, Qatar.

Key Points:

- **Top Rank:** Amul emerged as the world's **number-one cooperative**, with India's Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative Limited (IFFCO) coming in second.
- **Metric:** The ranking was based on **GDP per-capita performance** of cooperatives globally, as per the World Cooperative Monitor 2025.
- **Scale & Structure:** Amul is a farmer-owned cooperative with **3.6 million milk producers**, collecting over **35 million litres of milk daily** across more than 18,600 village societies.
- **Turnover:** GCMMF reported a brand-group turnover of approx **₹90,000 crore (~US$10.58 billion)** in FY 2024-25, with annual growth of ~11.23%.

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Awarded World Leader for Peace and Security 2025

In the News: Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was honoured with the World Leader for Peace and Security Award 2025 in London. The accolade recognizes his decades-long global efforts in peacebuilding, humanitarian service, and interfaith dialogue through the Art of Living Foundation, which operates in over 180 countries.

Key Points:

- **Award Recognition:** Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar received the World Leader for Peace and Security Award 2025 for promoting non-violence, global harmony, and social reform. The ceremony was held in London, attended by global dignitaries, peace advocates, and policymakers.
- **Organising Body:** The award was presented by the International Association for Global Peace in collaboration with the European Council on Human Rights and Development (ECHRD).
- **Contributions to Global Peace:** Over four decades, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's initiatives have mediated conflicts in Iraq, Colombia, and Sri Lanka, fostering reconciliation and community resilience through dialogue and stress-relief programs.
- **Environmental & Social Impact:** Under his leadership, the Art of Living Foundation has launched large-scale river rejuvenation projects, planted over 100 million trees worldwide, and promoted rural entrepreneurship and education.
- **Spiritual & Humanitarian Legacy:** His "World is One Family" (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam) philosophy aligns with India's vision of peace, coexistence, and compassion as central to global progress.
- **Previous Awards:** He has earlier been recognized with the Padma Vibhushan (2016) and several international honours, including peace awards from Colombia, Paraguay, and Argentina, for his contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable development.

Maharashtra Becomes First Indian State to Tie-Up with Starlink

In the News: Maharashtra became the **first Indian state** to sign an agreement with **Starlink**, the satellite internet company founded by Elon Musk, to provide high-speed internet connectivity to remote and rural areas. The partnership aims to bridge the digital divide and accelerate digital inclusion across the state's underserved regions.

Key Points:

- **Partnership Launch:** Maharashtra formalized its collaboration with **Starlink** on November 1, 2025, under the **Digital Maharashtra Mission**, focusing on expanding internet access to villages and tribal regions lacking fiber infrastructure.
- **Objective:** The initiative seeks to ensure **universal internet coverage** across the state, facilitating online education, telemedicine, and e-governance services in remote districts.
- **Implementation Scope:** The project will initially cover **1,200 gram panchayats** across Gadchiroli, Nandurbar, Chandrapur, and Palghar districts, with phased expansion planned statewide.
- **Technology Integration**: Starlink's Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite technology will enable high-speed, low-latency internet in difficult terrains where traditional broadband is unfeasible.
- **Government Collaboration:** The partnership is facilitated through the Department of Information Technology, Government of Maharashtra, with Starlink providing both equipment and technical training.

- **Economic and Social Impact:** The project is expected to boost digital entrepreneurship, enable e-learning for rural students, and strengthen healthcare outreach via telemedicine.

Hurun India Philanthropy List 2025: Shiv Nadar Tops

In the News: The Hurun India Philanthropy List 2025 was released, naming Shiv Nadar, Founder of HCL Technologies, as India's top philanthropist for the third consecutive year. Nadar donated ₹2,580 crore over the past year, reaffirming his commitment to education and social development through the Shiv Nadar Foundation.

Key Points:

- **Top Philanthropist:** Shiv Nadar retained the top spot with annual donations of ₹2,580 crore, focusing primarily on education, healthcare, and rural development.
- **Second and Third Positions: Azim Premji** of Wipro ranked second with ₹1,940 crore in donations, followed by **Mukesh Ambani** of Reliance Industries with ₹510 crore.
- **Sectoral Focus:** Education emerged as the top philanthropic area, accounting for **42% of total donations**, followed by healthcare and environmental sustainability.
- **New Entrants:** Notable first-time entrants include Nikhil Kamath (Zerodha) and Roshni Nadar Malhotra, highlighting the growing presence of young philanthropists in India's giving landscape.
- **Regional Trends**: Maharashtra and Karnataka led in philanthropic activity, collectively contributing nearly 60% of total donations made by individuals on the list.
- **Cumulative Impact:** The 2025 list includes 129 philanthropists who collectively contributed ₹11,200 crore, marking a 12% year-on-year increase in philanthropic giving.

North 24 Parganas Becomes India's Most Populated District

In the News: North 24 Parganas district in West Bengal was declared India's most populated district, surpassing Thane in Maharashtra, according to the latest demographic analysis released by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India.

Key Points:

- **Population Milestone:** North 24 Parganas has recorded a population of over 11.2 million, making it the most populated district in India as per 2025 estimates.
- **Previous Record Holder:** It overtook Thane district of Maharashtra, which had long held the position as India's most populous district since the 2011 Census.
- **Urbanization and Growth:** The district's high population density stems from rapid urban expansion, proximity to Kolkata, and improved employment opportunities in sectors such as manufacturing, services, and logistics.
- **Demographic Composition:** The district exhibits a high literacy rate of over 87% and an urbanization rate exceeding 60%, reflecting its evolution into a major metropolitan extension of Kolkata.
- **Administrative Importance:** North 24 Parganas plays a crucial role in West Bengal's economy, housing important towns like Barasat, Barrackpore, Bongaon, and Salt Lake City (Bidhannagar).
- **Challenges Ahead:** The rising population poses challenges in infrastructure, sanitation, housing, and environmental management, prompting new state-level urban planning initiatives.
- **National Context**: India's overall population growth has slowed to 0.8% annually, but districts like North 24 Parganas highlight the regional imbalance between urban growth centers and rural depopulation trends.

Operation 'WeedOut'

In the News: The Government of India launched Operation 'WeedOut', a nationwide campaign to combat narcotics cultivation, smuggling, and abuse. The operation is led by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in coordination with state police and central agencies, marking one of the largest anti-drug crackdowns in India's history.

Key Points:

- **Launch Objective:** Operation *'WeedOut'* was initiated to eliminate illegal cannabis and opium cultivation and dismantle networks involved in drug trafficking across India.

- **Coordinating Agencies**: The initiative is spearheaded by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs, with active participation from state police, the Indian Coast Guard, and customs authorities.
- **Scale of the Drive:** More than 1,200 hectares of illicit crop area have been destroyed across Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur, with continued surveillance operations in hilly and border regions.
- **Technology Integration:** The NCB is employing satellite imagery, drones, and AI-based mapping to identify and monitor illegal plantations in remote areas. Over 2,500 kg of narcotics were seized and 350 individuals arrested in the first phase of the operation.
- **Public Awareness:** The campaign also promotes the slogan "Drugs-free India by 2047", focusing on school-level sensitization programs and rehabilitation outreach.

Broader Vision: Operation *'WeedOut'* aligns with the government's National Drug Demand Reduction Policy, emphasizing inter-agency coordination, technology-led enforcement, and community engagement to create a narcotics-free India.

Commemorative ₹50 Coin Marks NHPC Limited's Golden Jublilee

In the News: President Droupadi Murmu released a **commemorative ₹50 coin** to mark the **Golden Jubilee of NHPC Limited**, India's premier hydropower company. The event celebrated NHPC's 50 years of contribution to clean and sustainable energy generation in India.

Key Points:

- **Event Launch:** The commemorative coin was unveiled by President Droupadi Murmu at a ceremony in New Delhi, attended by Union Power Minister R.K. Singh and senior NHPC officials.
- **Coin Design:** The ₹50 coin features the NHPC logo, the inscription "50 Years of NHPC Limited," and the years **1975–2025** engraved on one side, with the Lion Capital of Ashoka and the denomination on the reverse.
- **NHPC Background:** Established in **1975**, NHPC (formerly National Hydroelectric Power Corporation) is India's leading hydropower developer under the Ministry of Power.
- **Operational Achievements:** NHPC currently operates 25 power stations with an installed capacity of 7,097 MW, including solar and wind energy projects contributing to India's renewable energy goals.
- **Contribution to Clean Energy:** The company has played a vital role in promoting hydropower as a reliable renewable source, supporting India's target of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030.
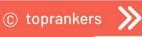
PM Modi Launches NexCAR19: India's First Homegrown CAR T-Cell Therapy

In the News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched NexCAR19, India's first indigenously developed CAR T-cell therapy, marking a breakthrough in the nation's cancer treatment landscape. The therapy represents a major milestone in affordable and advanced cancer care, offering hope for patients with certain types of blood cancers.

Key Points:

- **Therapy Launch:** PM Modi launched NexCAR19, the country's first homegrown CAR T-cell (Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell) therapy, developed through collaboration between IIT Bombay and ImmunoACT, a startup incubated at the institute.
- **Medical Innovation:** NexCAR19 uses genetically engineered T-cells from a patient's own immune system to identify and destroy cancer cells, particularly targeting B-cell lymphomas and leukemias.
- **Global Significance:** India becomes the fifth country in the world to develop an indigenous CAR T-cell therapy, after the US, China, South Korea, and Japan.
- **Affordability:** Unlike imported CAR T-cell treatments that cost ₹3–4 crore, NexCAR19 will be available for under ₹50 lakh, making it accessible to more patients.
- **Institutional Collaboration:** The project was supported by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) under the Ministry of Science and Technology, highlighting India's scientific self-reliance under the 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' missions.

New Delhi Work Hours: A Step Against Seasonal Smog

In the News: The Delhi government announced revised work hours for offices in New Delhi as part of emergency measures to combat the city's recurring seasonal smog crisis. The decision aims to curb vehicular congestion during peak hours and reduce pollution from daily commuting, a major contributor to deteriorating air quality in the capital.

Key Points:

- **Policy Introduction:** The Delhi government introduced staggered office timings for government and private sector employees to reduce traffic density and vehicular emissions.
- **Implementation Period:** The new work-hour schedule will remain effective throughout the high-pollution season—November to January—when smog levels typically reach hazardous levels.
- **Air Quality Measures:** The decision follows record-high Air Quality Index (AQI) readings in early November 2025, with several areas exceeding the 'Severe+' category (AQI above 450).
- **Work Schedule:** Government offices will operate from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., while private offices have been encouraged to adopt flexible work-from-home or staggered shifts between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. starts.
- **Supporting Initiatives:** Complementary actions include restrictions on construction dust, vehicle bans under the GRAP-IV (Graded Response Action Plan), and intensified air-quality monitoring.

Karnataka Becomes India's First State with Paid Menstrual Leave

In the News: Karnataka became the first Indian state to introduce paid menstrual leave for women employees in both government and private sectors. The move marks a major policy step toward gender-sensitive workplace reform and aims to promote menstrual health and inclusivity in India's employment ecosystem.

Key Points:

- **Policy Launch:** The Government of Karnataka formally approved the Menstrual Leave Policy 2025, granting one day of paid leave per menstrual cycle to women employees across all state departments and encouraging private organisations to follow suit.
- **Scope of Implementation**: The policy applies to approximately 3.4 lakh women employees in the state government, with provisions allowing private firms to voluntarily adopt the same through HR policy alignment.
- **Objective:** The initiative seeks to recognise menstrual health as a legitimate aspect of workplace wellness, reducing stigma and ensuring better productivity and well-being for women workers.
- **Broader Vision:** Karnataka's move aligns with the state's Women@Work initiative, aimed at increasing female participation in the workforce and creating more equitable working conditions.
- **Supporting Framework:** The policy was developed in consultation with the Department of Women and Child Development, Labour Department, and various health experts to ensure inclusivity and ease of implementation.

India Gears Up for 2026 Tiger Census: World's Largest Wildlife Survey

In the News: India announced preparations for the 2026 All-India Tiger Estimation, the world's largest wildlife survey, reaffirming its leadership in big cat conservation. The upcoming census, coordinated by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), will deploy advanced technology for unprecedented accuracy and scale.

Key Points:

- **Census Launch:** The 2026 Tiger Census will cover over 4 lakh sq. km across India's tiger reserves, forest divisions, and wildlife sanctuaries, involving thousands of forest officials, scientists, and volunteers.
- **Use of Technology:** For the first time, the survey will integrate AI-enabled camera traps, eDNA sampling, and satellite data to map tiger populations and prey density.
- **Objective**: The census aims to assess the current status of India's tiger population, monitor habitat quality, and guide future conservation strategies under Project Tiger.
- **Institutional Collaboration:** The initiative is led by the NTCA in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), State Forest Departments, and local communities across 20 tiger-bearing states.
- **Historical Background**: India conducts this mega exercise every four years since 2006, with the last census in 2022 estimating 3,167 tigers, representing over 75% of the world's wild tiger population.

- **Global Significance:** The 2026 census will strengthen India's commitment to the Global Tiger Recovery Programme (GTRP) and showcase its success under the St. Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation (2010).

INTERNATIONAL

Russia Launches Nuclear Submarine to Carry 'Doomsday' Poseidon Drone

In the News: Russia formally launched its new nuclear-powered submarine, the Project 09851 Khabarovsk, at the Sevmash shipyard in Severodvinsk. The vessel is explicitly designed to carry the unmanned underwater drone Poseidon (also referred to as Status-6), which Russian officials describe as a "doomsday" weapon capable of triggering radioactive tsunamis. The launch ceremony was attended by Defence Minister Andrei Belousov and Navy Commander Aleksandr Moiseyev. The move underscores Russia's emphasis on expanding its under-sea nuclear-deterrence capability amid heightened global tensions.

Key Points:

- The Khabarovsk submarine was ceremonially launched at the Sevmash shipyard in Severodvinsk under Russian naval authorities.
- The submarine is designed by the Rubin Central Design Bureau of Marine Engineering to deploy advanced underwater weapons including the Poseidon drone.
- The Poseidon unmanned underwater vehicle is nuclear-powered, can travel to great depths and over long range, and is claimed to be capable of devastating coastal regions by triggering radioactive ocean swells.
- Russian officials have repeatedly referred to the Poseidon as a "doomsday missile" or "doomsday drone," signalling its role in strategic deterrence.
- The launch is perceived externally as a shift in under-sea warfare dynamics, raising concerns among NATO and maritime security analysts about the emergence of a new class of underwater nuclear threats.
- The submarine and drone system still require extensive sea-trials before becoming fully operable, suggesting this is a preparatory rather than immediately operational step in Russia's naval build-up.
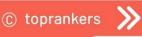
India Secures Six-Month US Waiver for Chabahar Port

In the News: The Government of India announced that it has obtained from the United States a six-month exemption from sanctions for operations at Iran's Chabahar Port, thereby securing permission to continue its activities at the strategic Iranian port along the Gulf of Oman. This waiver enables India to maintain its trade, transit and connectivity links via Chabahar despite the US sanctions regime on Iran. India's Ministry of External Affairs confirmed that the exemption started from 29 October and will run for six months, giving New Delhi a window to safeguard its regional connectivity agenda.

Key Points:

- The Chabahar Port is located in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province, on the Gulf of Oman, and serves as Iran's only deep-water oceanic port, offering direct access to the Indian Ocean.
- India has been developing and operating Chabahar Port (notably through its interest in the Shahid Beheshti terminal) to establish a sea-land route to Afghanistan and Central Asia thereby bypassing Pakistan.
- The US sanctions waiver that India secured for six months is crucial because without it, Indian activities at the port could have been exposed to penalties under US law governing Iran sanctions.
- The exemption reflects India's strategic connectivity policy, including its "Connect Central Asia" goal, and the use of Chabahar as a gateway to Central Asia and Eastern Russia.
- The timing of the waiver comes after the US had previously revoked a long-standing exception (from 2018) for Chabahar Port, so the six-month window offers transitional relief for India's commitments there.
- The waiver strengthens India-US diplomatic engagement and provides New Delhi with flexibility in balancing its regional infrastructure priorities while managing relationships with major global powers.

Maldives Enforces World's First Generational Tobacco Ban

In the News: The Maldives became the first country in the world to enforce a Generational Tobacco Ban, marking a historic step in global public health policy. The law prohibits the sale of all tobacco products to anyone born on or after January 1, 2009, effectively creating a "tobacco-free generation."

Key Points:
- **Policy Launch:** The landmark legislation, passed by the Maldivian Parliament earlier in 2024, officially came into effect in November 2025 as part of the nation's **Tobacco-Free Maldives 2040** vision.
- **Scope of the Ban:** Under the new law, individuals born in 2009 or later will never be legally allowed to buy tobacco or related products in their lifetime, regardless of when they reach adulthood.
- **Implementation Measures:** The Ministry of Health has introduced strict monitoring, digital ID verification for tobacco sales, and heavy penalties for vendors violating the ban.
- **Public Health Impact**: The initiative is expected to drastically reduce youth smoking rates and long-term tobacco-related illnesses, aligning with WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) goals.
- **Global Significance**: The Maldives now leads the world in generational tobacco control, serving as a model for similar legislation under consideration in countries like New Zealand and the United Kingdom.
- **Domestic Support:** The move has received broad support from health experts and civil society, positioning the Maldives as a global pioneer in preventive health and youth protection policy.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit 2025

In the News: The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit 2025 was held in Seoul, South Korea, bringing together leaders from 21 member economies to discuss trade, sustainability, digital transformation, and regional security. The summit underscored the region's collective efforts to enhance economic resilience and strengthen multilateral cooperation amid shifting global dynamics.

Key Points:
- **Summit Venue and Theme:** Hosted by South Korea, the 2025 APEC Summit adopted the theme *"Building a Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Future for All."* The discussions focused on revitalizing trade and fostering inclusive digital growth across the Asia-Pacific region.
- **India's Participation:** India attended as a guest nation, emphasizing its growing role in Indo-Pacific trade and connectivity frameworks, and advocating for supply chain diversification and equitable technology access.
- **Economic Cooperation:** Member economies reaffirmed their commitment to the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040, aimed at promoting free and open trade, sustainable growth, and innovation-driven development.
- **Digital and Green Economy:** The summit announced initiatives to boost cooperation in clean energy transition, AI governance, digital standards, and carbon neutrality pathways
- **Regional Security Dialogue:** Leaders discussed maintaining stability in the South China Sea and strengthening cooperation against economic coercion and cyber threats.

OPEC+ Pauses Oil Production Hikes Amid Surplus Concerns

In the News: The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies (OPEC+) decided to pause previously planned oil production hikes, citing rising global inventories and concerns over a potential supply surplus in early 2026. The decision reflects the group's strategy to stabilize prices amid slowing demand growth and geopolitical uncertainties.

Key Points:
- **Decision Announcement:** OPEC+ ministers, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, agreed during their November 2025 meeting to maintain current production levels instead of implementing incremental increases scheduled for early 2026.
- **Market Impact:** Following the announcement, Brent crude prices stabilized near USD 83 per barrel, easing earlier declines triggered by demand concerns in major economies like China and Europe.
- **Saudi Arabia's Role:** Riyadh reaffirmed its commitment to voluntary output cuts, emphasizing the need for "proactive and preemptive" market management to prevent volatility.

- **Global Economic Context:** The pause coincides with sluggish global growth projections and ongoing energy transition efforts, which have moderated oil consumption in advanced economies.

Sweden Becomes the World's First Cashless Society

In the News: Sweden has emerged as the world's first truly **cashless society**, achieving a shift in which only about one in ten transactions is made using cash.

Key Points:

- **Decline in Cash Usage:** The share of cash payments has fallen dramatically — as of the latest data, only ~10 % of purchases are made using cash.
- **Payment Adoption:** Digital platforms such as Swish, launched in 2012, are widely used: more than 80 % of the population use mobile or card payments.
- **Cash in Circulation:** The amount of cash in circulation is among the lowest in the world, registering far below other advanced economies as a proportion of GDP.
- **Regulatory Context:** The central bank, Sveriges Riksbank, emphasises safety, accessibility and inclusivity even as the country moves toward digital payments.
- **Emerging Concerns:** Despite success, Sweden is re-evaluating its near-cashless model due to national-security and crisis-resilience concerns, with authorities now advising citizens to retain some cash for emergencies.

Famine conditions confirmed in Sudan's Al Fasher and Kadugli

In the News: According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Famine Review Committee's latest assessment on 4 November 2025, famine conditions (IPC Phase 5) have been formally confirmed in the cities of Al Fashir in North Darfur and Kadugli in South Kordofan, Sudan. This marks the first time that the famine classification has been applied to urban centres in the country's ongoing conflict.

Key Points:

- **Famine Declaration:** Al Fashir and Kadugli have been classified as experiencing full famine—marked by extreme food consumption gaps, widespread acute malnutrition, and elevated mortality—since September 2025.
- **Conflict & Siege:** Both cities have been under extended siege Al Fashir trapped for about 18 months by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Kadugli by RSF-aligned SPLM-N forces—cutting off food, medical supplies and humanitarian access.
- **Scale of Food Insecurity:** Around 21.2 million people in Sudan (roughly 45 % of the population) are facing acute food insecurity, with an estimated 375,000 people already at catastrophic levels of hunger.
- **Worsening Humanitarian Environment:** Amid the conflict, aid delivery is severely restricted. Families report resorting to consuming animal feed, hides and boiled leaves due to blockade-induced food scarcity.
- **At-Risk Areas:** In addition to Al Fashir and Kadugli, the IPC warns of famine risk in at least 20 other locations across the Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan regions.

'Vibe Coding' Named Collins Dictionary's Word of the Year 2025

In the News: The Collins Dictionary announced "Vibe Coding" as its Word of the Year 2025, reflecting a growing trend in how people adjust their tone, language, and online behavior to match social contexts. The term symbolizes the evolving dynamics of digital communication and emotional intelligence in the internet era.

Key Points:

- **Word of the Year:** Vibe Coding was chosen by Collins Dictionary as the Word of the Year 2025, highlighting the cultural importance of aligning one's "vibe" or energy with others, particularly in online and workplace interactions.
- **Meaning:** The term refers to the act of tailoring communication style and emotional tone—whether online, in text, or in conversation—to build rapport or fit into different social environments.
- **Usage Growth:** The word saw a 420% increase in usage in 2025, especially across social media, corporate communications, and Gen Z internet slang.

- **Other Shortlisted Words:** Other contenders for Word of the Year included "AI Anxiety", "Heatflation", and "Greentelligence", each capturing major global themes in technology, economy, and climate discourse.
- **Linguistic Evolution:** The term exemplifies how digital culture and artificial intelligence tools are reshaping everyday communication patterns and interpersonal understanding.

Hyderabad-Born Ghazala Hashmi Becomes Virginia's First Indian-American Lieutenant Governor

In the News: Ghazala Hashmi, an Indian-American politician born in Hyderabad, India, was elected as Virginia's first Indian-American and Muslim Lieutenant Governor, marking a historic moment in U.S. state politics. Her victory highlights the growing representation of South Asians and women of color in American leadership roles.

Key Points:

- **Historic Win:** Ghazala Hashmi, representing the Democratic Party, became the first Indian-American and Muslim woman to hold the office of Lieutenant Governor of Virginia.
- **Background:** Born in Hyderabad, she immigrated to the United States in 1981 and pursued a career in academia before entering politics. She holds a Ph.D. in English from Emory University and previously served as a Virginia State Senator.
- **Election Significance:** Hashmi's victory reflects Virginia's demographic and political transformation, emphasizing inclusion, education, and social equity.
- **Political Priorities:** Her campaign focused on education reform, affordable healthcare, climate action, and reproductive rights, resonating with a diverse electorate.
- **Broader Representation:** With her election, Hashmi joins a growing list of Indian-origin leaders in U.S. politics, including Vice President Kamala Harris and several members of Congress.
- **Recognition:** In her victory speech, she dedicated the win to "immigrant daughters everywhere," reaffirming her commitment to public service and equality.
- **Global Context:** Hashmi's achievement is celebrated in India and the U.S. as a symbol of India–U.S. diaspora success, showcasing the strength of democratic representation across communities.

Kazakhstan to Join Abraham Accords Hints By Trump

In the News: Former U.S. President Donald Trump hinted that **Kazakhstan** could be the next country to join the **Abraham Accords**, marking a potential expansion of the landmark peace initiative that normalized relations between Israel and several Arab and Muslim-majority nations. The statement has sparked renewed diplomatic attention toward Central Asia's evolving role in Middle East geopolitics.

Key Points:

- **Background:** The Abraham Accords, initiated in 2020 under Trump's administration, established diplomatic relations between Israel and countries such as the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan.
- **Kazakhstan's Position:** Kazakhstan, a Muslim-majority nation maintaining balanced ties with both Israel and Arab states, has expressed interest in strengthening cooperation in technology, agriculture, and renewable energy sectors.
- **Trump's Statement:** During a public event in Florida, Trump stated that Kazakhstan's inclusion in the accords would "further consolidate peace and economic integration in the broader Middle East and Central Asia."
- **Strategic Significance:** Kazakhstan's participation could make it the first Central Asian nation to join the Abraham Accords, signaling a geopolitical bridge between the Gulf and Eurasian regions.
- **Diplomatic Reactions:** Israeli and U.S. officials welcomed the prospect, while Kazakhstan's foreign ministry noted that discussions were in a preliminary stage.
- **Regional Impact:** If finalized, Kazakhstan's entry would enhance trade, defense cooperation, and connectivity projects linking Central Asia with West Asia.
- **Global Context:** The move aligns with a broader U.S. diplomatic push to expand normalization agreements amid shifting alliances and energy security concerns in the Middle East.

Strongest Geomagnetic Storm Of 2025

In the News: Earth experienced the **strongest geomagnetic storm of the year**, triggered by a series of powerful coronal mass ejections (CMEs) from the Sun. The storm reached **G4 (severe)** level on the NOAA space weather scale, disrupting satellite communications, GPS navigation, and power grids in several regions, while also producing vivid auroras visible across mid-latitudes.

Key Points:

- **Event Trigger:** The storm was caused by multiple CMEs ejected from a large and magnetically complex sunspot region (AR3891) that had been active for several days.
- **Intensity Level:** Classified as a **G4 (severe)** geomagnetic storm, the event recorded a Kp index of 8, making it one of the most intense solar storms since 2003.
- **Global Impact:** Temporary communication blackouts were reported in North America, Northern Europe, and parts of Asia; airlines rerouted polar flights as a precaution.
- **Aurora Activity:** Spectacular auroras were observed as far south as Italy, northern India (Ladakh and Himachal), and the U.S. states of Texas and Arizona.
- **Scientific Monitoring:** NASA and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) closely tracked solar wind speeds exceeding 900 km/s using the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) and India's Aditya-L1 mission.
- **Impact on Satellites and Grids:** Satellite operators switched to safe mode to prevent damage from high-energy particles; power fluctuations were noted in northern Canada.
- **Scientific Context:** Scientists warned that solar activity is peaking as part of **Solar Cycle 25**, expected to reach its maximum in 2025–26, increasing the likelihood of more such strong space-weather events.

Crisis in Sudan: Current trigger, old faultlines, and the human cost

In the News: The crisis in Sudan escalated sharply as fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) engulfed major cities including Khartoum, Al Fasher, and Kadugli, worsening an already dire humanitarian situation. The renewed conflict reflects deep-rooted political, ethnic, and economic faultlines that have shaped Sudan's instability for decades.

Key Points:

- **Current Trigger:** The latest wave of violence began after a failed ceasefire collapsed in late September 2025, with both the SAF and RSF accusing each other of violating peace terms. RSF advances in Darfur and Kordofan prompted retaliatory airstrikes by the army.
- **Old Faultlines:** Sudan's conflict stems from historical rivalries between central and regional powers, ethnic divisions, and disputes over resource control — particularly in the oil- and gold-rich western provinces.
- **Humanitarian Impact:** According to the UN, over 10 million people have been displaced, with famine conditions confirmed in Al Fasher and Kadugli. Hospitals, aid depots, and schools have been destroyed, leaving millions without food or medical assistance.
- **International Response:** The **United Nations**, **African Union**, and **IGAD** have called for immediate ceasefire talks, while India and the EU have sent humanitarian aid through relief corridors in Port Sudan.
- **Human Rights Concerns:** Reports of ethnic violence, sexual assaults, and indiscriminate bombings have drawn global condemnation. The **International Criminal Court (ICC)** has announced investigations into possible war crimes.

China Launches Third Aircraft Carrier 'Fujian' with Cutting-Edge Tech

In the News: China officially launched its third aircraft carrier, *Fujian*, marking a major leap in the country's naval modernization and power projection capabilities. Named after the southeastern coastal province facing Taiwan, *Fujian* is China's most advanced domestically built carrier, featuring next-generation launch and control systems.

Key Points:

- **Launch Event**: The Fujian was launched at the Shanghai Jiangnan Shipyard, marking a milestone for China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). The vessel is expected to begin sea trials by early 2026.

- **Technological Milestone:** It is China's first aircraft carrier equipped with an electromagnetic catapult system (EMALS), similar to that of the U.S. Navy's Gerald R. Ford-class carriers, allowing faster and more efficient aircraft launches.
- **Design and Features:** The carrier displaces approximately 80,000 tonnes, operates conventionally powered engines, and supports both fixed-wing aircraft and drones. It represents a full transition from ski-jump decks to flat-deck technology.
- **Strategic Significance:** The Fujian enhances China's maritime reach and operational capacity in the South China Sea, Indian Ocean, and Western Pacific, advancing President Xi Jinping's vision of building a "world-class navy" by 2049.
- **Comparison:** The Fujian follows China's first two carriers — Liaoning (Soviet-origin) and Shandong (China's first indigenously built carrier) — but surpasses them in size, technology, and combat readiness.
- **Global Response:** The launch has drawn close attention from global powers, especially the United States and regional nations, amid rising tensions over Taiwan and Indo-Pacific security dynamics.

SPORTS

India Clinch First-Ever Women's World Cup Title

In the News: India created history by winning its first-ever ICC Women's Cricket World Cup title after defeating South Africa by 52 runs in the final held at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai. The victory came after years of near misses, including two previous final appearances in 2005 and 2017. Shafali Verma's explosive 87-run innings and two wickets anchored India's dominance, while Deepti Sharma's all-round brilliance with both bat and ball secured the win. The triumph marks a watershed moment for women's cricket in India, drawing parallels with the men's 1983 World Cup victory.

Key Points:
- India defeated South Africa by a margin of 52 runs in the final to lift its maiden ICC Women's Cricket World Cup trophy.
- The final was played at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai, where India scored 298 for 7 and bowled out South Africa for 246 runs.
- Shafali Verma was named **Player of the Match** for her outstanding performance, scoring 87 runs and taking 2 wickets in the final.
- Deepti Sharma delivered an exceptional all-round performance, scoring 58 runs and taking 5 wickets in the final, and was awarded **Player of the Series**.
- Jemimah Rodrigues played a pivotal role in the semi-final victory over Australia, helping India chase down a record total to reach the final.
- The 2025 ICC Women's World Cup was the 13th edition of the tournament and was jointly hosted by **India and Sri Lanka**.
- With this historic win, India joined the elite group of women's teams that have won the World Cup, cementing its place in global cricket history.

Kane Williamson Retires from T20Is, Ends Career with 93 Matches

In the News: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson announced his retirement from T20 Internationals, concluding an illustrious career spanning 93 matches. The decision marks the end of an era for one of cricket's most composed and technically gifted leaders in the shortest format.

Key Points:
- **Career Overview:** Kane Williamson made his T20I debut in 2012 and went on to represent New Zealand in 93 matches, scoring over 2,500 runs at an average above 33, including 18 fifties.
- **Leadership Legacy**: Under his captaincy, New Zealand reached the T20 World Cup Final in 2021, where Williamson's 85 off 48 balls in the final remains one of the most memorable innings in World Cup history.
- **Reason for Retirement:** Williamson stated that stepping away from T20Is would allow him to focus on ODIs and Test cricket, particularly with the 2027 ODI World Cup and New Zealand's long-format commitments ahead.

- **Tributes:** Teammates, opponents, and fans across the cricketing world lauded his sportsmanship, calm temperament, and consistency, calling him one of New Zealand's finest ambassadors for the game.
- **Post-Retirement Role:** Williamson is expected to continue mentoring young players in the New Zealand setup and remain active in global franchise leagues as a senior professional.

India Shines at 2025 Asian Youth Games with Record 48 Medals

In the News: India achieved its best-ever performance at the Asian Youth Games 2025, securing a record 48 medals, including 19 gold, 14 silver, and 15 bronze. The event, held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, highlighted India's emerging dominance in youth sports across Asia.

Key Points:

- **Historic Performance:** With 48 total medals, India registered its highest-ever tally at the Asian Youth Games, surpassing its previous best of 37 medals achieved in 2017
- **Top Sports:** Athletics, shooting, and wrestling emerged as India's strongest disciplines, accounting for nearly 60% of the total medals, while swimming and badminton also recorded notable breakthroughs.
- **Star Performers:** Sprinter Ritika Singh and shooter Aarav Mehta each won two gold medals, becoming standout athletes of the Indian contingent.
- **Team Excellence:** The Indian mixed relay team's gold in athletics and a historic first-ever medal in fencing added to the nation's growing sporting diversity.
- **Coaching & Support:** The Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) were credited for nurturing young talent through early exposure and scientific training.

Sir David Beckham Received Knighthood Honour

In the News: As part of the King's Birthday Honours list, David Beckham was awarded a knighthood by Charles III, becoming **Sir David Beckham**. The honour, conferred for his services to sport and charity, marks a major milestone for the former England captain.

Key Points:

- **Investiture & Title:** The knighthood recognition means David Beckham now carries the title **Sir**, and his wife, Victoria Beckham, may use the courtesy title **Lady Beckham**.
- **Reason for Honour:** The award cites his distinguished football career—including 115 international caps, captaincy of England—and his significant charitable work and global ambassadorship.
- **Timing & Context:** The knighthood comes after a long-anticipated wait. Beckham had been nominated for knighthood years earlier, but tax complications delayed the award.
- **Legacy and Impact:** Beckham's elevation strengthens his role as a cultural icon and global ambassador of sport, enhancing the crossover of sports, philanthropy and public service.
- **Ceremony Venue:** The investiture took place at Windsor Castle, symbolising a formal and high-profile royal endorsement of his achievements.

FIFA Announces Peace Prize to Debut at 2026 World Cup Draw

In the News: FIFA announced the launch of the FIFA Peace Prize, which will make its debut during the 2026 FIFA World Cup Draw in Mexico City. The award aims to honor individuals, teams, or organizations that have used football as a medium to promote peace, unity, and social change across nations.

Key Points:

- **Award Launch:** FIFA introduced the Peace Prize as part of its global initiative, Football for Humanity, highlighting the sport's power to foster reconciliation and understanding across divided societies.
- **First Presentation:** The inaugural FIFA Peace Prize will be presented at the 2026 World Cup Draw, set to take place in Mexico City, symbolizing global unity ahead of the tournament co-hosted by the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.
- **Purpose:** The award recognizes outstanding contributions to peacebuilding, humanitarian aid, and social justice through football-related activities and community engagement.

- **Selection Process:** Nominations will be reviewed by a panel of former football legends, UN peace envoys, and human rights advocates, ensuring a diverse and globally representative jury.
- **Prize Components:** The recipient will receive a gold trophy and a $500,000 grant dedicated to funding peace-related football initiatives worldwide.
- **FIFA's Vision:** FIFA President Gianni Infantino emphasized that the Peace Prize reflects the organization's mission to "make football a universal language of hope and harmony."

India Celebrates 100 Years of Hockey

In the News: India celebrated 100 years of its rich hockey legacy, marking a century since the establishment of the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) in 1925. The centenary celebrations honored the sport's glorious history, its legendary players, and India's dominance in international hockey, including eight Olympic gold medals.

Key Points:

- **Centenary Celebration:** India commemorated 100 years of hockey excellence through a grand event organized by Hockey India in New Delhi, attended by former Olympians, current players, and officials.
- **Historical Origin:** The Indian Hockey Federation was founded in 1925, paving the way for India's first international tour to New Zealand in 1926
- **Golden Legacy:** India won its first Olympic gold medal in hockey at the 1928 Amsterdam Games and went on to secure eight Olympic golds — a record unmatched in the sport's history.
- **Special Recognition:** The celebration included tributes to legends like Dhyan Chand, Balbir Singh Sr., and Dhanraj Pillay for their contributions to Indian hockey.
- **Cultural Integration:** The centenary logo and theme *"A Century of Glory: Sticks, Spirit & Pride"* were unveiled to symbolize India's enduring love for the sport.

India's 91st Chess Grandmaster: Raahul VS Triumphs at ASEAN Championship

In the News: Raahul VS became India's 91st Chess Grandmaster after a stellar performance at the ASEAN Chess Championship 2025, marking another milestone in India's dominance in world chess. His achievement continues India's remarkable rise in producing top-tier chess talents on the global stage.

Key Points:

- **Achievement:** Raahul VS earned his final GM norm and crossed the 2500 Elo rating mark at the ASEAN Championship, officially earning the title of Grandmaster, the highest rank awarded by the Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE).
- **Event:** The ASEAN Chess Championship 2025 was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, featuring strong international competition from across Asia.
- **Performance:** Raahul remained undefeated through nine rounds, displaying tactical precision and positional mastery, securing both a podium finish and GM title in the same event.
- **Career Journey:** The 20-year-old from Kerala had earlier earned two GM norms at the Chennai Grandmasters 2024 and the Sharjah Masters 2025, showcasing consistent growth and resilience.
- **Significance:** With this milestone, India now boasts 91 Grandmasters, consolidating its status as a global chess powerhouse following the legacy of Viswanathan Anand, India's first GM in 1988.
- **Recognition:** The All India Chess Federation (AICF) congratulated Raahul on his historic achievement, highlighting his contribution to India's growing youth talent in international chess.

SCIENCE AND TECH

China Achieves First-Ever Thorium-Uranium Fuel Conversion in TMSR

In the News: China announced a breakthrough in nuclear technology, achieving the world's first successful thorium-to-uranium fuel conversion in a Thorium Molten Salt Reactor (TMSR). The experiment, conducted at the Shanghai Institute of Applied Physics, marks a major milestone in clean and sustainable nuclear energy innovation.

Key Points:

- **Scientific Achievement:** Chinese scientists achieved self-sustaining thorium fuel breeding within a TMSR, successfully converting thorium-232 into fissile uranium-233 — a process essential for long-term thorium-based energy production.
- **Reactor Type:** The TMSR operates using molten fluoride salts as both fuel solvent and coolant, allowing for higher efficiency, passive safety, and minimal radioactive waste compared to conventional uranium reactors.
- **Energy Security and Sustainability:** The development enhances China's energy independence by tapping into its abundant thorium reserves, offering a safer, low-carbon alternative to traditional uranium-based reactors.
- **Environmental Impact:** Thorium fuel cycles produce less long-lived nuclear waste and carry reduced proliferation risks, aligning with global clean energy transition goals.
- **Future Outlook:** Following this success, China plans to expand its TMSR program in Gansu province, integrating it with renewable energy grids as part of its 2060 carbon neutrality roadmap.

India's Maiden Private Rocket Launch

In the News: India successfully conducted its maiden private rocket launch from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, marking a new era for the nation's commercial space sector. The mission, led by Hyderabad-based startup Skyroot Aerospace, demonstrated India's growing capabilities in private space innovation under ISRO's regulatory framework.

Key Points:

- **Launch Milestone:** The suborbital rocket *Vikram-II*, developed by Skyroot Aerospace, became the first privately built and operated launch vehicle to lift off from Indian soil under ISRO's supervision.
- **Mission Objective:** The launch tested advanced 3D-printed cryogenic engines, lightweight carbon-fiber structures, and avionics systems designed for reusable small satellite missions.
- **Government Collaboration:** The mission was supported by IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre) under the Department of Space, facilitating private-sector participation in India's space ecosystem.
- **Technological Significance:** The Vikram-II demonstrated precision control, reduced turnaround time, and cost-effective manufacturing — paving the way for India's entry into the global small satellite launch market.
- **Private Space Ecosystem:** The launch reflects India's vision under the Space Policy 2023 to transform the country into a global hub for satellite manufacturing, launch services, and space-based applications.

Google's Project Suncatcher Aims to Launch AI Data Centres in Space

In the News: Google unveiled Project Suncatcher, an ambitious initiative to establish AI-powered data centres in space, marking a historic step toward sustainable and high-efficiency cloud computing. The announcement was made during the Google Cloud Next 2025 Conference in San Francisco, showcasing the company's vision for space-based digital infrastructure.

Key Points:

- **Project Launch:** Google launched Project Suncatcher to build and operate orbital AI data centres, leveraging solar energy and near-zero cooling costs available in space to enhance efficiency and sustainability.
- **Objective:** The project aims to reduce Earth's carbon load from terrestrial data storage while expanding cloud computing capacity for AI-driven workloads, particularly large language models (LLMs).
- **Technical Partners:** The initiative is being developed in collaboration with NASA, SpaceX, and Alphabet's DeepMind, combining aerospace logistics with advanced AI energy management systems.
- **Energy Efficiency:** The orbit-based data centres will use solar concentrators to generate power continuously and rely on AI-regulated thermal systems for optimized cooling in vacuum conditions.
- **Deployment Plan:** The first prototype module, *Suncatcher-1*, is scheduled for launch in 2027, orbiting at 1,200 km altitude, with data transmission supported by Starlink's laser-linked satellite network.

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- **Sustainability Focus:** Each module is projected to cut energy consumption by 60% compared to Earth-based data centres, aligning with Google's 2030 carbon-free goal.
- **Global Impact:** If successful, *Project Suncatcher* could revolutionize AI cloud infrastructure, making space the next frontier for digital data management and sustainable computation.

ENVIRONMENT

Gogabeel Lake in Bihar Declared Newest Ramsar Site
In the News: Gogabeel Lake in Bihar was officially declared India's newest Ramsar Site, recognizing it as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. The lake's inclusion highlights its ecological significance for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods in the region.
Key Points:
- **Location and Recognition:** Gogabeel Lake, located in Katihar district of Bihar, has been designated as a Ramsar Site, making it the state's second such wetland after Kanwar Lake.
- **Ecological Importance:** The oxbow lake serves as a crucial habitat for more than 90 species of migratory and resident birds, including several threatened species listed by the IUCN.
- **Biodiversity and Conservation:** The site supports diverse aquatic vegetation, fish species, and wetland fauna, playing a key role in maintaining regional hydrology and flood control.
- **Community Involvement:** Local communities, NGOs, and the Bihar Forest Department have been actively engaged in lake restoration, sustainable fishing, and ecotourism initiatives.
- **Ramsar Designation Benefits:** The international recognition will attract funds and technical assistance for wetland management, biodiversity monitoring, and livelihood enhancement programs.
- **India's Wetland Network:** With this addition, India now has 83 Ramsar Sites, covering over 1.35 million hectares, reflecting the country's expanding commitment to wetland conservation under the *Amrit Dharohar* initiative.

India to Import Eight More Cheetahs from Botswana
In the News: India is set to receive another batch of **eight cheetahs from Botswana** in December 2025 under its flagship Project Cheetah—the country's ambitious initiative to reintroduce cheetahs, extinct in India since 1952.
Key Points:
- **Import Plan:** As part of Project Cheetah, India plans to import eight additional cheetahs from Botswana and bring them to India by the third week of December 2025.
- **Historic Extinction and Reintroduction:** Cheetahs went extinct in India in 1952; the first reintroduction under Project Cheetah involved cheetahs from Namibia in September 2022, followed by a batch from South Africa in February 2023.
- **Current Numbers & Locations:** India currently hosts around 27 cheetahs, including 16 born in the country; the primary habitat remains Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
- **Quarantine & Release Protocol:** The incoming cheetahs from Botswana will undergo mandatory quarantine and acclimatisation in Botswana and then in India (likely at Kuno National Park) before release into the wild.
- **Genetic Diversity & Conservation Goals:** The import aims to enhance genetic diversity of the cheetah population in India and expand the species' range beyond Kuno to other suitable wildlife sanctuaries.

AWARDS

Yuva Scientist Award 2025 Goes to Sai Gautam Gopalakrishnan at IISc
In the News: The **Manohar Parrikar Yuva Scientist Award 2025** has been conferred upon Dr. Sai Gautam Gopalakrishnan, Associate Professor of Materials Engineering at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, for his exemplary work in computational materials science.
Key Points:

- **Award Recipient:** Dr. Sai Gautam Gopalakrishnan, whose research at IISc focuses on computational modelling of advanced materials for applications in energy, aerospace, and manufacturing.
- **Award Details:** The award includes a citation and a cash prize of ₹ 5 lakh, which is the highest monetary component among national science & technology honours in India.
- **Selection Process:** The 2025 edition saw around **50 applications**, with **10 candidates** shortlisted after rigorous evaluation by a committee chaired by Dr. Anil Kakodkar.
- **Research Focus:** Dr. Gopalakrishnan leads a team using artificial intelligence and atomic-level simulations to design new alloys and compounds aimed at improving performance in clean-energy storage, electronics, and structural materials.