

Weekly Current Affairs 3rd May to 9th May 2026

CONTENTS

1. NATIONAL.....	2
2. INTERNATIONAL.....	15
3. ENVIRONMENT.....	20
4. SPORTS.....	21
5. SCIENCE AND TECH.....	22
6. APPOINTMENTS.....	24
7. AWARDS AND HONOURS.....	25
8. STATIC.....	26



IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

Making Right to Vote a Fundamental Right

In the News: The Opposition has demanded that the Right to Vote be elevated from a statutory right to a Fundamental Right under Part III of the Constitution of India. The demand has gained renewed urgency amid concerns over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process, with allegations of large-scale deletion of names from electoral rolls raising serious concerns about electoral inclusion and democratic participation.

Key Points:

- **Current Legal Status of the Right to Vote:** The Right to Vote in India is presently a statutory right, not a Fundamental Right. Its constitutional basis lies in Article 326 of the Constitution, which guarantees voting rights to all citizens above 18 years of age. The voting age was reduced from 21 to 18 years by the 61st Constitutional Amendment Act, 1988. The statutory framework is governed by the Representation of the People Act, 1950 (which covers voter eligibility, citizenship, and residence) and the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (which regulates voting rights and disqualifications).
- **Freedom of Voting as a Fundamental Right:** While the Right to Vote itself is statutory, the freedom of voting -- that is, the voter's ability to express a choice by selecting a candidate or opting for NOTA (None of the Above) -- is recognised as part of the Fundamental Right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. However, this expressive freedom is exercised only during an actual election process.
- **The Opposition's Demand:** The Opposition has called for upgrading the Right to Vote to a Fundamental Right under Part III of the Constitution. If elevated, citizens would gain constitutional recourse against arbitrary disenfranchisement, allowing them to directly approach the Supreme Court under Article 32 or High Courts under Article 226 for enforcement of their voting rights.
- **Trigger -- Special Intensive Revision (SIR) Concerns:** The demand has been sharpened by allegations surrounding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process of electoral rolls, which critics claim has led to the large-scale deletion of names, thereby excluding legitimate voters and posing a threat to electoral inclusion and universal adult franchise.
- **Judicial Interpretation of the Right to Vote:** The Supreme Court has consistently held the Right to Vote to be a statutory right across three landmark cases. In *N.P. Ponnuswami v. Returning Officer* (1952), the Court held that the right to vote is statutory and subject to legislative limitations. In *Jyoti Basu v. Debi Ghosal* (1982), the Court reaffirmed that voting is neither a fundamental right nor a common law right, but a simple statutory right. In *Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India* (2006), the Court again upheld the statutory character of the right to vote.

Karnataka: 1st State to Launch Grievance Redressal for Gig Workers

In the News: The Karnataka government has officially operationalised India's first digital grievance redressal mechanism for platform-based gig workers. Developed by the Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers' Board in collaboration with the Department of e-Governance, the system enables gig workers to lodge complaints related to pay, working conditions, and platform-specific disputes through the Integrated Public Grievance Redressal System (IPGRS) portal.

Key Points:

- **India's First Gig Worker Grievance System:** Karnataka has become the first state in India to launch a government-backed digital grievance redressal mechanism exclusively for platform-based gig workers. The system has been developed by the Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers' Board in collaboration with the Department of e-Governance, creating a formal dispute resolution framework for a workforce that previously had no structured recourse.
- **How the System Works:** Gig workers can lodge grievances including those related to pay, working conditions, and platform-specific disputes through the Integrated Public Grievance Redressal System (IPGRS) portal. Complaints are automatically routed to the respective platform's Internal Dispute Resolution Committee (IDRC) and must be addressed within a strictly defined timeframe. The government acts as a central facilitator, monitoring the process to ensure transparency.
- **Legal Basis -- Internal Dispute Resolution Committee:** Under the Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act and Rules, every aggregator platform is mandated to constitute an Internal Dispute Resolution Committee (IDRC). Platforms such as Namma Yatri and Yulu have already integrated their IDRC contact details with the government portal, while platforms including Amazon are in the process of onboarding.

- **Worker Registration and Unique ID:** Details of 12 lakh active gig workers have so far been shared by platforms with the Board. Since many gig workers operate across multiple platforms, the government will assign each worker a unique identification number to eliminate duplicate entries, with the software enablement currently under process.

Rs 50 crore and counting: How Jharkhand's alleged 'treasury scam' exposes system's vulnerabilities

In the News: A major financial fraud has come to light in Jharkhand, with government officials suspected of siphoning off crores of rupees by misusing the state's Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS). The detected amount stands at approximately Rs 50 crore across five districts, with around 15 arrests reported so far. Suspected irregularities may span up to 14 district treasuries, with estimates suggesting the total figure could rise to Rs 100-150 crore or more as investigations continue.

Key Points:

- **The Alleged Scam:** Government officials and staff handling treasury-related work across departments in Jharkhand are suspected of fraudulently withdrawing crores of rupees through the state's Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS), a computerised platform used for budgeting, bill processing, treasury operations, and e-disbursement of public funds including salaries through the Kuber portal. The fraud does not involve external hacking; it is an internal manipulation wherein authorised employees illegally withdrew amounts in the name of retired or deceased employees, routing funds into "ghost" accounts of associates, in some cases for nearly a decade.
- **How It Was Detected:** The fraud came to light during a routine analysis and audit of treasury accounts by the state Finance Department. The first case emerged from the Bokaro Superintendent of Police (SP) office, involving an alleged initial fraud of around Rs 3.15 crore. Chief Minister Hemant Soren and Finance Minister Radha Krishna Kishore subsequently ordered a probe across all 24 districts of Jharkhand.
- **District-wise Fraud Pattern:** In Bokaro, an accountant at the SP's office made illegal withdrawals in the name of a police official who retired in 2016, routing approximately Rs 10 crore to his wife's and his own bank accounts between May 2024 and March 2026. In Hazaribagh, around Rs 30 crore was siphoned over 10 years through 21 different SBI accounts linked to the SP office. In Ranchi, accountants at the Institute of Animal Health and Production manipulated salary figures on the Kuber portal to withdraw excess funds totalling nearly Rs 3 crore between 2023 and 2026. In West Singhbhum, suspicious transactions of around Rs 26.21 lakh linked to the SP office were traced, involving data tampering between digital and physical records. In Ramgarh, an ex-employee under the Animal Husbandry Department siphoned approximately Rs 35 lakh through false accounts and fabricated bills.
- **Systemic Vulnerabilities:** A treasury officer speaking anonymously explained that salary bills pass through multiple layers -- billing clerk, accountant, Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO), clerical treasury staff, and the Treasury Officer -- before final payment via the Kuber portal. However, scrutiny in practice is largely limited to summary figures such as gross amounts and DDO certification. In bulk submissions running into hundreds of bills per day, individual accounts are rarely verified, creating a systemic blind spot that allowed manipulated entries to pass undetected through layered approvals.

Chief Justice Surya Kant Declares Sikkim First Paperless Judiciary in India

In the News: Chief Justice of India Justice Surya Kant declared Sikkim as India's first fully paperless state judiciary during the National Conclave on Technology and Judicial Education held at Gangtok. The announcement coincided with Sikkim's 50th Statehood Anniversary and marks a landmark milestone in India's judicial modernisation efforts.

Key Points:

- **Historic Declaration:** Chief Justice of India Justice Surya Kant formally declared Sikkim the country's first fully paperless judiciary state at a national conclave in Gangtok on May 1, 2026. Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang Golay termed it a historic step towards building a faster, transparent, and technology-driven justice system.
- **What a Paperless Judiciary Means:** A paperless judiciary conducts all court processes digitally, encompassing e-filing of cases and documents, virtual hearings through video conferencing, digital case records in place of physical files, real-time online case tracking, and automated workflows for faster case management.
- **Key Features of Sikkim's Model:** Sikkim has achieved end-to-end digitisation covering petition filing to judgment delivery. Litigants can access courts without physical presence through virtual connectivity, reducing geographical barriers. Artificial Intelligence tools such as SUPACE (for legal research) and SUVAS (for translation of judgments into regional languages) have been integrated. E-Seva Kendras have also been expanded to assist citizens with limited digital literacy.
- **e-Courts Mission Mode Project:** Sikkim's achievement is part of the nationwide e-Courts Mission Mode Project, implemented under the guidance of the Supreme Court's e-Committee. The project has been rolled out in three phases since

2007, with Phase III approved in 2023 at an outlay of Rs 7,210 crore, focusing on creating a fully digital, paperless, and integrated judicial system with cloud-based infrastructure, universal e-filing, and digitisation of legacy records.

India and Cambodia Kick Off 2nd Edition of CINBAX-II Military Drill

In the News: The Indian Army contingent departed for Cambodia to participate in CINBAX-II 2026, the second edition of the India-Cambodia Bilateral Military Exercise. The exercise is scheduled to be held from May 4 to 17, 2026, at the Techo Sen Phnom Thom Mreas Prov Royal Cambodian Air Force Training Centre (Camp Basil), Kampong Speu Province, Cambodia.

Key Points:

- **Exercise Overview:** CINBAX-II 2026 is the second edition of the bilateral military exercise between India and Cambodia. It is being conducted under the framework of Chapter VII of the United Nations Mandate, with a focus on Company-level joint training for operations in a sub-conventional environment.
- **Participating Contingents:** The Indian Army contingent comprises 120 personnel, drawn majorly from a Battalion of the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment. The Cambodian contingent consists of 160 personnel from the Royal Cambodian Army.
- **Training Focus:** The exercise is aligned with the current dynamics of Counter-Terrorism operations encountered by United Nations peacekeeping forces. It includes practical discussions, tactical exercises, and a comprehensive validation exercise. Special skill training in drone operations, mortar tactics, and sniper tactics will also be conducted.

Election Results 2026

In the News: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won the West Bengal Legislative Assembly Elections for the first time in its history, defeating the incumbent All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The BJP won or was leading in 206 out of 294 seats, far surpassing its previous best of 77 seats in 2021, while the TMC was reduced to 87 seats.

Key Points:

- **Historic Victory:** The BJP's win in West Bengal marks the first time the party has secured a majority in the state, which holds special symbolic significance as it was the home state of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the BJP's ideological forerunner. Voter turnout reached a record high of 92.93 percent, with nearly 68.2 million people casting their votes.
- **Women's Vote:** BJP insiders credited a significant swing in women's votes, estimated at around five percent in the party's favour, as a key factor. The narrative around opposition parties being anti-women gained traction, further boosted by the NDA government's push for women's reservation in the legislature. West Bengal had 3.16 crore women voters on the rolls following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.
- **Government Employees and Youth:** Anti-incumbency among government employees, denial of pay revision rights, and promises of implementing the Seventh Pay Commission within 45 days of coming to power resonated with an estimated 20 to 50 lakh voters. The BJP also made dedicated outreach efforts to first-time voters and the 1.31 crore voters aged between 20 and 29 on the electoral rolls.
- **Law and Order and Security:** The unprecedented deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) instilled voter confidence in a state historically associated with political violence during elections. High-profile cases such as the RG Kar rape and murder case also deepened anti-incumbency sentiment against the TMC on the issue of law and order.
- **Electoral Roll Revision (SIR):** The Special Intensive Revision exercise led to the removal of over 27 lakh names from the state's electoral rolls on grounds of logical discrepancies, which the BJP framed as the purification of rolls from alleged "outsiders." This exercise was credited by party insiders with ensuring that only eligible voters participated, and over 30 lakh more votes were polled compared to the 2021 elections.

Hazaribag Set to Become India's First Pearl Farming Cluster

In the News: The Hazaribag district in Jharkhand has been officially identified by the Government of India as the country's first and only pearl farming cluster, led by the Department of Fisheries with active support from the state government. The initiative aims to promote scientific aquaculture, generate rural employment, and empower women through pearl farming.

Key Points:

- **India's First Pearl Farming Cluster:** The Government of India has officially notified and designated Hazaribag, Jharkhand, as the country's first production and processing pearl cluster under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). The recognition is based on the region's favourable water sources and aquaculture potential. The National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) has reported that 1.02 lakh pearls have already been produced from Hazaribag district.

- **Government Initiatives Under PMMSY:** The Department of Fisheries has approved 2,307 bivalve cultivation units (including mussels, clams, and pearl farming) at a total cost of Rs. 461 lakh to states and Union Territories. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the development of production and processing clusters, including pearl clusters, has been circulated to all states and Union Territories.
- **Women's Empowerment at the Core:** A key highlight of the initiative is the active involvement of women Self-Help Groups (SHGs), particularly in areas like Daurwa-Kundwa, where women are being trained in pearl farming techniques. Officials have also proposed the formation of an all-women Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) to enhance financial independence and promote rural entrepreneurship.
- **Integrated Aquaculture Model:** At the Tilaiya Reservoir, pearl farming is being combined with cage fish culture, allowing farmers to diversify their income sources. This integrated approach improves the productivity and ensures better utilisation of water resources, increasing overall profitability and resilience for farmers.
- **About Pearl Farming:** Pearl farming involves inserting a nucleus into oysters and nurturing them in controlled water conditions to produce freshwater or saltwater pearls. It is considered a high-value, low-investment activity with strong domestic and export market demand, particularly in luxury markets. Key requirements include clean water bodies, suitable oyster species, and technical training.

India Among Top Migration Corridors

In the News: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) of the United Nations released the World Migration Report 2026 on May 5, 2026, revealing that India remained the world's top remittance-receiving country in 2024, with inflows exceeding USD 137 billion. India is the only country in the world to surpass the USD 100 billion mark in remittances.

Key Points:

- **India as Top Remittance Recipient:** According to the World Migration Report 2026, India received over USD 137.67 billion in remittances in 2024, retaining its position as the world's largest remittance-receiving country. India has consistently held this position since 2010, when it received USD 53.48 billion, growing steadily to USD 68.91 billion in 2015 and USD 83.15 billion in 2020. India is the only nation globally to have crossed the USD 100 billion threshold in remittances.
- **Global Rankings:** India was followed by Mexico, the Philippines, and France as the top four remittance-receiving countries in 2024. South Asia recorded the highest regional growth in remittances at 11.8% in 2024, driven by strong inflows to India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.
- **Top Remittance-Sending Countries:** The United States remained the world's largest remittance-sending country, with outflows exceeding USD 100 billion in 2024, followed by Saudi Arabia (over USD 46 billion), Switzerland (around USD 40 billion), and Germany (nearly USD 24 billion). High-income countries have consistently dominated as the primary sources of international remittances.
- **India and International Students:** Asia accounts for the largest share of internationally mobile students globally. In 2022, China was the single largest origin country with over one million students abroad, while India ranked second with over 620,000 students studying internationally. More than half of the world's internationally mobile students reside in Europe and North America.
- **About Migration Corridors and Remittances:** A migration corridor is a route connecting a country of origin and a country of destination for migrants and workers. India has significant migration links with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, North America, Europe, and parts of Asia. Remittances are cross-border personal transfers sent by migrant workers to households in their home countries and are recorded in balance of payments statistics as personal transfers.

SC to Review Apnoea Test for Brain Death

In the News: The Supreme Court of India directed AIIMS, New Delhi, to constitute a three-member expert panel of neurologists or neurosurgeons to examine whether the apnoea test is a reliable sole method for determining brain death, and whether alternative tests such as cerebral angiogram and electroencephalogram (EEG) offer greater accuracy.

Key Points:

- **Supreme Court's Direction:** A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta, in its April 28, 2026 order, directed the Head of the Department of Neurology at AIIMS, New Delhi, to constitute a team of three experts in neurology or neurosurgery to examine brain death determination protocols. The expert committee is required to submit its recommendations to the Supreme Court within two months, in a sealed envelope.

- **Background of the Case:** Kerala-based doctor and activist S. Ganapathy had originally filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) before the Kerala High Court, alleging serious malpractices in organ transplantation procedures in the state. He contended that patients in critical condition were being declared brain-dead without fulfilling the clinical parameters required under law, sometimes with the intent of facilitating organ harvesting.
- **About Brain Death:** Brain death, or brain stem death, is an irreversible condition in which all brain activity, including essential functions such as breathing, permanently ceases. While patients may remain on life support such as a ventilator, they cannot be revived. Brain-dead patients are eligible donors for vital organs such as the heart and lungs, which cannot be donated by living individuals, making accurate brain death determination critical for ethical organ transplantation.
- **The Apnea Test and Its Concerns:** The apnea test assesses brainstem function by checking whether a patient breathes spontaneously when ventilation is stopped while oxygen supply is maintained. It is widely used in ICUs as part of brain death certification. However, experts argue that the test should serve only as a confirmatory tool, not as the sole criterion, in line with WHO guidelines. A key concern is that the test may itself reduce cerebral blood flow, potentially inducing or worsening brain death.
- **Existing Protocol:** As per National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) guidelines, brain death must be confirmed by a four-member board comprising the hospital in-charge, a neurologist or neurosurgeon, and the treating physician. Confirmation must occur at least twice, with a minimum interval of 12 hours between assessments.

Union Cabinet clears two new semiconductor projects under India Semiconductor Mission

In the News: The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on May 5, 2026 approved two new semiconductor manufacturing projects under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM), entailing a cumulative investment of approximately Rs. 3,936 crore. Both facilities will be set up in Gujarat and include the country's first commercial Mini/Micro-LED display manufacturing unit based on Gallium Nitride (GaN) technology, marking a significant step in India's transition into advanced compound semiconductor manufacturing.

Key Points:

- **Cabinet Approval:** The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cleared two new semiconductor projects under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) on May 5, 2026, with a combined investment outlay of around Rs. 3,936 crore.
- **Project Location:** Both approved facilities will be established in Gujarat, with one project located in Dholera and the other in Surat, further strengthening Gujarat's position as a leading hub for semiconductor manufacturing in India.
- **First Project (Crystal Matrix Limited):** Crystal Matrix Limited (CML) will set up an integrated compound semiconductor fabrication and Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) facility in Dholera, Gujarat, which will be India's first commercial Mini/Micro-LED display manufacturing unit based on Gallium Nitride (GaN) technology.
- **CML Production Capacity:** The Crystal Matrix facility will have an annual production capacity of 72,000 square metres of Mini/Micro-LED display panels and 24,000 sets of RGB Gallium Nitride epitaxy wafers, along with GaN foundry services including epitaxy on six-inch wafers.
- **Second Project (Suchi Semicon):** Suchi Semicon Private Limited (SSPL) will establish an Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility in Surat, Gujarat, dedicated to the manufacturing of discrete semiconductors used across multiple industrial applications.
- **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM):** The India Semiconductor Mission was launched in 2021 under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) with an initial outlay of Rs. 76,000 crore, aimed at developing a sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem in India.

Centre Approves Proposal to Increase Supreme Court Judge Strength to 37

In the News: The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on May 5, 2026 approved a proposal to raise the sanctioned strength of judges in the Supreme Court of India from 33 to 37, excluding the Chief Justice of India (CJI). The Cabinet also cleared the introduction of the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026 in Parliament, which will amend the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 with the aim of tackling rising case pendency and ensuring speedy delivery of justice.

Key Points:

- **Cabinet Decision:** The Union Cabinet on May 5, 2026 approved the proposal to raise the strength of the Supreme Court of India by four judges, taking the total sanctioned strength from 33 to 37, excluding the Chief Justice of India.

- **Legislative Mechanism:** The proposal will be implemented through the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, which seeks to amend the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 to give statutory effect to the increase in judicial strength.
- **Constitutional Basis:** The expansion derives its authority from Article 124(1) of the Constitution of India, which provides that the Supreme Court shall consist of a Chief Justice of India and such number of other judges as Parliament may determine by law, allowing periodic legislative revision of the court's strength.
- **Original Constitutional Strength:** When the Constitution was adopted in 1950, the original sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court was fixed at 8 judges in total, including the Chief Justice of India, marking the baseline from which all subsequent revisions are counted.
- **Original Statutory Strength:** When the 1956 Act was enacted, the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court was fixed at 10 judges, excluding the Chief Justice of India, in line with the rising volume of cases at the time.
- **Earlier Amendments:** The strength was raised to 13 by the 1960 Amendment Act, to 17 by the 1977 Amendment Act, to 25 by the 1986 Amendment Act, to 30 by the 2008 Amendment Act, and to 33 by the 2019 Amendment Act, with the present 2026 proposal marking the seventh upward revision in the Supreme Court's sanctioned strength since 1950.
- **Sixth Amendment to 1956 Act:** The 2026 Bill, when enacted, will be the sixth amendment to the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956, while it counts as the seventh official increase in the Supreme Court's history when measured from the original constitutional baseline of 8 judges set in 1950, since the 1956 Act itself was the first revision of that baseline.
- **Working Strength Cap:** From 1977 until the end of 1979, the working strength of the Supreme Court was administratively capped at 15 judges by the Cabinet, despite the statutory ceiling being 17, with the restriction subsequently lifted at the request of the then Chief Justice of India.
- **Pendency Burden:** The government cited the mounting pendency of cases as the central rationale for the expansion, with over 92,000 cases currently awaiting adjudication before the apex court, putting significant pressure on the existing bench strength.
- **Appointment Process:** Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President of India under Article 124(2) of the Constitution, on the recommendation of the Collegium system comprising the Chief Justice of India and four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court.

NCRB Reports Rise in Juvenile Crime Cases

In the News: The latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data has flagged a continued rise in juvenile crime cases across India, with Delhi retaining its position as the metropolitan city recording the highest number of cases and the highest crime rate among children in conflict with the law. According to the NCRB report released on May 6, 2026, Delhi recorded around 42 Children in Conflict with the Law (CCL) per one lakh minors in 2024, while the 2023 nationwide figures showed a 2.7 percent rise in registered juvenile cases over 2022.

Key Points:

- **Reporting Agency:** The data has been compiled and released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the nodal agency under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) responsible for collecting and analysing crime data in India under the Indian Police Act and the Delhi Police Establishment Act framework.
- **National Trend in 2023:** A total of 31,365 cases were registered against juveniles across the country in 2023, marking an increase of 2.7 percent compared to the figures recorded in 2022, indicating a sustained upward trajectory in juvenile offending.
- **Delhi's 2024 Figures:** Delhi continued to dominate juvenile crime statistics in 2024, registering 2,306 cases of Children in Conflict with the Law, the highest among all metropolitan cities, with a crime rate of approximately 42 per one lakh minors.
- **Other Metropolitan Cities:** After Delhi, Chennai recorded 466 juvenile cases in 2024, while Bengaluru reported 386 such cases, indicating that the concentration of juvenile crime in metropolitan zones remains a serious urban policing concern.
- **Nature of Offences:** Cases registered against juveniles span a wide spectrum, ranging from petty thefts and snatching to more serious offences including assault, robbery, and crimes against women and children, reflecting both economic and behavioural dimensions of the issue.
- **Legal Framework:** Juvenile cases in India are dealt with under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, which classifies offenders as Children in Conflict with the Law (CCL) and follows a reformative rather than punitive approach for children below 18 years of age.



- **Heinous Offences Provision:** Under the 2015 Act, juveniles in the age group of 16 to 18 years can be tried as adults for heinous offences (those carrying punishment of seven years or more), subject to a preliminary assessment by the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB).
- **Constitutional and Statutory Backdrop:** The protection of children's rights is anchored in Article 15(3), Article 39(e) and (f), and Article 45 of the Constitution of India, supported by the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

Supreme Court Hears Challenge to Election Commissioners Act

In the News: The Supreme Court of India refused to stay the operation of the new law governing the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs). A bench comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta declined to grant interim relief at this stage, observing that the Lok Sabha elections were approaching, and held that the Constitution Bench judgement did not specifically prescribe the composition of the selection committee.

Key Points:

- **Law Under Challenge:** The petitioners sought a stay on the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, which governs the appointment process and service conditions of the CEC and ECs.
- **Bench Composition:** The matter was heard by a bench of the Supreme Court comprising Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Dipankar Datta, which considered a batch of petitions challenging the validity of the new appointment framework.
- **Refusal to Stay:** The Supreme Court declined to stay the operation of the 2023 Act at the present stage, noting that the Lok Sabha elections were approaching and that judicial intervention at that point would not be appropriate.
- **Selection Committee Composition:** Under the 2023 Act, the selection committee for the appointment of the CEC and ECs comprises the Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition (or the leader of the largest opposition party) in the Lok Sabha.
- **Background of Constitution Bench Ruling:** The 2023 Act was enacted following the Constitution Bench judgement of the Supreme Court in Anoop Baranwal versus Union of India (March 2023), which had directed that until Parliament enacted a law, the appointments would be made by a panel consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- **Departure from Earlier Ruling:** The 2023 Act replaced the Chief Justice of India in the selection committee with a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, a change that forms the principal ground of challenge in the petitions filed before the apex court.
- **Newly Appointed Election Commissioners:** The Supreme Court noted that there were no allegations levelled against the newly appointed Election Commissioners, namely Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, who were appointed under the new framework.
- **Petitioners' Concerns:** The petitioners argued that the exclusion of the Chief Justice of India from the selection committee dilutes the independence of the Election Commission of India (ECI) and undermines the principle of free and fair elections, which forms part of the basic structure of the Constitution.

INS Mahendragiri Inducted into Indian Navy

In the News: The Indian Navy received INS Mahendragiri (Yard 12654), the sixth stealth frigate under the Nilgiri-class (Project 17A), from Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDSL) on April 30, 2026. With this induction, the Indian Navy has taken delivery of six Project 17A frigates in less than 17 months, marking a significant milestone in the country's pursuit of self-reliance in warship design and construction under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Key Points:

- **Delivery and Builder:** INS Mahendragiri was delivered to the Indian Navy on April 30, 2026 by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDSL), Mumbai, and is the fourth and final ship to be built by MDSL under the Project 17A programme.
- **Project 17A Programme:** The Project 17A programme comprises a total of seven advanced stealth frigates, with four ships constructed by MDSL and the remaining three built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata.
- **Naming Convention:** All vessels in the series are named after prominent Indian hill ranges, namely INS Nilgiri, INS Himgiri, INS Udaygiri, INS Dunagiri, INS Taragiri, INS Vindhyagiri, and INS Mahendragiri.
- **Delivery Timeline:** The first ship of the class, INS Nilgiri, was delivered by MDSL on December 20, 2024, and the Indian Navy has since received six frigates within a span of less than 17 months, reflecting accelerated indigenous shipbuilding capacity.

- **Predecessor Class:** The Project 17A frigates are the successors to the Shivalik-class frigates and feature significantly improved stealth characteristics, upgraded weapon and sensor suites, and enhanced platform management systems.

Centre Moves to Grant Vande Mataram Anthem Like Legal Status on 150th anniversary

In the News: The Union Cabinet led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved a proposal to amend the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, granting the National Song Vande Mataram legal protection equivalent to that enjoyed by the National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana. The decision, announced shortly after the BJP's sweeping victory in the West Bengal Assembly polls, comes as the country is currently observing the 150th anniversary of the song, which was originally written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1875.

Key Points:

- **Cabinet Proposal:** The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved a proposal to amend the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act to place Vande Mataram on the same legal footing as the National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana. The amendment would make acts of disrespect or disruption during the singing of Vande Mataram a cognisable offence.
- **Historic Anniversary:** The proposal coincides with 150 years since Vande Mataram was written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1875. The song was originally composed in Sanskritised Bengali and first appeared in Chattopadhyay's celebrated novel Anandamath, published in 1882.
- **Existing Legal Framework:** Currently, the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act prescribes penalties including imprisonment, fines, or both, for insulting the National Flag and the Constitution of India, and for disturbing or preventing the singing of the National Anthem. However, no specific legal provisions exist for Vande Mataram, despite its status as the National Song.
- **Section 3 Amendment:** To implement the change, Section 3 of the Act, which currently deals with disruptions to the National Anthem and is punishable by up to three years in jail, a fine, or both, would be amended to include Vande Mataram within its scope. The Act also attracts at least one year of jail term for repeated offences.
- **Constitutional Status:** When India became a republic in 1950, the Constituent Assembly adopted Jana Gana Mana as the National Anthem while granting Vande Mataram the status of National Song. Although both songs were considered symbols of equal national respect, only the National Anthem received explicit legal protection under existing laws until now.
- **Possible Penalties:** If the amendment is implemented, penalties under the Act could include imprisonment of up to three years, a monetary fine, or both. Repeated offences may attract a minimum of one year of imprisonment, mirroring the existing framework applicable to disrespect towards the National Anthem.
- **Acts Considered Disrespectful:** Under the proposed framework, deliberate interruption of the song during official functions, mocking or parodying the song in a derogatory manner, planned organising of disruptions during formal events, and intentional disrespect during institutional or government events could potentially be treated as violations.
- **About Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay:** Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838 to 1894) was a celebrated Bengali novelist, poet, and journalist who is regarded as one of the key figures of the Bengal Renaissance. Beyond Anandamath, his other notable works include Durgeshnandini, Kapalkundala, and Devi Chaudhurani, which collectively shaped modern Bengali literature.
- **About the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act:** The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, is a legislation enacted to prevent insults to national symbols and honour, including the National Flag, the Constitution, and the National Anthem. The proposed amendment would expand its protective ambit to include Vande Mataram, marking the most significant legislative change to the Act since its enactment.

Government names Vempati as new CBFC chief, succeeds Prasoon Joshi

In the News: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting announced the appointment of Shashi Shekhar Vempati, former Prasar Bharati CEO, as the new Chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) for a period of three years from the date of joining. Vempati succeeds Prasoon Joshi, the renowned screenwriter and lyricist who helmed the CBFC since 2017 and has now been appointed Chairman of Prasar Bharati on May 2, 2026.

Key Points:

- **Appointment Announcement:** Shashi Shekhar Vempati has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. He will hold office for a period of three years from the date of joining, bringing with him extensive experience in media, broadcasting, and public communication.

- **Succession from Prasoon Joshi:** Vempati succeeds Prasoon Joshi, who has been named the new Chairman of Prasar Bharati on May 2, 2026. Joshi, a renowned screenwriter, lyricist, and advertising professional, had helmed the CBFC since 2017, completing nearly nine years at the helm of the certification body.
- **Vempati's Prasar Bharati Tenure:** Shashi Shekhar Vempati served as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Prasar Bharati from 2017 to 2022, where he led significant modernisation and digitisation efforts at India's public broadcaster. His tenure was marked by initiatives to expand the digital footprint of Doordarshan and All India Radio.
- **Diverse Professional Background:** Following his Prasar Bharati tenure, Vempati served in various capacities at the University Grants Commission (UGC), the television ratings agency Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC), and the Department of Science and Technology, gaining wide-ranging experience across regulatory, research, and policy domains.
- **Expansion of Censorship Scope:** During Joshi's tenure, film censorship expanded into key areas such as the mention of political personalities and scrutiny of religious themes in cinema. Hundreds of hours of footage were impacted by censorship from 2018 to 2022, a period during which cut lists were readily available, before the CBFC shut off ready access to cut lists last year.
- **CBFC Certification Categories:** The CBFC certifies films under categories including U (Universal), UA (Parental Guidance for children below 12), A (Adults only), and S (Restricted to specialised audiences). The board ensures that films comply with content guidelines before public exhibition in cinemas.

India Marks One Year Since Operation Sindoor With Military Tribute

In the News: India marked the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor, the calibrated cross-border military operation launched on May 7, 2025, against terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) in response to the Pahalgam terror attack of April 22, 2025. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the Indian Army, and the Indian Air Force paid tribute to the valour and sacrifices of the armed forces, with the IAF and Army releasing commemorative videos under the message "India forgets nothing, India forgives nothing," reaffirming the country's resolve against terrorism.

Key Points:

- **First Anniversary Commemoration:** The Indian Army released a special commemorative video on May 7, 2026, marking exactly one year since Operation Sindoor was launched. The video opened with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address declaring that India will "identify, track and eliminate terrorists and their backers," describing it as the country's national resolution.
- **Defence Minister's Tribute:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh saluted the valour and sacrifices of the armed forces in a post on X, stating that their actions during the operation reflected unmatched precision, seamless jointness, and deep synergy across services, setting a benchmark for modern military operations.
- **Symbol of National Resolve:** Rajnath Singh described Operation Sindoor as a powerful symbol of national resolve and preparedness, demonstrating that India's armed forces are always ready to act decisively when it matters most. He also highlighted that the operation stands as a testament to India's steady advance towards Atmanirbharta (self-reliance) in defence.
- **IAF Anniversary Message:** The Indian Air Force posted a video with the message "India forgets nothing, India forgives nothing." The IAF stated, "Precise in action, eternal in memory, Operation Sindoor continues," reinforcing the message of strategic memory and continued vigilance against terrorism.
- **Operation Sindoor Background:** Operation Sindoor was launched on May 7, 2025, in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack of April 22, 2025, in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed by terrorists who infiltrated a tourist area in Kashmir. The attack triggered nationwide outrage and intensified calls for strong counter-terror measures.
- **Targets of the Operation:** Indian armed forces destroyed nine major terror launchpads linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) in Pakistan and PoJK. The strikes were carried out in approximately 25 minutes, demonstrating exceptional precision and coordinated military planning.
- **Tri-Service Synergy:** Operation Sindoor showcased seamless jointness across the Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force, marking a significant milestone in India's journey towards integrated theatre commands and unified military operations. The synergy demonstrated has been cited as a benchmark for future operations.

Bengaluru Records Highest Suicide Rate Among Indian Cities

In the News: According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI) reports released in May 2026, Bengaluru has recorded the country's highest suicide rate among major metros, with the city's suicide

rate remaining close to 20 per lakh population across 2022, 2023, and 2024. The trend has been linked by mental health experts to urban isolation, work pressure, migration stress, rising living costs, and weakening social support systems associated with the city's rapid urban expansion.

Key Points:

- **Bengaluru's Highest Suicide Rate:** Bengaluru recorded the highest suicide rate among major Indian cities, with the rate remaining close to 20 per lakh population through 2022, 2023, and 2024. This consistently high rate places the city at the top among major Indian metros on this critical mental health indicator.
- **Three-Year Suicide Trend in Bengaluru:** The city recorded over 2,313 suicides in 2022, 2,370 in 2023, and 2,430 in 2024, showing a steady year-on-year increase. The rising absolute numbers, combined with the high per-capita rate, indicate a deepening mental health crisis in India's tech capital.
- **Comparison with Other Metros:** Delhi reported higher absolute suicide numbers, crossing 3,204 cases in 2024, but its suicide rate remained far lower at 9.8 per lakh population due to its much larger population base. Mumbai's suicide rate stayed below 7 per lakh, with 1,447 suicidal deaths, while Chennai had 1,562 deaths and Hyderabad had 1,311 deaths in 2024.
- **Karnataka State Picture:** The overall suicide count in Karnataka continued to rise between 2022 and 2024, with Bengaluru alone accounting for a disproportionately large share of deaths in the State. This reflects the concentration of suicide-related distress in the urban capital relative to the rest of the State.
- **Causes Linked to Urban Suicides:** Mental health experts have repeatedly linked urban suicides in Bengaluru to isolation, work pressure, migration stress, rising living costs, and weakening social support systems. These factors are increasingly associated with Bengaluru's rapid urban expansion and its status as a major IT and migration hub.
- **Previous Year Data:** The NCRB's 2023 data, released in September 2025, placed Bengaluru at 2,370 reported suicide deaths, higher than the 2,313 suicides recorded in 2022. The pattern of incremental increases suggests that interventions so far have not been able to reverse the upward trajectory.
- **Mental Health Helplines:** Citizens in distress or experiencing suicidal tendencies can reach out to dedicated 24/7 helplines, including KIRAN at 1800-599-0019, the national mental health helpline launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, and Arogya Sahayavani at 104 in Karnataka for immediate support and crisis intervention.

Telangana Tops Human Trafficking Cases in India

In the News: According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Crime in India 2024 report released in May 2026, Telangana recorded 423 human trafficking cases in 2024, the highest among all States and Union Territories in India. The State alone accounted for nearly 20 percent of the 2,135 human trafficking cases registered nationally during the year, with women forming an overwhelming majority of victims and sexual exploitation for prostitution emerging as the dominant motive behind trafficking.

Key Points:

- **Telangana Tops the List:** Telangana registered 423 human trafficking cases in 2024, the highest among all States and Union Territories. Maharashtra followed with 337 cases, Odisha with 141, Bihar with 138, and Karnataka with 115. Telangana alone accounted for nearly 20 percent of all human trafficking cases registered across India in 2024.
- **Sharp Rise in Cases:** The 2024 figures reflect an increase of around 25.9 percent compared to 336 cases registered in 2023. When compared to 391 cases recorded in 2022, the 2024 numbers represent an overall increase of around 8.2 percent, indicating a worrying upward trajectory in trafficking incidents in the State.
- **National Trafficking Numbers:** India registered a total of 2,135 human trafficking cases in 2024. The country had recorded 2,250 human trafficking cases in 2022, showing a marginal decline at the national level even as Telangana's numbers continued to rise sharply.
- **Highest Crime Rate in Country:** Telangana recorded a human trafficking crime rate of 1.1 cases per lakh population in 2024, the highest in the country and significantly above the national average of 0.2 cases per lakh population. This indicates that the State faces a disproportionately severe trafficking problem relative to its population.
- **Victim Profile:** A total of 814 victims were identified in Telangana in 2024, of whom 765 were adults above 18 years of age and 49 were minors below 18 years. Women accounted for an overwhelming majority of victims, with 792 of the 814 identified being female, highlighting the gendered nature of the crime.

- **Strong Charge-Sheeting Rate:** Telangana's charge-sheeting rate stood at 99 percent in 2024, considerably higher than the national average of 90.8 percent. This reflects efficient case registration and investigation by the State police, even though conviction rates remain a concern.
- **Previous Year Comparisons:** In 2023, Telangana had registered 336 human trafficking cases and ranked second after Maharashtra, which recorded 388 cases. Telangana also topped the list in the Crime in India 2022 report with 391 cases, indicating a consistent pattern of high trafficking incidence in the State.

Suwendu Adhikari Named West Bengal Chief Minister After BJP's Historic Victory

In the News: Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Suwendu Adhikari was formally elected as the new Chief Minister of West Bengal following the BJP's decisive victory in the recently concluded Assembly elections. The announcement was made during the BJP Legislature Party meeting in Kolkata in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Adhikari met the Governor of West Bengal and staked claim to form the government, with the swearing-in ceremony scheduled at Brigade Parade Grounds in Kolkata on May 9, 2026, marking the end of the Trinamool Congress's (TMC) 15-year rule in the state.

Key Points:

- **Historic Political Shift:** The BJP registered a historic victory in the West Bengal Assembly Elections 2026, ending the Trinamool Congress's (TMC) 15-year rule under Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The election results, announced on May 4, 2026, marked one of the biggest political setbacks in Mamata Banerjee's career. She refused to resign as Chief Minister on May 5, 2026, alleging that the verdict was the result of a "conspiracy" rather than a popular mandate. This makes Suwendu Adhikari the first BJP Chief Minister of West Bengal.
- **Election as Legislative Party Leader:** Suwendu Adhikari was unanimously elected as the Leader of the BJP Legislative Party at the meeting held in Kolkata on May 8, 2026. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who presided over the meeting as the central observer, confirmed that all proposals were received in favour of Adhikari. Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi attended the meeting as co-observer.
- **Suwendu Adhikari's Political Journey:** Adhikari began his political career with the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and played a key role in strengthening the party's organisation in rural Bengal. Following political differences with Mamata Banerjee, he joined the BJP in December 2020. He famously defeated Mamata Banerjee from the Nandigram constituency in the 2021 Assembly Elections and went on to lead the BJP's statewide election campaigns. In the 2026 elections, he won the Bhabanipur seat by a margin of over 15,000 votes.
- **Swearing-in Ceremony:** The oath-taking ceremony is scheduled at the Brigade Parade Grounds in Kolkata on May 9, 2026. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several BJP-ruled state Chief Ministers are expected to attend the ceremony, underscoring the national political significance of the event.

West Bengal New Cabinet 2026: Full List of Ministers in Suwendu Adhikari Government

In the News: Suwendu Adhikari was sworn in as the first Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Chief Minister of West Bengal after the party secured a sweeping victory with 207 seats in the 294-member Assembly. The newly formed government inducted five fresh faces into the State's Cabinet — Dilip Ghosh, Agnimitra Paul, Ashok Kirtania, Kshudiram Tudu, and Nisith Pramanik — at a grand ceremony held at Kolkata's iconic Brigade Parade Ground, marking a historic transition in Bengal's political landscape.

Key Points:

- **Historic Mandate:** The BJP secured a sweeping victory with 207 seats in the 294-member West Bengal Assembly, leading to the formation of the first BJP government in the state under Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari.
- **High-Profile Attendance:** The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, J.P. Nadda, and Dharmendra Pradhan, along with BJP Chief Ministers Manik Saha (Tripura), Himanta Biswa Sarma (Assam), Rekha Gupta (Delhi), Yogi Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh), Bhajan Lal Sharma (Rajasthan), Mohan Yadav (Madhya Pradesh), and Pushkar Singh Dhami (Uttarakhand).
- **Adhikari's Electoral Victories:** Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari secured massive victories from both Nandigram and Bhabanipur, winning by margins of over 9,500 and 15,000 votes respectively. In Bhabanipur, he defeated incumbent Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, and in Nandigram, he defeated All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) candidate Pabitra Kar, once considered a loyal aide.
- **Dilip Ghosh:** A senior BJP leader and former West Bengal BJP president (2015-2021), he won the Kharagpur seat by over 30,000 votes in the 2026 Assembly polls. He was previously elected as Member of Parliament (MP) from Medinipur in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and is credited with expanding the BJP's footprint in West Bengal from 2019 onwards.

- **Agnimitra Paul:** A fashion designer-turned-legislator, she won the Asansol Dakshin seat by 40,839 votes. She joined the BJP in 2019, previously served as president of the BJP Mahila Morcha in West Bengal, and is currently the party's State vice-president. She is one of the most prominent women leaders in the Bengal BJP.
- **Ashok Kirtania:** A BJP stalwart, he won the Bangaon Uttar seat by 40,670 votes, having also won from Bangaon in the 2021 Assembly polls. His induction into the Cabinet is expected to give a significant boost to the Matua community, which plays a crucial role in West Bengal's electorate.
- **Kshudiram Tudu:** A former school teacher and first-time BJP MLA from the tribal-dominated Ranibandh (Scheduled Tribe) constituency in Bankura district. He has played a significant role in advocating BJP's promises among tribal communities in the Jangalmahal region and raising issues of tribal rights and rural development.
- **Nisith Pramanik:** A key BJP face from North Bengal and former Union Minister of State for Home Affairs and Youth Affairs & Sports. He won the Mathabhanga seat by over 57,000 votes. A former Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader who joined the BJP in 2019, he had earlier won the Cooch Behar Lok Sabha seat in 2019 and became one of the youngest ministers in the Narendra Modi government in the 2021 Cabinet reshuffle.
- **Social and Regional Representation:** The Cabinet reflects deliberate social diversity — Dilip Ghosh represents Other Backward Classes (OBC), Agnimitra Paul represents women and the Kayastha community, Ashok Kirtania represents the Matua community, Kshudiram Tudu represents tribal communities, and Nisith Pramanik represents the Rajbongshi community and North Bengal.

Suvendu Adhikari Takes Oath as West Bengal's First BJP Chief Minister

In the News: Suvendu Adhikari took oath as the first Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Chief Minister of West Bengal, ending the 15-year rule of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) led by Mamata Banerjee. Governor R.N. Ravi administered the oath of office and secrecy at a grand ceremony held at the Brigade Parade Grounds in Kolkata, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and other senior NDA leaders. The ceremony was held on Pochishe Boishak, marking the 165th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore.

Key Points:

- **Historic First:** Suvendu Adhikari took oath as the first Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Chief Minister of West Bengal, marking the party's maiden victory in the state's electoral history after the eras of the communists and Mamata Banerjee.
- **Oath Administered:** Governor R.N. Ravi, a former Intelligence Bureau (IB) officer with vast experience in fighting insurgencies, administered the oath of office and secrecy to Adhikari and other cabinet ministers.
- **Venue and Date:** The grand ceremony was held at the Brigade Parade Grounds in Kolkata on May 9, 2026.
- **Election Mandate:** The BJP secured a decisive victory in the recent West Bengal Assembly elections, winning 207 seats in the 294-member House, while the Trinamool Congress was reduced to 80 seats, ending its 15-year rule in the state.
- **Cabinet Ministers Sworn In:** Five MLAs took oath as Cabinet Ministers alongside Adhikari — Dilip Ghosh, Agnimitra Paul, Ashok Kirtania, Kshudiram Tudu, and Nisith Pramanik.
- **Suvendu Adhikari's Background:** Adhikari was once an aide to Mamata Banerjee in the Trinamool Congress and rose as a senior figure in the party before switching to the BJP. He is known as the political hero of voters in Nandigram and Bhabanipur constituencies.

Supreme Court Proposes Permanent Women-Only Vice-President Post in SCBA

In the News: The Supreme Court of India proposed the creation of a permanent women-only Vice-President post in the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) starting from the 2027-28 election cycle. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice K.V. Viswanathan asked the SCBA General Body Meeting to consider the proposal during hearings on reforms in Bar bodies, observing that the move could eventually pave the way for the apex lawyers' body to have its first woman president.

Key Points:

- **Proposal for Permanent Women VP Post:** The Supreme Court proposed the creation of an additional Vice-President post in the SCBA reserved permanently for women, beginning with the 2027-28 election cycle.
- **Bench Composition:** The order was passed by a bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice K.V. Viswanathan during hearings related to reforms in Bar bodies.
- **Direction to SCBA:** The court directed the SCBA General Body Meeting to formally consider the desirability of creating one more Vice-President post that would be exclusively earmarked for women from 2027-28 onwards.

- **Pathway to First Woman President:** The bench observed that the reform would empower women and they would "rise one day to become the SCBA President," signalling the long-term objective of the proposal.
- **Restored Reservation for 2026-27:** Under the restored arrangement for the 2026-27 elections, the Secretary's post, two posts in the Senior Executive Committee, and three posts in the Executive Committee remain reserved for women members.
- **Application by Women Lawyers:** Seven women members of the SCBA — R. Shase, Savita Devi, C. Rubavathi, V. Keerthana, Maitri Goal, Deepika Nandakumar, and R. Kanishca — moved an application before the court seeking continuation of reservation for the Secretary's post.
- **Three Principal Offices Highlighted:** The plea pointed out that the three principal offices of the SCBA are President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and that reserving one of these would send a stronger message to bar associations across the country.
- **CJI's Commitment:** Justice Surya Kant promised that the order on the permanent women VP post would be passed before his retirement in February 2027.
- **About SCBA:** The Supreme Court Bar Association is the recognised body of advocates practising before the Supreme Court of India, with key office-bearer posts including President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Executive Committee Members, elected through annual elections.

NCRB's Crime in India 2024 Report

In the News: The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released the Crime in India 2024 report, covering crime data from January 1 to December 31, 2024. India recorded 58.85 lakh cognisable crime cases in 2024, marking a 6% decline from 62.41 lakh cases in 2023. However, cybercrimes saw a sharp jump of nearly 18%, juvenile offences and missing children numbers also rose, presenting a mixed picture of public safety trends. The NCRB also released the Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India (ADSI) 2024 report on the same day.

Key Points:

- **Overall Decline in Crime:** India recorded 58.85 lakh cognisable crime cases in 2024 as against 62.41 lakh in 2023, registering a 6% dip in total crime cases.
- **Crime Rate:** The crime rate, calculated as the number of cases registered per lakh population, fell from 448.3 in 2023 to 418.9 in 2024.
- **Cybercrime Surge:** A total of 1,01,928 cybercrime cases were registered in 2024, up from 86,420 in 2023, marking an increase of 17.9%. The crime rate under this category rose from 6.2 to 7.3.
- **Missing Children:** Child safety remained a concern with 98,375 children going missing in 2024, a 7.8% increase from 91,296 in 2023, including 75,603 girls, 22,768 boys, and four transgender children.
- **Crime Against Women:** Crime against women saw a 1.5% dip, with 4.41 lakh cases registered in 2024 compared to 4.48 lakh in 2023. Cruelty by husband or relatives was the leading cause, followed by kidnapping, crime against minors, and assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty.
- **State-Wise Crime Against Women:** Telangana recorded the highest crime rate against women at 128.6 cases per lakh population, followed by Odisha at 118.3. Delhi recorded the highest absolute number at 13,396 cases, more than a quarter of all such cases in Metros.
- **Rape Crime Rate:** Chandigarh recorded the highest rape crime rate at 16.6 per lakh population, followed by Goa at 13.3 (with 105 registered cases), and Rajasthan at 12.2.
- **Crimes Against SCs and STs:** Cases against Scheduled Castes (SCs) declined 3.6% to 55,698, while crimes against Scheduled Tribes (STs) fell sharply by 23.1% to 9,966 cases. Uttar Pradesh reported the highest SC cases (14,642), and Madhya Pradesh led in ST cases (3,165).
- **Human Trafficking:** Human trafficking cases declined by 2.2%, with 2,135 registered cases. A total of 6,018 victims were trafficked, including 2,297 children and 3,721 adults.
- **Juveniles in Conflict with Law:** Cases against juveniles rose by 11.2% to 34,878 in 2024. The majority of juveniles apprehended under Indian Penal Code (IPC), Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and Special and Local Laws (SLL) crimes were in the 16-18 years age group (77.7%, or 33,129 out of 42,633).
- **ADSI Report 2024:** The NCRB also released the Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India (ADSI) 2024 report, recording 1,70,746 suicides in 2024, with deaths due to drug overdose seeing a 50% increase compared to the previous year.
- **About NCRB:** The National Crime Records Bureau was established in 1986 to compile crime data and functions under the Union Home Ministry. It serves as a national warehouse for fingerprint records of Indian and foreign criminals, coordinates



inter-state and international criminal information, and assists in locating interstate criminals through fingerprint search. Its annual reports inform policymaking and law enforcement priorities.

INTERNATIONAL

Why a tiny African nation matters to China on Taiwan, Meta-Manus deal and Pakistan's submarine

In the News: Three significant global developments dominated international affairs in the first week of May 2026: China excluded Eswatini from its pan-Africa tariff relief policy due to the small African nation's continued diplomatic ties with Taiwan; China forced the cancellation of a \$2 billion acquisition deal between American tech giant Meta and Chinese-origin AI company Manus; and Pakistan commissioned its first Hangor-class submarine in China, marking a milestone in China-Pakistan defence ties.

Key Points:

- **Eswatini and the Taiwan Question:** China removed tariffs on all African nations except Eswatini on May 1, 2026, as a direct consequence of the latter's continued diplomatic recognition of Taiwan. Eswatini is one of only 12 nations worldwide that maintain formal ties with Taiwan, with its relationship dating back to 1968. Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te also undertook an official visit to Eswatini during this period, which China's state media condemned. Lai's earlier planned April visit had been delayed after Seychelles, Mauritius, and Madagascar cancelled flight permits for his charter plane, reportedly under Chinese pressure.
- **The One-China Principle:** Under the One-China principle, countries seeking diplomatic relations with China must acknowledge that there is "One China" and deny formal recognition to Taiwan. China asserts territorial rights over Taiwan. The exclusion of Eswatini from tariff benefits is a pointed illustration of the economic and diplomatic consequences China imposes on nations that maintain ties with Taipei.
- **Meta-Manus Deal Collapsed:** A \$2 billion deal signed in December 2025 between Meta (United States) and Manus, a Chinese-origin artificial intelligence company that had relocated to Singapore, was revoked after the Chinese government intervened, citing potential threats to its "industrial security and development interests." The incident highlighted the phenomenon of "Singapore-washing," where Chinese companies relocate to Singapore to circumvent US restrictions and Chinese state interference, a strategy that ultimately failed in this case.
- **Huawei and the AI Chip Market:** Amid the fallout from US-China tech tensions, the Financial Times reported that Huawei is set to capture the largest share of China's AI chip market in 2026, as Chinese companies seek domestic alternatives to American firm Nvidia. US restrictions on chip sales to China have inadvertently accelerated China's domestic semiconductor development.
- **Pakistan's Hangor-Class Submarine:** Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari attended the commissioning ceremony in China for the first of eight Hangor-class submarines, describing it as a "historic milestone" for Pakistan's navy. The Hangor-class is an export variant of China's Type039B Yuan-class diesel-electric attack submarine. It is named after the decommissioned PNS Hangor, which sank India's INS Khukri during the 1971 war.

Canada becomes First non-European Country to Attend an EPC Summit

In the News: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney became the first leader of a non-European country to attend a summit of the European Political Community (EPC), participating in its eighth meeting held in Yerevan, Armenia. The summit, co-chaired by European Council President António Costa and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, brought together more than 40 heads of state and government under the theme 'Building the Future: Unity and Stability in Europe.'

Key Points:

- **Historic First for EPC:** Canada became the first non-European nation to participate in an EPC summit, with Prime Minister Mark Carney attending the Yerevan meeting. European Council President António Costa described this as politically very significant, reflecting the strong and growing alignment between Europe and Canada.
- **Canada's Strategic Objectives:** Carney's participation is widely seen as an effort to build new trade and diplomatic alliances following the disruption of US markets under President Donald Trump. Canadian diplomats, however, have rejected suggestions that Canada is seeking European Union membership.
- **About the EPC Summit:** The eighth EPC summit was held in Yerevan, Armenia, marking the first time the European Political Community has convened in the South Caucasus region. The forum aims to foster political dialogue, strengthen security and stability, and advance connectivity and economic cooperation across the European continent.

- **Armenia at the Centre:** Yerevan was chosen as the host city to strengthen Armenia's ties with Europe. The EPC had earlier provided a platform for the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which culminated in a historic bilateral agreement. A separate EU-Armenia bilateral summit was also scheduled for May 4-5, 2026, the first ever of its kind.

Global Press Freedom Hits Record Low in World Press Freedom Index 2026 Report

In the News: The Reporters Without Borders (RSF) World Press Freedom Index 2026 recorded its lowest average score in the index's 25-year history, with over half of all countries falling into the "difficult" or "very serious" categories for press freedom. India ranked 157th out of 180 countries, reflecting a continued decline in press freedom conditions.

Key Points:

- **Historic Low in Press Freedom:** The 2026 RSF World Press Freedom Index recorded the lowest global average score since its inception 25 years ago. For the first time, more than 52% of the 180 countries and territories assessed fall into the "difficult" or "very serious" categories, compared to only 13.7% in 2002. Less than 1% of the world's population now lives in a country where press freedom is categorised as "good."
- **Five Indicators of Assessment:** The Index evaluates countries across five key indicators: political environment, legal framework, economic conditions, social context, and safety of journalists. The legal indicator recorded the sharpest decline in 2026, deteriorating in over 60% of states (110 out of 180 countries).
- **Criminalisation of Journalism:** The most alarming trend in 2026 is the rising criminalisation of journalism, involving the misuse of national security laws, emergency provisions, Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), and anti-terrorism legislation to silence, harass, and imprison journalists worldwide.
- **India's Ranking:** India ranked 157th out of 180 countries in the 2026 Index, placing it among the nations where the legal framework governing media has been significantly weakened. India now ranks below all its immediate neighbours, including Nepal (87th), Maldives (108th), Sri Lanka (134th), Bhutan (150th), Bangladesh (152nd), and Pakistan (153rd).
- **Top and Bottom Performers:** Norway retained the top position for the tenth consecutive year, followed by the Netherlands, Estonia, Denmark, and Sweden. Eritrea ranked last (180th) for the third consecutive year. Post-Assad Syria recorded the biggest improvement, climbing 36 places to 141st following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government in December 2024.

From Rodents to Cruise Cabins How Hanta Virus Is Spreading Concern

In the News: The World Health Organization (WHO) was notified of a cluster of severe respiratory illness cases linked to a Dutch-flagged cruise ship, with seven cases (two confirmed and five suspected) of hantavirus infection reported as of 4 May 2026, including three deaths. WHO currently assesses the global risk from this event as low.

Key Points:

- **The Outbreak:** Seven cases of hantavirus infection, comprising two laboratory-confirmed and five suspected cases, were reported aboard a cruise ship carrying 147 passengers and crew from 23 nationalities. Of these, three patients died, one remained critically ill in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in South Africa, and three reported mild symptoms. The vessel departed Ushuaia, Argentina, on 1 April 2026 and was moored off Cabo Verde as of 4 May 2026.
- **Voyage Route and Exposure Risk:** The ship travelled across the South Atlantic, with stops at mainland Antarctica, South Georgia, Nightingale Island, Tristan da Cunha, Saint Helena, and Ascension Island. The extent of passenger contact with local wildlife during the voyage or prior to boarding in Ushuaia remains under investigation as a potential source of exposure.
- **About Hantavirus:** Hantavirus Cardiopulmonary Syndrome (HCPS), also called Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS), is a rare but severe zoonotic respiratory disease caused by hantaviruses. It is primarily transmitted through contact with the urine, faeces, or saliva of infected rodents, or by touching contaminated surfaces. Symptoms include fever, headache, gastrointestinal problems, and rapid progression to respiratory distress and shock. The incubation period is typically 2 to 4 weeks.
- **Human-to-Human Transmission:** While hantavirus does not commonly spread between humans, limited human-to-human transmission has been documented in previous outbreaks involving Andes virus, a South American hantavirus species, through close and prolonged contact. This possibility is being monitored in the current cluster.
- **Treatment and Diagnosis:** There is no specific antiviral treatment or approved vaccine for HCPS. Management relies on early supportive care, careful fluid administration, hemodynamic monitoring, and respiratory support in an ICU setting. Diagnosis is confirmed through serologic testing (ELISA) or reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing for viral RNA.

India-Nepal Border Frictions Regarding Kailash Yatra Route

In the News: Nepal objected to India and China planning the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via Lipulekh Pass, claiming the route passes through Nepali territory. India's Ministry of External Affairs firmly rejected the claim, calling Lipulekh a long-standing yatra route since 1954 and terming Nepal's territorial assertions unjustified and untenable.

Key Points:

- **Nepal's Objection:** Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs objected to the proposed Kailash Mansarovar Yatra route via Lipulekh Pass, asserting that Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh, and Kalapani east of the Mahakali River are integral parts of Nepal based on the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli. Nepal stated it was not consulted before the route was finalised and has conveyed its position to both India and China through diplomatic channels.
- **India's Rejection:** MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal rejected Nepal's claim, stating that Lipulekh Pass has been a long-standing route for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra since 1954 and its use is not a new development. India described Nepal's territorial claims as neither justified nor based on historical facts and evidence, calling such unilateral enlargement of territorial claims untenable.
- **India's Openness to Dialogue:** Despite rejecting the claims, India reaffirmed its willingness to engage constructively with Nepal on all bilateral issues, including resolving outstanding boundary disputes through dialogue and diplomacy.
- **Nepal's Diplomatic Stance:** Nepal stated it remains committed to resolving boundary issues through diplomatic means based on historical treaties, facts, maps, and evidence, in the spirit of friendly relations with India. It has previously urged India not to undertake activities such as road construction, border trade, or pilgrimage operations in the disputed area.
- **About the Yatra:** The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is organised by India's Ministry of External Affairs in coordination with the Chinese government and is scheduled to take place from June to August 2026. China had reopened the yatra last year amid improving bilateral ties following the completion of troop disengagement in eastern Ladakh.

Trump pauses Project Freedom: What this means for US-GCC alliance, Strait of Hormuz

In the News: US President Donald Trump announced the pause of Project Freedom, an initiative launched on May 4 to escort stranded vessels through the Strait of Hormuz. The operation, halted just two days after its launch with only two of thousands of stranded ships guided through, exposed deep divisions within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and strained Washington's ties with key Gulf allies, particularly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The development comes amid a fragile ceasefire in the ongoing US-Israel-Iran war that began on February 28, 2026.

Key Points:

- **Project Freedom Launch and Pause:** US President Donald Trump announced Project Freedom on May 4, 2026, aimed at escorting commercial vessels stuck in the Strait of Hormuz. The operation was paused on May 6 "for a short period of time," with Trump citing requests from Pakistan, which has acted as an intermediary between the US and Iran, and progress in ceasefire negotiations as the official reasons.
- **Real Reason Behind the Pause:** According to an NBC report, the reversal was triggered by strong backlash from Gulf allies who were caught unaware about the plan. Saudi Arabia restricted the US military's access to the Prince Sultan Airbase and its airspace, while Kuwait similarly denied Washington the use of its bases and airspace, making it impossible for US aircraft to protect ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Strait of Hormuz Significance:** The Strait of Hormuz is a critical maritime chokepoint through which approximately 20 percent of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas usually passes. Iran blocked this waterway in response to the US-Israeli air strikes that began on February 28, 2026, under Operation Epic Fury, severely disrupting global energy supplies.
- **Operation Epic Fury Concludes:** US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced that the initial US-Israeli offensive in Iran, named Operation Epic Fury, was over after achieving its objectives. The US and Iran reached a ceasefire in early April 2026, under which Iran ended its drone and missile strikes on Gulf countries, though the US blockade of Iranian ports remains in place.
- **Saudi Arabia's Firm Stand:** The Kingdom emerged as the strongest opponent of Project Freedom within the GCC. A direct call between Trump and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman failed to resolve the dispute, signaling that Riyadh has drawn a clear line on unilateral US military actions in the region without prior consultation.
- **UAE's Divergent Position:** Unlike Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates appeared aligned with Project Freedom. The UAE had recently exited the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), with the linked assumption that it would increase oil production and leverage spare capacity, which required the Strait of Hormuz to be reopened for exports through its Fujairah pipeline.

Ecocide and International Law

In the News: The term "ecocide" has gained renewed global attention following allegations that military actions in conflicts such as Israel's operations in Southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip caused massive environmental destruction. Similar concerns were raised by Iran after attacks on fuel depots in Tehran. These developments have intensified demands to recognise ecocide as the fifth international crime alongside genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression, exposing the inadequacy of the Rome Statute in addressing large-scale environmental destruction.

Key Points:

- **Definition and Origin:** Ecocide literally means "killing one's home" and refers to the mass destruction or degradation of ecosystems to the extent that peaceful enjoyment by inhabitants is severely diminished. The term was coined in 1970 by Yale plant biologist Professor Arthur W. Galston in reference to the United States military's use of the herbicide Agent Orange during the Vietnam War (1955–1975). In 2021, a panel convened by Stop Ecocide International defined it as "unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment."
- **Early Political and Legal Adoption:** Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme introduced the term to refer to the Vietnam War. Vietnam became the first country to codify ecocide into domestic law in 1990. Russia, Ukraine, France, and Belgium have since adopted it in their domestic laws, but ecocide is still not universally recognised as an international crime.
- **Legal Status in India:** India does not recognise ecocide as a distinct criminal offence. It relies on a patchwork of statutes including the Environment Protection Act, 1986, the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, where penalties are limited to minor fines and short-term imprisonment, treating environmental harm as a regulatory violation rather than a heinous crime.
- **Judicial Acknowledgment in India:** In *M.K. Ranjitsinh vs. Union of India (2024)*, the Supreme Court recognised the "Right against the adverse impacts of climate change" as a fundamental right under Article 14 and Article 21, laying the constitutional groundwork for future criminalisation of ecocide. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) treats severe pollution as a "continuing offence" and applies the Polluter Pays Principle to impose multi-crore compensation fines as a pseudo-penalty for ecocide-like destruction.
- **International Crimes Framework:** The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutes four core international crimes: Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes, and the Crime of Aggression. The Rome Statute (1998) is the foundational treaty that established the ICC and defined these crimes. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) codifies laws via the International Law Commission (ILC), while the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) can refer situations to the ICC under Chapter VII.

India Advances BRICS MSME Cooperation Under Its 2026 Chairship

In the News: As Chair of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) in 2026, India is spearheading a renewed agenda for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) cooperation under the BRICS Partnership on the New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR). During India's Chairship, the Ministry of MSME has been mandated to convene three SME Working Group Meetings and the inaugural BRICS MSME Forum. The 1st SME Working Group Meeting was held virtually on April 24, 2026, with a specialised focus on "Access to Finance for MSMEs."

Key Points:

- **India's Chairship Role:** India assumed the Chair of BRICS in 2026 and is leading a renewed agenda for MSME cooperation under the BRICS Partnership on the New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR).
- **Ministry Mandate:** The Ministry of MSME has been tasked with convening three SME Working Group Meetings and organising the inaugural BRICS MSME Forum during India's Chairship year.
- **First Working Group Meeting:** The 1st SME Working Group Meeting was successfully convened as a webinar on April 24, 2026, with a specialised focus on "Access to Finance for MSMEs."
- **Key Deliberation Themes:** Discussions centred on two main themes — "Bridging the MSME Credit Gap through Financial Inclusion, Literacy and Credit Readiness" and "Fintech-Driven Ecosystems: Expanding SME Credit and Seamless Global Trade Payments."
- **Broad BRICS Participation:** The webinar witnessed active participation from all BRICS Member Countries and served as a platform for exchanging experiences, policy approaches, and best practices on MSME financing challenges and opportunities.

- **Institutional Cooperation:** The Meeting underlined the importance of enhanced collaboration among BRICS economies to strengthen institutional capacities, promote innovative financing mechanisms, and build supportive ecosystems for MSME finance.

India Hosts ISO International Subcommittee Meetings for the First Time

In the News: The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body of India, hosted the 35th Plenary and Working Groups meetings of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) Technical Committee 20 / Subcommittee 14 (ISO TC 20 / SC 14) on 'Space Systems and Operations' at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. This was the first time India hosted these international subcommittee meetings, with 131 international delegates from 13 countries participating to shape global standards for the entire lifecycle of space systems, including mission safety, interoperability, and debris mitigation.

Key Points:

- **First-Time Hosting:** India hosted the ISO International Subcommittee meetings on 'Space Systems and Operations' for the first time, marking a significant milestone in the country's growing role in the global space standards ecosystem.
- **Organising Body:** The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body of India, organised the 35th Plenary and Working Groups meetings of ISO TC 20 / SC 14 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- **Scale of Participation:** The event witnessed participation of 131 international delegates from 13 countries, representing National Standards Bodies, International Space Agencies including the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), space industry, and academia.
- **Key Dignitaries:** The Inaugural Session was graced by Ms. Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India; Shri Sanjay Garg, Director General, BIS; Dr. Pawan Goenka, Chairman, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe); Ms. Reena Garg, Deputy Director General (Standardisation), BIS; Mr. Frederick Slane, Chairperson, ISO TC 20 / SC 14; and Mr. Rajeev Jyoti, Chairperson, National Mirror Committee BIS TED 14 on Air and Space Vehicles.
- **Role of Policy Reforms:** The Government of India, through significant reforms and the creation of IN-SPACe, has laid the foundation for an emerging space hub where startups and established industries can thrive.
- **About ISO TC 20 / SC 14:** The subcommittee develops international standards for the entire lifecycle of space systems, from design and production to launch, operations, and space-based services, ensuring safety, interoperability, and sustainability in global space activities.

Andaman & Nicobar Islands Set Guinness World Records

In the News: The Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration set two Guinness World Records on consecutive days at Swaraj Dweep (Havelock Island). On May 2, the world's largest underwater national flag was unfurled at Radhanagar beach, and on May 3, the tallest human stack underwater was formed at the same location. The back-to-back feats are part of an initiative to showcase the islands as a premier global diving destination and a hub for adventure tourism and eco-tourism.

Key Points:

- **First Record on May 2, 2026:** The Andaman and Nicobar administration unfurled the world's largest underwater national flag at Radhanagar beach in Swaraj Dweep (Havelock Island), setting a new Guinness World Record.
- **Flag Dimensions:** The massive Tricolour measured approximately 60 by 40 metres and was deployed beneath the sea in a complex, tightly coordinated operation involving multiple agencies and trained divers.
- **Multi-Agency Coordination:** Personnel from the Andaman and Nicobar Police, Forest Department, Indian Navy, and Indian Coast Guard, along with scuba divers from various diving centres, collaborated to execute the intricate underwater unfurling.
- **Participation by Over 200 Divers:** More than 200 divers took part in the operation, including three school children, Fateh Jahaan Singh (16), Lavanya Eira (15), and Ranvijay Singh (14), who were the youngest participants.
- **Formal Confirmation:** At 10.35 am on May 2, 2026, Rishi Nath, adjudicator from Guinness World Records, formally confirmed the achievement and presented the certificate to Lieutenant Governor D.K. Joshi.
- **Dignitaries Present:** Lieutenant Governor D.K. Joshi, Chief Secretary Chandra Bhushan Kumar, and Director General of Police H.S. Dhaliwal, along with senior officials, witnessed the event.
- **Second Record on May 3, 2026:** A day later, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands created another Guinness World Record by forming the tallest human stack underwater at Swaraj Dweep.
- **Human Stack Details:** Fourteen people, including Lieutenant Governor D.K. Joshi, took part in forming the 22.3-metre-long stack, remaining under the water for three minutes.

- **Lieutenant Governor's Role:** D.K. Joshi, who is also the Vice-Chairman of the Islands Development Agency (IDA), personally participated in both record-setting events, underscoring administrative commitment to the initiative.

ENVIRONMENT

Santa Marta Climate Conference, Background, Objectives, Role

In the News: The First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels, co-hosted by Colombia and the Netherlands, was held in Santa Marta, Colombia from April 24 to 29, 2026. The Conference served as the first implementation-focused international platform dedicated to advancing a just, orderly, and equitable transition away from fossil fuels, complementing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process and feeding directly into the COP30 Presidency Roadmap.

Key Points:

- **Background and Origin:** The Conference traces its political mandate to paragraph 28(d) of the first Global Stocktake (GST) decision adopted at COP28 in Dubai (November-December 2023), which called on Parties to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly, and equitable manner to achieve net zero by 2050 in line with 1.5°C pathways.
- **Co-Hosts and Venue:** The Conference was co-hosted by the Government of Colombia and the Government of the Netherlands and was convened in Santa Marta, Colombia, marking the first dedicated international forum focused exclusively on the implementation of the fossil fuel transition.
- **Nature of the Forum:** The Conference is not a negotiating body and does not replace the UNFCCC, but functions as a sustained political platform for countries ready to deliver implementation-driven action toward an orderly phase-out of fossil fuels and as a complementary space contributing to the COP30 Presidency's roadmap.
- **Three Guiding Principles:** The Conference was guided by three principles, namely participation by those ready to move forward, implementation as the guiding star based on shared scientific certainty, and a focus on solutions that meaningfully support the transition rather than delay it.
- **Three Thematic Pillars:** The synthesis report was organised around three thematic pillars, covering overcoming economic dependence on fossil fuels, transforming supply and demand, and advancing international cooperation and climate diplomacy.
- **Participation Scale:** A total of 57 countries participated in the Conference, representing approximately one-third of global GDP, around one-third of global fossil fuel consumption, and roughly one-fifth of global fossil fuel production, while 2,608 organisations expressed interest in participating.
- **Second Conference Announcement:** A second Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels was announced for 2027, to be co-hosted by Tuvalu and Ireland, with the main conference taking place in Tuvalu and a pre-conference meeting in Ireland.
- **Coordination Group:** A coordination group was established to ensure continuity towards future conferences, comprising countries leading various transition alliances and initiatives along with Colombia, the Netherlands, Tuvalu, and Ireland, and connected with the COP30 Activation Group 4.

Sir David Attenborough at 100: Why iconic conservationist's legacy lies beyond his documentaries

In the News: The renowned British broadcaster and conservationist Sir David Attenborough turned 100, marking a remarkable milestone in a career spanning over seven decades. Celebrated globally for transforming natural history programming into a powerful tool for environmental advocacy, Attenborough's legacy extends far beyond his iconic documentaries, having directly influenced conservation policies, public awareness, and global climate action.

Key Points:

- **Early Life and Career Beginnings:** Born on May 8, 1926, David Attenborough is the son of Frederick Attenborough, the former principal of University College, Leicester. He completed his education at Cambridge, where he studied geology and earth sciences. He joined the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as a trainee producer in 1952 and rapidly rose through the ranks. By 1954, he had become the face of his own docuseries, Zoo Quest, which featured 42 episodes across seven seasons in collaboration with the London Zoo.

- **Rise at the BBC:** Owing to the popularity of Zoo Quest, Attenborough was elevated to the position of Controller (editorial executive) at BBC Two in 1965. He was directly involved in the BBC's introduction of colour television in 1967. In 1972, he resigned from his administrative post to return to fieldwork and natural history programming.
- **Landmark Series and Conservation Impact:** His 1979 series Life on Earth is credited with bringing global attention to the plight of the mountain gorilla, whose population had dwindled to just 250 at the time. The broadcast of his encounter with gorillas in Rwanda triggered a worldwide influx of donations. By 2018, mountain gorilla numbers exceeded 1,000, prompting the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to reclassify the species from "Critically Endangered" to "Endangered." It remains the only great ape species recording steady population growth.
- **Shift to Climate Advocacy:** Attenborough's transition from observer to active conservationist advocate began in 2004, after he attended a lecture at the University of Liège in Belgium that conclusively linked human activity to climate change. This shift marked the beginning of his vocal engagement with global warming, biodiversity loss, and habitat destruction.
- **The 'Attenborough Effect':** The 2017 broadcast of Blue Planet 2, which exposed the threat of microplastics and single-use packaging in oceans, generated widespread public outrage. It is widely credited as the primary catalyst for the United Kingdom's 2020 ban on plastic straws, stirrers, and cotton buds. The series also influenced the UK's 25-Year Environment Plan, which aims to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by 2042. Post-broadcast research recorded a 50% surge in online queries about plastic recycling and a measurable drop in single-use goods demand.

SPORTS

India to Participate in FIFA ASEAN Cup

In the News: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has signed a participation agreement with FIFA to feature in the inaugural FIFA ASEAN Cup 2026, which is expected to be hosted in the September to October international window. The tournament was announced by FIFA president Gianni Infantino at the 47th ASEAN Summit held in Kuala Lumpur in October 2025, and brings together football associations from across Southeast Asia along with invited nations India and China.

Key Points:

- **Participation Confirmed:** AIFF deputy secretary general M Satyanarayan confirmed that the federation has accepted FIFA's invitation and signed the participation agreement, with further operational details still awaited from the world governing body.
- **Tournament Window:** The competition is expected to be staged between September 21 and October 6, 2026, falling within the official FIFA international match window for senior national teams.
- **Special Invitees:** India and China have been invited to join the Southeast Asian nations, ensuring the participation of the two most populous countries in the world and expanding the regional footprint of the tournament.
- **Format Structure:** The competition will feature 14 teams across a two-division format, with Division 1 comprising eight teams split into two groups and Division 2 featuring six teams divided into two groups, with placements decided on the basis of FIFA rankings.
- **Host Nations:** Indonesia is expected to host the Division 1 group stage matches, while Division 2 fixtures are reportedly set to take place in Hong Kong.
- **Knockout Stage:** The tournament will not include semi-finals, as the group winners in each division will directly face off in a final while the runners-up will compete for third place, with each team playing between two and four matches.
- **Prize Money:** Every participating nation will receive a guaranteed participation fee of US\$125,000, with Division 1 champions earning US\$1 million and Division 2 winners receiving US\$300,000, taking the total prize pool to approximately US\$4 million.
- **Indian Context:** India are currently ranked 136 in the FIFA rankings and are placed alongside Thailand, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore in the projected Division 1 line-up.

India's Dual-Track Sports Policy for Pakistan

In the News: The Union Sports Ministry issued an Office Memorandum formalising India's dual-track sports policy on Pakistan, a year after the Pahalgam terror attacks and Operation Sindoor. The policy bars bilateral sporting contests between the two countries while permitting Pakistani athletes and teams to participate in multilateral events hosted in India. The move comes as India positions itself as a credible global sporting destination with bids and hosting rights for several major international

tournaments.

Key Points:

- **Policy Formalisation:** The Sports Ministry's Office Memorandum dated May 5, 2026, formally separates bilateral and multilateral sporting engagements with Pakistan, ending years of ad hoc handling of such cases.
- **No Bilateral Engagement:** Indian teams will not travel to Pakistan for bilateral competitions, nor will Pakistani teams be permitted to play in India for bilateral events, reflecting India's overall policy approach towards Pakistan.
- **Multilateral Events Open:** Indian teams and players will participate in international events featuring Pakistani teams or players, and Pakistani athletes and teams will be allowed to compete in multilateral events hosted by India.
- **Multi-Entry Visas for Officials:** International federation officials will be granted multi-entry visas on a priority basis for the duration of their official tenure, subject to a maximum period of five years.
- **India as Global Sports Host:** The policy reflects India's emergence as a credible venue for international sports events. India will host the Commonwealth Games in 2030 and has bid for the 2036 Olympics and 2038 Asian Games, with Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) officials set to visit Ahmedabad to evaluate India's bid.
- **Upcoming Cricket Events:** India will also host the Champions Trophy in 2029 and the 50-over Cricket World Cup in 2031, where the new policy framework will be tested in high-profile settings.

SCIENCE AND TECH

India Tests Hypersonic Anti-Ship Missile with 1500km Range

In the News: India has successfully carried out the second flight test of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)-developed Long-Range Hypersonic Anti-Ship Missile (LR-AShM) off the Odisha coast. The missile, capable of speeds up to Mach 10 and a strike range exceeding 1,500 km, marks a significant advancement in India's maritime defence and indigenous defence innovation capabilities.

Key Points:

- **Second Flight Test:** The second flight test of the DRDO-developed Long-Range Hypersonic Anti-Ship Missile (LR-AShM) was successfully conducted off the Odisha coast on May 2, 2026. The second trial specifically focused on validating the missile's two-stage hypersonic glide vehicle configuration. The first test had been conducted on November 16, 2024.
- **Key Specifications:** The LR-AShM has a strike range exceeding 1,500 km, significantly extending India's reach into deep ocean zones. It can achieve peak speeds of up to Mach 10, while sustaining an average speed of around Mach 5 during its glide phase -- fast enough to evade advanced ship-based radar and interception systems.
- **Technical Design:** The missile is built on a two-stage solid rocket system integrated with a hypersonic glide vehicle. It is designed to carry multiple payloads and incorporates unpredictable flight paths, including low-altitude radar-evading trajectories and skipping manoeuvres. Indigenously developed sensors enable precision targeting of both stationary and moving targets, such as aircraft carriers, in the terminal phase.
- **"Carrier-Killer" Capability:** The LR-AShM was described as a "carrier-killer" system by the defence ministry during its first test in November 2024. Its ability to strike moving targets such as aircraft carriers at hypersonic speeds makes it a formidable addition to India's maritime arsenal, with strategic implications for regional rivals such as China and Pakistan.

India's Private Sector Launches 'Mission Drishti' Earth Observation Satellite

In the News: Bengaluru-based space startup GalaxEye successfully launched Mission Drishti, the world's first OptoSAR satellite, aboard SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg, California. Weighing 190 kilograms, it is the largest Earth observation satellite ever built by a private Indian company.

Key Points:

- **Mission Drishti Launch:** GalaxEye launched Mission Drishti on May 3, 2026, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg, California. The satellite has been successfully deployed into orbit, with initial imagery expected to be delivered to customers in the coming weeks.
- **World's First OptoSAR Satellite:** Mission Drishti is the first satellite globally to integrate Electro-Optical (EO) and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) sensors into a single operational platform. This enables all-weather, day-and-night imaging capabilities, addressing long-standing limitations of conventional Earth observation systems.



- **Dual-Use Applications:** Mission Drishti supports a wide range of use cases including defence, agriculture, disaster management, maritime monitoring, and infrastructure planning, and is expected to complement ISRO's existing fleet of 29 Earth observation satellites.
- **National Recognition:** Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan hailed the launch as a significant step forward for India's commercial space ecosystem, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi described it as a testament to the youth's passion for innovation and nation-building.
- **IN-SPACE Response:** Dr. Pawan Goenka, Chairman of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE), noted that Mission Drishti reflects years of confidence-building and capacity-building in India's private space technology ecosystem, and expressed confidence that such milestones would attract greater global demand for Indian space capabilities.

Pathfinder to be India's First AI Orbital Data Centre Satellite

In the News: Indian space-tech startup Pixxel announced a strategic partnership with AI firm Sarvam AI to develop Pathfinder, described as India's first orbital data centre satellite. The 200 kg satellite is scheduled to reach orbit by Q4 2026 and will host datacenter-class GPUs capable of training and running large language models directly in space.

Key Points:

- **The Partnership:** Pixxel will design, build, launch, and operate the Pathfinder satellite from its upcoming Gigapixxel facility, while Sarvam AI will provide the artificial intelligence backbone, handling both model training and inference directly in orbit without relying on foreign cloud infrastructure.
- **What Makes Pathfinder Different:** Unlike conventional satellites that use low-power edge processors optimised for survival, Pathfinder will carry datacenter-class Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) of the same generation as ground-based AI data centres, enabling frontier-level AI training and inference in space.
- **Hyperspectral Imaging Capability:** The satellite will also carry Pixxel's hyperspectral imaging camera, making it among the first satellites globally capable of capturing high-fidelity hyperspectral data and analysing it in real time using foundation models, eliminating the need to transmit large volumes of raw data back to Earth.
- **Why Space Computing:** Rising energy demands, land constraints, regulation, and environmental concerns are pushing companies to explore space-based alternatives. Global data centre capacity is projected to reach 200 GW by 2030, while India's own capacity could grow from 1.8 GW to approximately 10.5 GW by 2031, according to a Morgan Stanley estimate.

Claude Mythos

In the News: Department of Financial Services (DFS) Secretary M Nagaraju, addressing an Indian Banks' Association (IBA) summit on risk management, urged Indian banks to fortify their cybersecurity and operational resilience against the disruptive potential of advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) models like Anthropic's "Claude Mythos." He directed IBA Chairman Challa Sreenivasulu Setty to ensure banks are adequately prepared if Mythos is publicly released, citing its capability to autonomously identify and exploit software vulnerabilities in critical financial infrastructure.

Key Points:

- **About Claude Mythos:** Claude Mythos is one of Anthropic's latest Artificial Intelligence (AI) models developed under its broader Claude AI system. The model is specifically designed for cybersecurity tasks and has demonstrated capabilities surpassing human experts in locating dormant bugs and identifying exploits in legacy software systems. It is dual-use in nature, capable of fixing security issues when deployed as a cyber defender, but equally capable of exploiting vulnerabilities if used as a hacking tool by malicious actors.
- **Why in the News:** Reports suggest Mythos can dramatically compress the time needed to discover software vulnerabilities and potentially enable sophisticated cyberattacks on critical infrastructure and financial systems. Anthropic has delayed its public release and restricted access to a limited set of organisations while governments and regulators assess the implications. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, on April 24, 2026, also flagged Mythos as a key risk requiring banks to upgrade systems and strengthen customer protection.
- **Project Glasswing:** To mitigate the risks associated with Mythos, Anthropic launched a restricted initiative called Project Glasswing. The project provides controlled access to over 40 critical organisations, including Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google, Microsoft, Nvidia, and CrowdStrike, with the objective of proactively securing the world's most critical software systems before broader deployment of the model.

- **Systemic and Cascading Risks:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and central bankers have classified Mythos as an "unknown unknown" risk, fearing that its potential release could undermine the security of international financial systems. Due to the highly interconnected nature of financial institutions, a single successful breach could trigger a cascading failure across markets, directly threatening national and global financial stability.
- **Regulatory Response in India:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been in discussions with global regulators and banks to assess risks associated with the model and strengthen coordinated response mechanisms. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has separately cautioned market participants about risks arising from frontier AI tools, including potential cyber vulnerabilities and misuse scenarios linked to advanced generative AI systems.

APPOINTMENTS

Prime Minister Appoints Two New NITI Aayog Members

In the News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the appointment of Dr. R. Balasubramaniam and Dr. Joram Aniya as full-time members of NITI Aayog, as notified by the Cabinet Secretariat through a gazette notification. With these two additions, the total number of full-time members of NITI Aayog rises to seven. The appointments come days after a major reconstitution of the think tank on April 24, 2026, described as the first major revamp of NITI Aayog since its inception in 2015.

Key Points:

- **New Appointments:** PM Narendra Modi has approved the appointment of Dr. R. Balasubramaniam and Dr. Joram Aniya as full-time members of NITI Aayog. The appointments were formally notified through a gazette notification by the Cabinet Secretariat. With these additions, the total number of full-time members of NITI Aayog now stands at seven.
 - **About Dr. R. Balasubramaniam:** Dr. Balasubramaniam has previously served as a member of the Capacity Building Commission. He is also the author of the book titled "Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi."
 - **About Dr. Joram Aniya:** Dr. Aniya is an academician and a member of the Arunachal Pradesh Private Educational Regulatory Commission, with over 18 years of experience in teaching, research, and public policy engagement. She has authored and edited several books on Nyishi literature and culture, along with numerous research publications.
 - **Historic Appointment:** NITI Aayog officials described Dr. Joram Aniya's appointment as historic. She is the first woman from the Nyishi community to earn a PhD, and also the first doctorate in Hindi language from Arunachal Pradesh.
 - **Earlier Reconstitution on April 24:** Days before these appointments, the government had reconstituted NITI Aayog on April 24, 2026, appointing a new Vice-Chairman and replacing four of the five existing full-time members. Eminent economist Ashok Lahiri was appointed as the new Vice-Chairman, replacing Suman Berry. Other new members inducted at that stage included Abhay Karandikar (Secretary, Department of Science and Technology) and Dr. M. Srinivas (Director, AIIMS Delhi) along with Rajiv Gauba, K. V. Raju, Gobardhan Das, as full-time members in a move to reconstitute the think tank.
- First Major Revamp Since 2015:** The reconstitution of NITI Aayog, including the latest appointments, represents the first major overhaul of the institution since its establishment in 2015, when it replaced the Planning Commission set up during the Nehruvian era.

Prasoon Joshi Named Chairman of Prasar Bharati in Media Leadership Shift

In the News: The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting appointed renowned lyricist, writer, and communications expert Shri Prasoon Joshi as the Chairman of Prasar Bharati, India's statutory public service broadcaster.

Key Points:

- **New Chairman Appointed:** Shri Prasoon Joshi has been named Chairman of the Prasar Bharati Board, effective May 2, 2026. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw congratulated the appointment, stating that Joshi's creative vision will bring renewed energy and purpose to public broadcasting in India.
- **Profile of Prasoon Joshi:** Joshi is a celebrated creative professional with contributions spanning film lyrics, advertising, literature, and public communication. He is widely recognized for his deep cultural sensibility and his ability to connect with diverse audiences across the country through socially resonant storytelling.
- **Previous Roles:** Before this appointment, Joshi served as Chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) since August 2017, where he balanced creative expression with regulatory responsibility. He also served as CEO of McCann World Group India and Chairman of McCann World Group Asia Pacific, and has been a Trustee of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts since 2016.

- **About Prasar Bharati:** Established under the Prasar Bharati Act, 1990, and operational since 1997, Prasar Bharati is India's autonomous public broadcaster comprising two major divisions: All India Radio (AIR), one of the world's largest radio networks, and Doordarshan (DD), the national television broadcaster. It has also launched the Waves OTT platform to strengthen free-to-air digital services.

Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan Appointed as New Navy Chief

In the News: The Government of India announced the appointment of Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, as the next Chief of the Naval Staff. He will succeed Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, who retires on May 31, 2026. The appointment comes at a critical juncture as the Indian Navy embarks on a major transformation, particularly in the underwater domain involving submarines and unmanned systems.

Key Points:

- **Appointment Announcement:** Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, currently serving as Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, has been named the new Chief of the Naval Staff. He will assume charge after Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi retires on May 31, 2026.
- **Operational Sea Commands:** His sea commands include missile vessels INS Vidyut and INS Vinash, the missile corvette INS Kulish, the guided missile destroyer INS Mysore, and the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, reflecting expertise across surface warfare and carrier operations.
- **Key Flag Appointments:** On promotion to flag rank, he served as Chief Staff Officer (Training) at Southern Naval Command, Kochi, and was instrumental in raising the Indian Naval Safety Team. He later served as Flag Officer Sea Training, Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet, and Flag Officer Offshore Defence Advisory Group cum Advisor, Offshore Security and Defence to the Government of India.
- **Higher Leadership Roles:** He has held senior positions including Controller of Personnel Services, Chief of Personnel at Naval Headquarters, Chief of Staff of the Western Naval Command, and Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, where he was in charge of modernisation.
- **Priority Areas:** His immediate priorities include concluding the long-pending Project 75 (India) for six new submarines, pushing for the next generation of surface ships, and expanding the strength of the force through induction of niche technology.
- **Honours and Awards:** He has been conferred the Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM), Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM), and Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) for distinguished service and professional excellence.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

India Shines Globally as Indian Journalists Win Pulitzer Prize for Digital Crime Story

In the News: Indian journalists Anand RK and Suparna Sharma, along with Natalie Obiko Pearson, were awarded the Pulitzer Prize 2026 in the Illustrated Reporting and Commentary category for their Bloomberg investigation titled 'trAPPed,' which exposed the growing global threat of digital scams and surveillance.

Key Points:

- **Award and Category:** Anand RK and Suparna Sharma won the Pulitzer Prize 2026 in the Illustrated Reporting and Commentary category, sharing the award with Natalie Obiko Pearson. Their collaborative work was published in Bloomberg and announced on May 4, 2026.
- **The 'trAPPed' Investigation:** The award-winning project narrates the story of a neurologist in India who fell victim to a 'digital arrest' scam, in which cybercriminals remotely manipulated and controlled the victim through her phone. The report combined visual storytelling, data-driven insights, and narrative reporting to expose the dark side of digital connectivity.
- **Global Significance:** The investigation drew attention to the rising threat of cyber fraud and digital surveillance worldwide, highlighting how increasing dependence on smartphones and online platforms has made such crimes more sophisticated and widespread.
- **Key Issues Highlighted:** The report underscored the risks of digital scams and online fraud, the misuse of surveillance technologies, and the lack of cybersecurity awareness among ordinary users, serving as a call to action for individuals, institutions, and governments.

- **About the Pulitzer Prize:** One of the most prestigious honors in journalism, literature, and music, the Pulitzer Prize is administered by Columbia University and recognizes excellence in investigative reporting, public service journalism, and storytelling. The 2026 prizes were announced on May 4, 2026.

STATIC

Rabindranath Tagore Jayanti 2026: Celebrating the Timeless Legacy of India's Nobel Laureate Poet

In the News: India observed the 165th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, the celebrated poet, philosopher, and Nobel laureate. The day is marked nationally on May 7 as per the Gregorian calendar, while West Bengal, Tripura, and Bangladesh observe it on the 25th day of Boishakh (Pochishe Boishakh) according to the Bengali calendar, which falls on May 9 in 2026.

Key Points:

- **Dual Observance:** Rabindranath Tagore Jayanti is celebrated twice each year due to the coexistence of the Gregorian and Bengali calendars. The Gregorian date remains fixed on May 7, while the Bengali calendar date (Pochishe Boishakh) shifts annually as it follows a lunisolar system, usually falling on May 8 or May 9.
- **Birth and Background:** Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 7, 1861, at Jorasanko Thakurbari in Kolkata, to Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi. A literary prodigy, he began writing at a young age and went on to become one of India's most influential cultural figures, earning the title "Bard of Bengal."
- **Nobel Prize Achievement:** In 1913, Tagore became the first non-European and the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, awarded for his celebrated poetry collection Gitanjali. This recognition placed Indian literature on the global stage and remains a milestone in the country's cultural history.
- **Author of National Anthems:** Tagore authored Jana Gana Mana, the national anthem of India, and Amar Sonar Bangla, the national anthem of Bangladesh. His work is also believed to have influenced the composition of Sri Lanka's national anthem, making him uniquely linked to three South Asian nations.
- **Educational Vision:** He founded Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan in West Bengal to promote holistic education that blended creativity, nature, and culture, moving beyond rigid conventional systems. The institution remains a centre of learning rooted in his philosophy.
- **Notable Associations:** Tagore is credited with conferring the title "Mahatma" on Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He also engaged in famous intellectual exchanges with Albert Einstein, discussing topics ranging from science to spirituality.

