

## Weekly Current Affairs 5th April to 11th April 2026

### IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

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## IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

### NATIONAL

#### Cabinet's advice on grant of remission to convicts is binding on Governor

**In the News:** The Madras High Court, in a significant judgment, has held that the Governor is bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers while exercising powers under Article 161 of the Constitution in matters relating to remission and premature release of convict prisoners. A full bench comprising Justices A D Jagadish Chandira, G K Ilanthiraiyan, and Sunder Mohan delivered the verdict while answering a reference made to it following conflicting views taken by different benches on the same issue.

#### Key Points:

- **The Judgment:** The Madras High Court full bench categorically held that while exercising powers under Article 161 of the Constitution, the Governor is bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers in matters relating to remission and premature release of convict prisoners, regardless of whether he agrees with that advice or not. The bench further held that under no circumstance can the Governor exercise discretion to take a view different from that of the Council of Ministers.
- **Article 161 of the Constitution:** Article 161 grants the Governor of a state the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites, or remissions of punishment, or to suspend, remit, or commute sentences of persons convicted of offences against state laws. The key question before the court was whether this power is exercised at the Governor's discretion or on the binding advice of the cabinet.
- **Background — The Reference:** The full bench verdict arose from a reference made after two division benches of the Madras High Court arrived at conflicting conclusions. One bench held that the cabinet's advice is binding on the Governor under Article 161, while another held that the Governor could act on his own discretion. The full bench was constituted to resolve this conflict.
- **Supreme Court Precedents Cited:** The full bench relied on the Supreme Court's judgment in the Maru Ram case, which categorically held that the Governor is the formal head and sole repository of executive power but is incapable of acting except on and according to the advice of his Council of Ministers. The bench also distinguished the MP Special Police Establishment case, noting that it dealt with sanction to prosecute public servants under Section 197 of CrPC and was not applicable to matters under Article 161.
- **Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case — Relevant Precedent:** The Supreme Court had earlier, in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, invoked Article 142 to release convict A G Perarivalan after he spent nearly 31 years in prison, holding that the Tamil Nadu Governor's decision to refer the state cabinet's remission recommendation to the President was without constitutional backing. It subsequently extended the same relief to six other convicts — Robert Payas, Jayakumar, T Suthendraraja, Ravichandran, Nalini, and Murugan — who had all spent over 30 years in prison with satisfactory conduct.
- **Constitutional Provisions Involved:** Article 161 deals with the Governor's pardoning power. Article 142 grants the Supreme Court extraordinary jurisdiction to pass any order necessary to do complete justice in any matter before it. The Governor's general obligation to act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers flows from Article 163 of the Constitution.

#### OECD lowers India's growth projection to 6.1% for FY 27

**In the News:** The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released its Interim Economic Outlook Report for March 2026, projecting India's GDP growth to moderate from 7.6% in FY 2025–26 to 6.1% in FY 2026–27 and 6.4% in FY 2027–28. The downward revision is primarily attributed to rising energy prices driven by the ongoing West Asia crisis, gas rationing disrupting production, and fading fiscal support.

#### Key Points:

- **About the OECD:** The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental economic organisation founded in 1961, comprising 38 member countries. It publishes periodic economic outlooks that assess global and country-level growth, inflation, and policy recommendations. India is not an OECD member but is a Key Partner country.
- **India's GDP Growth Projections:** The OECD projected India's economy to grow at 7.6% in FY 2025–26, moderating to 6.1% in FY 2026–27 and recovering slightly to 6.4% in FY 2027–28. Growth is expected to remain below 6.5% for the next two fiscals, driven by gas rationing disrupting production activities and fading fiscal support.



- **Inflation Outlook for India:** The OECD projected India's inflation to rise sharply from 2.0% in FY 2025–26 to 5.1% in FY 2026–27, before easing to 4.1% in FY 2027–28. The surge is attributed to the fading deflationary impact of past food and energy price-reducing shocks, compounded by the recent rise in global energy prices due to the West Asia conflict.
- **Impact of West Asia Crisis:** Disruption of shipments through the Strait of Hormuz and damage to energy infrastructure have triggered a surge in global energy prices and affected the supply of commodities, including fertilisers. The OECD cautioned about broader risks to global supply chains that could significantly impact India's fertiliser industry.
- **US Tariff Relief:** The OECD noted that US bilateral tariff rates have declined following a US Supreme Court ruling against levies imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. While this has resulted in significant tariff reductions for several emerging-market economies including India, the overall US effective tariff rate remains higher than pre-2025 levels. The decline in tariffs is expected to provide some support to India's growth.
- **Global Growth Outlook:** The OECD kept its global growth projection unchanged at 2.9% for 2026 but lowered the 2027 estimate to 3% from 3.1% earlier. Global growth is expected to be supported by strong technology-related investment and production, lower effective tariff rates, and carry-over momentum from 2025, partially offset by rising energy prices and geopolitical uncertainties.

### Amul crosses ₹1 lakh crore mark, reports 11% growth

**In the News:** Amul, the dairy brand owned by the Anand-based Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd. (GCMMF), crossed ₹1 lakh crore in total brand turnover in 2025–26, registering an 11% increase over the previous financial year. This milestone comes after Amul was ranked the world's number one cooperative by the International Cooperative Alliance.

#### Key Points:

- **About GCMMF and Amul:** The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), headquartered in Anand, Gujarat, is the apex body that markets the Amul brand of milk and dairy products. It operates through Gujarat's 18 district cooperative milk unions and manages branding, marketing, and distribution of the Amul product range across India and international markets. GCMMF is now the largest FMCG organisation in India by turnover.
- **Financial Milestone:** The total unduplicated revenue of the Amul brand crossed ₹1 lakh crore in 2025–26, growing 11% over the base of ₹90,000 crore in 2024–25. GCMMF itself recorded a sales turnover of ₹73,450 crore in 2025–26, an increase of 11.4% over ₹65,911 crore in the previous financial year.
- **Key Statistics:** GCMMF has a network of 3.6 million (36 lakh) dairy farmers, collects 31 million litres of milk per day, maintains a product portfolio of over 1,200 product packs, and distributes over 24 billion packs annually across more than 50 countries.
- **Global Expansion:** During 2025–26, Amul expanded its international presence by launching fresh milk in Europe and the United States. The growth was driven by product expansion, a large distribution network, and changing consumer demand patterns.
- **International Recognition:** Amul was ranked the world's number one cooperative by the International Cooperative Alliance, a prestigious recognition that underlines the strength of India's farmer-owned cooperative model on the global stage.
- **Sardar Patel Cooperative Dairy Federation:** Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah launched the Sardar Patel Cooperative Dairy Federation Limited on July 6, 2025, under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies framework, to link dairy cooperatives from outside Gujarat into a national cooperative network — further expanding the Amul model across India.

### Gujarat HC Bans AI in Courtroom Decisions, Human Judgment Must Prevail

**In the News:** The Gujarat High Court introduced a formal 'Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence', becoming the second High Court in India to formalise an AI policy, after the Kerala High Court issued the first such policy in July 2025. The policy prohibits AI in judicial decision-making while permitting its use as a controlled administrative and research aid, with mandatory human oversight at all times.

#### Key Points:

- **About the Policy:** The Gujarat HC's AI policy applies to all judicial officers, registry staff, legal assistants, interns, and administrative personnel across the High Court and District Judiciary. Its overarching philosophy is rooted in preserving the "unique constitutional mandate of dispensing justice through human conscience."



- **Core Principle — Human in the Loop:** The policy mandates that there shall be "no autonomous or unreviewed AI action" in any judicial or administrative process, and that a "qualified human officer" must always verify AI-generated outputs. This reflects the shared principle across all Indian court AI frameworks.
- **Prohibited Uses of AI:** AI shall never be used for judicial decision-making, judicial reasoning, substantive order or judgment drafting, bail or sentencing considerations, or any adjudicatory process. It is also barred from evaluating evidence or assessing witness credibility, and from processing confidential case data, personal details of litigants, or privileged communications on public AI platforms. Use of AI-generated citations without independent verification from authoritative primary sources is also banned.
- **Permitted Uses of AI:** AI is allowed for legal research, including extraction of *ratio decidendi* and identifying precedents; drafting assistance such as improving language, grammar checking, and machine-assisted translation — provided substantive legal analysis remains entirely that of the judge; administrative tasks such as drafting circulars based on public domain information; and cause list management using anonymised metadata.
- **Violations:** Any breach of the policy will be treated as professional misconduct attracting departmental or disciplinary proceedings.
- **Kerala HC Precedent:** The Kerala High Court's policy, issued in July 2025, similarly restricted AI to assistive roles for routine administrative and translation tasks, directed avoidance of cloud-based AI services for case data, and prohibited AI from being used to arrive at any findings, orders, or judgments.

### Sadhana Saptah 2026 Launched to Boost Governance and Service Delivery

**In the News:** India launched Sadhana Saptah 2026, observed from April 2–8, 2026, as one of the largest collaborative capacity building initiatives in the country. Organised by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Capacity Building Commission, and Karmayogi Bharat, the initiative aims to foster citizen-centric governance and strengthen civil services capacity across ministries, states, and training institutions. It also marks the Foundation Day of the Capacity Building Commission and five years of Mission Karmayogi.

#### Key Points:

- **About Sadhana Saptah:** Sadhana stands for Strengthening Adaptive Development and Humane Aptitude for National Advancement. Operating under the tagline "Ham Bane Karmayogi", it brings together over 100 Central Ministries and Departments, 36 States and Union Territories, and 250+ Civil Services Training Institutions under a unified national framework.
- **Mission Karmayogi:** Sadhana Saptah is an initiative under Mission Karmayogi, also known as the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building — a Central Sector Scheme implemented by DoPT. It aims to build a future-ready, transparent, and citizen-centric civil service by shifting from a rule-based to a role-based, competency-driven approach to governance, reflecting PM Modi's vision of transforming public administration.
- **Supporting Institutions:** The mission is supported by two institutions — the Capacity Building Commission (CBC), set up in 2021, which drives civil service reforms through competency-based learning frameworks, and Karmayogi Bharat Special Purpose Vehicle, set up in 2022, which manages the iGOT Karmayogi digital learning platform.
- **iGOT Karmayogi Platform:** A key pillar of Mission Karmayogi, the iGOT platform offers online training across behavioural, functional, and domain areas, enabling anytime, anywhere learning. It has so far registered over 1.5 crore learners, recorded more than 8 crore course completions, and provides access to 4,600+ courses in multiple languages.
- **Three Themes (Three Sutras) of Sadhana Saptah:** The initiative is structured around three core themes — Technology (April 3–4): focusing on AI in governance, Digital Public Infrastructure, data-informed decision making, and automation; Tradition (April 5–6): emphasising Indian Knowledge Systems, ethical frameworks from Indian philosophy, and community-based governance models; and Tangible Outcomes (April 7–8): focusing on measuring public value, citizen impact tracking, and dashboard-based monitoring.

### BRO's Project Chetak Turns 47: How It Strengthened India's Border Infrastructure Explained

**In the News:** The Border Roads Organisation's (BRO) Project Chetak celebrated its 47th Raising Day at Bikaner, Rajasthan, marking over four decades of dedicated service in strengthening infrastructure across India's strategically vital western border regions.

**Key Points:**

- **About Project Chetak:** Project Chetak is one of the largest projects of the BRO in terms of geographical coverage, established on April 4, 1980, in the strategically important western sector of India. It operates across Rajasthan, Punjab, and northern parts of Gujarat.
- **Motto:** The project operates under the guiding motto "Chetak ka Prayas, Desh ka Vikas" (Chetak's Effort, Nation's Development), reflecting its commitment to nation-building through infrastructure development.
- **Infrastructure Coverage:** Project Chetak maintains more than 4,000 kilometres of road network and 214 kilometres of Ditch-cum-Bund infrastructure, essential for troop movement, logistics, and surveillance along the International Border.
- **Strategic Importance:** By connecting remote and sensitive border regions, the project contributes significantly to both national security and socio-economic development in border districts, supporting defence forces through key feeder roads leading to the International Border.
- **Upgradation Efforts:** Continuous efforts are underway to upgrade key feeder roads to National Highway Double Lane specifications, ensuring faster and more efficient mobility for defence and civilian purposes.
- **About BRO:** The Border Roads Organisation is a premier road construction force established on 7 May 1960, functioning under the Ministry of Defence since 2015. It is responsible for developing and maintaining infrastructure in remote border areas and neighbouring friendly countries, including roads, bridges, tunnels, and airfields in some of the world's most challenging terrains. Its motto is "Shramena Sarvam Sadhyam" (Everything is Achievable through Hard Work).

**Election Petition**

**In the News:** The Supreme Court of India ruled that appellate courts cannot remand election petitions for fresh evidence or expert examination — such as fingerprint analysis — if such issues were not raised before the Election Tribunal. The Court held that election disputes must be decided solely on the existing record, reinforcing procedural discipline and the integrity of original proceedings.

**Key Points:**

- **About Election Petitions:** An election petition is the exclusive judicial remedy in India to challenge the validity of an election result, safeguarding the integrity and purity of the democratic process.
- **Constitutional Basis:** Under Article 329(b) of the Constitution, no election to Parliament or State Legislatures can be questioned except through an election petition.
- **Statutory Framework:** Election petitions for Parliamentary and State Legislative Assembly elections are governed by the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951, while disputes relating to local bodies are governed by respective State laws enacted under the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.
- **Jurisdiction:** Petitions for Parliamentary or Assembly elections are filed in the High Court of the respective state, whereas challenges to Presidential or Vice-Presidential elections are filed directly in the Supreme Court under Article 71.
- **Eligibility & Timeline:** Any candidate or elector of the concerned constituency can file a petition within a strict window of 45 days from the date of result declaration.
- **Grounds for Voiding an Election (Section 100, RPA 1951):** An election can be declared void if the candidate was disqualified, committed corrupt practices such as bribery, undue influence, or appeals to religion/caste, or if there was improper acceptance or rejection of nomination papers.
- **SC Ruling — No Remand for Fresh Evidence:** The Supreme Court held that election petitions are special statutory proceedings requiring strict adherence to timelines and procedures, and that allowing parties to fill evidentiary gaps through remand would defeat the purpose of expeditious resolution of election disputes.

**Parliament Rejects Impeachment of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar**

**In the News:** Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla rejected the impeachment motions filed by the Opposition against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, without assigning any reason — marking the first-ever attempt in India's history to remove a sitting Chief Election Commissioner.

**Key Points:**

- **Background:** The Opposition, led by the Trinamool Congress, submitted impeachment motions in both Houses on March 12, 2026, alleging "partisan and discriminatory conduct" by the CEC and obstruction of investigation into electoral fraud



related to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The motions were backed by 130 Lok Sabha MPs and 63 Rajya Sabha MPs — clearing the minimum threshold of 100 and 50 respectively.

- **Rejection of Motions:** Both presiding officers declined to admit the motions "after due consideration and a careful and objective assessment of all relevant aspects," invoking their powers under Section 3 of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968. No specific reason was provided for the rejection, drawing sharp criticism from the Opposition.
- **Constitutional Provision — Article 324(5):** The removal of the CEC is governed by Article 324(5), which mandates that the CEC can only be removed in the same manner and on the same grounds as a Supreme Court judge — that is, on proved misbehaviour or incapacity.
- **Legal Framework:** The process is further governed by the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, whose Section 11 reiterates the constitutional standard for removal, aligning it with the procedure under Article 124(4) for Supreme Court judges.
- **Parliamentary Procedure for Removal:** The removal process involves five key stages — initiation of a motion with requisite signatures; admission by the Speaker/Chairman; formation of a three-member inquiry committee (comprising a Supreme Court judge, a High Court Chief Justice, and a distinguished jurist); investigation and submission of a report; and finally, a parliamentary vote requiring majority of total membership and two-thirds of members present and voting in both Houses, followed by a Presidential order.

### Menaka Guruswamy Takes Oath, Becomes India's First Openly Queer MP

**In the News:** Senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy took oath as a Member of the Rajya Sabha, elected on a Trinamool Congress (TMC) ticket from West Bengal, becoming India's first openly queer Member of Parliament — marking a historic milestone for LGBTQ+ representation in Indian politics.

#### Key Points:

- **Historic Oath:** Guruswamy was sworn in alongside eighteen other new and re-elected Rajya Sabha members in the presence of Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan. Her unopposed election from West Bengal under the TMC banner made her India's first openly queer MP.
- **Significance for LGBTQ+ Representation:** Her entry into Parliament breaks a major barrier in India's traditionally conservative political space, increasing the visibility of LGBTQ+ voices in policymaking and placing India among nations where openly queer leaders have entered mainstream politics.
- **Role in Section 377 Judgment:** Guruswamy was one of the lead lawyers representing petitioners in the landmark Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India case, in which the Supreme Court in 2018 struck down parts of Section 377 of the IPC, decriminalizing consensual same-sex relationships and marking a turning point in LGBTQ+ rights in India.
- **Academic and Legal Background:** Guruswamy joined the Bar in 1997 and began her career under then Attorney General Ashok Desai. She is a Rhodes Scholar from Oxford University (D.Phil) and a Gammon Fellow from Harvard Law School (LL.M), and has served as visiting faculty at Yale, Columbia, and NYU Law Schools.
- **Global Recognition:** In 2019, Guruswamy was named one of TIME's 100 Most Influential People in the World, alongside her partner and fellow lawyer Arundhati Katju, in recognition of their role in the Section 377 verdict. She was also featured among the 100 most influential Global Thinkers for 2019 by Foreign Policy Magazine.
- **Political Connect:** Guruswamy has served as TMC's counsel in several cases, including those related to Enforcement Directorate raids, reflecting her close association with Mamata Banerjee's party prior to her nomination to the Rajya Sabha.

### Article 324 and ECI's Transfer of Officials

**In the News:** Ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry, the Election Commission of India transferred several senior state officials — including West Bengal's Chief Secretary and Director General of Police — without prior consultation with the State government, sparking a major constitutional debate over the scope and limits of ECI's powers under Article 324.

#### Key Points:

- **What Happened:** The ECI transferred heads of state administration and police forces in election-bound states overnight, citing the need to ensure free and fair elections. The State governments, particularly West Bengal, were not consulted, leading to what critics described as a near-paralysis of administration.



- **Article 324 — ECI's Powers:** Article 324 vests the ECI with superintendence, direction, and control of elections, and the ECI frequently invokes it as a blanket provision to justify administrative actions. Article 324(6) mandates the President or Governor to make available to the ECI the staff necessary for election duties when requested.
- **Supreme Court's Stance — Mohinder Singh Gill (1978):** The Supreme Court held that Article 324 is a plenary provision and a reservoir of powers to ensure free and fair elections. However, these powers are not absolute — they can be exercised only where no existing law occupies the field, and where Parliament or a State Legislature has enacted a valid law, the ECI must act in conformity with it, not in violation.
- **Lack of Statutory Backing:** Neither the Representation of the People Act, 1950 nor the RPA, 1951 contains any explicit provision empowering the ECI to unilaterally transfer heads of state administration or police forces, making the legal basis for such transfers questionable.
- **Conflict with Existing Legal Frameworks:** Under the All India Services Act, 1951 and the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, the exclusive prerogative to transfer state public service officers lies with the respective State governments. Since Parliament already governs civil service transfers through existing law, the ECI is arguably bound to act in conformity with those laws.

### Supreme Court holds Sajjadanashin, Mutawalli are distinct offices under Waqf

**In the News:** The Supreme Court of India, in a bench comprising Justices MM Sundresh and Vipul M Pancholi, ruled on April 2, 2026, that the offices of Sajjadanashin and Mutawalli are distinct and separate positions under the Waqf framework, even if the same person may hold both roles simultaneously.

#### Key Points:

- **The Ruling:** The Supreme Court held that a Sajjadanashin is the spiritual head of a Waqf shrine, and the declaration of a Sajjadanashin is a religious affair. A Mutawalli, by contrast, is solely responsible for the administration and management of the Waqf. The two offices, though sometimes held by the same person, are legally and functionally distinct.
- **Who is a Sajjadanashin?** The term derives from "sajjada" (prayer mat) and "nasheen" (one who sits on it). The Sajjadanashin leads prayers, preserves the spiritual lineage (silsila) of the shrine, guides disciples (murids), and conducts religious ceremonies such as Urs and Sandal. Succession to this office is determined through nomination rooted in the institution's own traditions, typically through a formal document called a Khilafatnama.
- **Who is a Mutawalli?** The Mutawalli is a statutory office regulated under the Waqf Act, 1995. The role involves managing the waqf's land, income, and accounts, and ensuring properties are used for their intended religious purposes. The Waqf Board has authority to appoint, remove, inspect, and direct Mutawallis — but this authority does not extend to spiritual succession.
- **Key Legal Provision — Section 64(2), Waqf Act, 1995:** The Court relied on Section 64(2), which states that removal from the office of Mutawalli does not affect a person's rights as a Sajjadanashin. Since the two offices are mentioned distinctly in the same provision, they are treated as separate offices in law.
- **The Shivanasamudra Case:** Peer Pasha Khadri, the Sajjadanashin of Hazarath Mardane-e-Gaib Dargah in Karnataka, had nominated his eldest grandson through a 1981 Khilafatnama. His youngest son challenged this, relying on a power of attorney, an affidavit, and an earlier handwritten Khilafatnama. The Court dismissed the uncle's appeal, holding that a power of attorney ceases upon death of the grantor and cannot confer rights of succession to a religious office, and that an affidavit alone lacks the formality required for a valid nomination.

### Operation HimSetu: Army Completes High Risk Rescue in 48 Hours Near India-China Border

**In the News:** The Indian Army successfully concluded Operation HimSetu, a high-risk rescue mission in North Sikkim undertaken after massive landslides and the collapse of a bridge near Lachen disrupted all connectivity in the region. The entire evacuation was completed within 48 hours, with over 1,400 stranded tourists and local residents rescued safely near the India-China border.

#### Key Points:

- **Operation Overview:** Operation HimSetu was launched by the Trishakti Corps of the Indian Army under its Eastern Command to evacuate civilians stranded in North Sikkim following landslides, heavy snowfall, and a sudden bridge collapse near Lachen, close to the India-China border.



- **Scale of Rescue:** The operation successfully evacuated 1,321 tourists and 84 local residents — totalling over 1,400 individuals — in a completely incident-free manner. Special buses and vehicles transported evacuees from Tarum Chu via Chungthang to Gangtok.
- **Trigger for the Crisis:** Relentless snowfall and massive landslides caused the collapse of a newly constructed bridge near Tarum Chu in the Lachen region. The bridge had been inaugurated just two months prior, in February 2026, underscoring the extreme fragility of infrastructure in high-altitude Himalayan terrain. Road connectivity to the Lachen area was completely severed as a result.
- **Inter-Agency Coordination:** The operation was carried out in close coordination with the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and the civil administration, which worked simultaneously on snow clearance, road restoration, and repair of damaged connectivity in the region.

### President Droupadi Murmu Notifies Central Armed Police Forces Act, 2026

**In the News:** The Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Act, 2026 was officially notified by the Government of India after receiving the assent of President Droupadi Murmu. The legislation was subsequently published in the Official Gazette and seeks to establish a comprehensive and uniform administrative framework governing India's major paramilitary forces.

#### Key Points:

- **Act Notified:** The Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Act, 2026 has come into force following Presidential assent. It aims to bring consistency and efficiency to the recruitment, service conditions, and operational administration of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).
- **Forces Covered:** The Act applies to five major CAPFs — the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).
- **Scope of the Act:** The legislation governs Group A General Duty officers and other personnel across the covered forces. It standardises recruitment processes, harmonises service conditions and career progression, and aligns operational protocols across different forces.
- **IPS Deputation Provisions:** A significant feature of the Act is the formalisation of Indian Police Service (IPS) officer deputation to senior leadership roles in CAPFs. The Act mandates that at least 50 per cent of Inspector General-rank posts and a minimum of 67 per cent of Additional Director General-rank posts be filled through IPS deputation, all posts of Special Director General (SDG) and Director General (DG) will be filled exclusively through deputation.
- **Supreme Court Context:** Prior to this legislation, the Supreme Court of India had directed the government to gradually reduce IPS deputation in CAPFs and promote cadre officers from within these forces to senior leadership positions, emphasising fair career growth for CAPF officers. The new Act is likely to dilute or override this judicial direction by restoring a stronger legal basis for IPS control.

### Vantara University Launched for Wildlife and Veterinary Sciences

**In the News:** Vantara announced the launch of the world's first integrated global university dedicated to wildlife conservation and veterinary sciences. Located in Jamnagar, Gujarat, the foundation ceremony of Vantara University was conducted in accordance with Hindu traditions and brought together representatives from academia, science, conservation, and public life.

#### Key Points:

- **World's First of Its Kind:** Vantara University is the world's first integrated global university exclusively dedicated to wildlife conservation and veterinary sciences, marking a landmark moment in conservation education and animal welfare.
- **Location and Establishment:** The university is situated in Jamnagar, Gujarat, and is founded by Vantara, the global wildlife conservation organisation led by Anant Ambani, Executive Director of Reliance Industries.
- **Vision and Inspiration:** The university is inspired by the ethos of ancient Nalanda University and the Sanskrit principle *Ā no bhadraḥ kratavo yantu viśvataḥ* — meaning "let noble thoughts come to us from all directions." It aims to nurture a generation of professionals committed to protecting biodiversity through compassion, knowledge, and skill.
- **Academic Programmes:** Vantara University will offer undergraduate, postgraduate, fellowship, and specialised programmes across disciplines including wildlife medicine and surgery, animal nutrition, behavioural sciences, genetics, epidemiology, conservation policy, and naturalistic animal care environment design.
- **One Health Approach:** The curriculum integrates the One Health framework, which recognises the interconnection between human, animal, and environmental health, making it a holistic and globally relevant model of education.



## Mundra Port Sets Record as India's Largest Automobile Export Hub

**In the News:** Mundra Port, operated by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ), has set a national record by shipping 6,008 cars in a single vessel, cementing its position as India's largest automobile export hub. The milestone reflects the growing alignment between India's manufacturing capabilities and its logistics infrastructure.

### Key Points:

- **Record Shipment:** Mundra Port achieved a historic milestone by loading 6,008 vehicles onto a single vessel — the highest such figure recorded at any Indian port — marking a significant leap for the country's automobile export ecosystem.
- **RoRo Terminal:** The record was made possible by the port's advanced Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) terminal, a specialised facility where vehicles are driven directly onto ships without the use of cranes. This method ensures faster turnaround times, reduces handling costs, minimises cargo damage, and enables efficient large-scale transportation.
- **India's Automobile Export Growth:** India's automobile export sector has witnessed steady growth, driven by increasing global demand for Indian-made vehicles, competitive pricing, improved quality standards, and expanding trade networks. Key export destinations include Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Europe — spanning passenger vehicles, two-wheelers, and commercial vehicles.
- **Role of APSEZ: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone** has played a pivotal role in strengthening India's trade infrastructure. The company recently surpassed 500 million tonnes in cargo handling capacity and has set an ambitious target of reaching 1 billion tonnes by 2030.

## Former Delhi HC Judge Yashwant Varma Tenders Resignation to The President Murmu

**In the News:** Former Delhi High Court Judge Yashwant Varma tendered his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu with immediate effect. The resignation comes after prolonged controversy surrounding the alleged recovery of burnt cash from his official residence in New Delhi in March 2025, and subsequent removal proceedings initiated under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.

### Key Points:

- **Trigger — The Cash Recovery Controversy:** On March 14, 2025, a fire broke out in the storeroom of Justice Varma's Delhi residence, following which videos and photographs showing bags of burnt cash were shared with the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court. Justice Varma denied that any cash was recovered or that his family members were involved in removing any material from the storeroom.
- **In-House Inquiry and Transfer:** A three-member committee constituted by then Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna found Justice Varma guilty of misconduct and recommended his removal on May 3, 2025. He was subsequently transferred to his parent Allahabad High Court and relieved of all judicial work. The Allahabad High Court Bar Association had strongly opposed his transfer, with lawyers going on an indefinite strike.
- **Impeachment Proceedings Initiated:** After Justice Varma refused to step down, the then CJI wrote to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his impeachment on May 8, 2025. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla formally constituted a three-member inquiry committee under the Judges (Inquiry) Act in August 2025, comprising a Supreme Court judge, a High Court Chief Justice, and a senior advocate.
- **Supreme Court Rejects Varma's Challenges:** Justice Varma's petition seeking to invalidate the in-house inquiry panel's report was dismissed by the Supreme Court on August 7, 2025. Subsequently, on January 16, 2026, the Supreme Court also rejected his challenge to the Lok Sabha Speaker's constitution of the inquiry committee, holding that judicial safeguards cannot paralyse the removal process.
- **Resignation:** With the inquiry committee reconstituted by the Lok Sabha Speaker on February 26, 2026, and proceedings continuing, Justice Varma resigned on April 10, 2026 — before the parliamentary removal process could reach its conclusion.
- **Constitutional and Legal Framework — Removal of Judges: — Constitutional Basis:** Under Articles 124 and 218 of the Constitution of India, judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts can be removed by the President on grounds of "proven misbehaviour" or "incapacity." Parliamentary Requirement: A resolution for removal must be passed by both Houses of Parliament by a majority of total membership and not less than two-thirds of members present and voting, both in the same session. — Procedure under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968: The process begins with a notice of motion signed by at least 100 Lok Sabha members or 50 Rajya Sabha members. Upon admission by the Speaker or Chairman, a three-member committee — comprising a Supreme Court judge, a High Court Chief Justice, and a distinguished jurist — is formed to investigate the charges. If guilt is established, the report is sent to Parliament for a special majority vote, following which the President issues the removal order.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Iran FM Araghchi warns of contamination risk after U.S.-Israeli strikes on Bushehr nuclear power plant

**In the News:** U.S.-Israeli strikes hit an area near Iran's Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant on April 4, 2026, killing one security guard and causing damage to a side building. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned that continued attacks on the plant could lead to radioactive fallout that would "end life in GCC capitals, not Tehran." The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi expressed deep concern, stating that nuclear power plant sites or nearby areas must never be attacked.

#### Key Points:

- **About the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant:** The Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant is Iran's only functioning nuclear plant, located in the coastal city of Bushehr, which has a population of 250,000. Work on it initially began in 1975 by German companies but was eventually completed in 2011 by Russia's atomic energy ministry. It is the first nuclear power plant in the Middle East, with one operational reactor — Bushehr Unit 1 — currently providing about 1,000 MW to the national grid. Two additional reactor units are expected to be operational by 2029.
- **Radioactive Contamination Risk:** A direct strike on the reactor or fuel storage pools would release hazardous radioactive isotopes, particularly Caesium-137, into the atmosphere. These can spread far beyond the release point through wind and water, contaminating food, soil, and drinking water for decades. Close exposure would increase cancer risks significantly. Bushehr is geographically closer to Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar than to Tehran, making GCC nations especially vulnerable.
- **IAEA's Position:** IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi confirmed no increase in radiation levels following the latest strike but voiced deep concern. He has repeatedly warned that a direct hit on Bushehr could result in a very high release of radioactivity with consequences far beyond Iran's borders, calling for maximum restraint. The IAEA's guidelines prohibit indiscriminate targeting of nuclear facilities and mandate the safety of staff and uninterrupted power supply to prevent reactor core meltdown.
- **International Legal Framework:** Attacking civilian nuclear facilities during conflict is prohibited under international law. Article 56 (Protocol I) of the Geneva Conventions prevents the targeting of installations containing dangerous forces, including nuclear material. Warring parties are required to differentiate between civilian and military facilities.
- **Historical Nuclear Accidents for Context:** The 1986 Chernobyl disaster in then-Soviet Ukraine resulted in a massive explosion, killing 30 people immediately, leading to thyroid cancer in about 20,000 others, and forcing the evacuation of over 300,000 people. Japan's Fukushima nuclear reactors melted following an earthquake in 2011, necessitating the evacuation of around 1,60,000 residents.

### FAO Food Price Index Rises Amid Global Energy Pressures

**In the News:** The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) released its latest Food Price Index, revealing that world food commodity prices rose for the second consecutive month in March 2026, averaging 128.5 points — up 2.4% from February and 1.0% above year-ago levels. The rise was driven largely by higher energy prices stemming from the escalating conflict in the Near East.

#### Key Points:

- **FAO Food Price Index (FFPI):** The index averaged 128.5 points in March 2026, marking a 2.4% month-on-month increase and a 1.0% year-on-year rise, reflecting the second consecutive monthly increase.
- **Cereal Prices:** The FAO Cereal Price Index rose by 1.5% from the previous month. Wheat prices surged 4.3% due to drought-related crop deterioration in the USA and reduced planting expectations in Australia owing to higher fertilizer costs. Maize prices edged up slightly, supported by rising ethanol demand linked to energy price increases, while ample global availability limited larger gains.
- **Rice Prices:** The FAO All-Rice Price Index declined by 3.0% in March, reflecting harvest timing, weaker import demand, and currency depreciations against the US dollar.
- **Vegetable Oil Prices:** The FAO Vegetable Oil Price Index surged 5.1% from February and stood 13.2% higher than a year earlier. Palm, soy, sunflower, and rapeseed oil prices all rose due to spillover from crude oil price increases and stronger biofuel demand expectations.



- **Meat Prices:** The FAO Meat Price Index rose 1.0%, driven by higher pig meat prices in the EU ahead of seasonal demand, and rising bovine meat prices in Brazil due to tightening cattle availability. Ovine and poultry prices declined amid logistical constraints in the Near East.
- **Dairy Prices:** The FAO Dairy Price Index increased by 1.2%, supported by higher milk powder prices due to seasonal supply decline in Oceania. Cheese prices fell in the EU but rose in Oceania.
- **Sugar Prices:** The FAO Sugar Price Index registered the sharpest rise at 7.2%, driven by expectations that Brazil would divert more sugarcane toward ethanol production in response to rising crude oil prices, outweighing a generally favourable global supply outlook.

### Arab League Appoints New Secretary-General

**In the News:** The Council of the League of Arab States unanimously approved the appointment of Egypt's former Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy as the next Secretary-General of the Arab League for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2026, succeeding current Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit. The decision was taken during the 165th meeting of Arab foreign ministers, held via videoconference under Bahrain's presidency, and will be referred to the upcoming Arab Summit in Saudi Arabia for endorsement.

#### Key Points:

- **New Appointment:** Nabil Fahmy, former Foreign Minister of Egypt, was unanimously appointed as Secretary-General of the Arab League for a five-year term commencing July 1, 2026.
- **Outgoing Secretary-General:** Ahmed Aboul Gheit concludes his second term on June 30, 2026, after which Fahmy will assume office.
- **Decision Forum:** The appointment was approved during the 165th session of the Arab League's Council of Foreign Ministers, held via videoconference on March 29, 2026, presided over by the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- **About the Arab League:** The League of Arab States, founded in 1945 in Cairo, is a regional organisation of 22 Arab member states spanning West Asia and North Africa.
- **Origins:** It emerged from the Alexandria Protocol (1944), shaped by post-World War II geopolitical shifts, with goals of promoting Arab unity, resisting colonial divisions, and addressing concerns over Palestine.
- **Collective Security:** The 1950 Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Pact provides the framework for collective security and coordinated military measures among members.

### World Health Day 2026

**In the News:** The World Health Organization observed World Health Day under the theme "Together for Health. Stand with Science," launching a year-long global campaign promoting scientific collaboration, evidence-based healthcare, and the One Health approach to protect human, animal, and environmental health.

#### Key Points:

- **Theme:** "Together for Health. Stand with Science" — focuses on evidence-based decision making, rebuilding trust in science, and supporting global scientific cooperation to address future health challenges.
- **One Health Approach:** The campaign centers on the One Health framework, which recognizes the interconnection between the health of humans, animals, plants, and the environment.
- **Anchor Events:** Two major international events anchored this year's observance — the International One Health Summit (April 7), hosted by France under the G7 Presidency, and the Global Forum of WHO Collaborating Centres (April 7–9), convening nearly 800 scientific institutions from 80+ countries, forming the largest scientific network ever assembled under a UN agency.
- **Campaign Goals:** Governments, scientists, health workers, and citizens are called upon to engage with evidence and science-based guidance, rebuild public trust in health systems, and support science-led solutions for a healthier future.
- **Logo Significance:** The official logo combines the WHO emblem with interconnected nodes, symbolizing the global network of 800+ collaborating centres across 80+ countries and the idea of shared scientific responsibility.
- **Historical Context:** World Health Day has been observed every April 7 since 1948, marking the founding of the WHO. It serves as an annual reminder of the importance of global health awareness and accessible healthcare.



- **2026 Relevance:** Against the backdrop of rising threats — pandemics, climate change, antimicrobial resistance, and health misinformation — this year's campaign stresses that science is the backbone of global health security and that misinformation poses a direct danger to public health.

### France Hosts One Health Summit Under G7 to Promote Science-Based Health Policies

**In the News:** France hosted the International One Health Summit in Lyon, coinciding with World Health Day. WHO and global partners announced four major concrete initiatives to protect humans, animals, and the planet from future health crises, turning the One Health vision into real-world action under the G7 Presidency of France.

#### Key Points:

- **One Health Summit:** Held in Lyon, France on World Health Day (April 7, 2026), the Summit brought together Heads of State, ministers, experts, and policymakers to advance the One Health approach — recognizing that human, animal, and environmental health are deeply interconnected.
- **Why It Matters:** Around 60% of known human infectious diseases originate in animals, and approximately 75% of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic. The COVID-19 pandemic alone caused an estimated 15 million deaths and trillions of dollars in economic losses in 2020–21.
- **France's Role:** President Emmanuel Macron reaffirmed France's commitment to moving One Health "from ambition to implementation," championing international cooperation and science-led policy under France's G7 Presidency.
- **WHO's 4 Major One Health Actions Announced:** WHO announced four key initiatives — a Global Network of One Health Institutions (with Quadripartite partners FAO, UNEP, WOA) for country-focused support; extension of the One Health Expert Panel (OHHLEP) through 2027 with a new phase planned till 2029; a renewed global push to eliminate dog-mediated rabies deaths by 2030 (the disease kills nearly 60,000 annually, many of them children); and a new Avian Influenza Strategic Framework to replace fragmented national responses with a unified One Health strategy.
- **WHO Assumes Quadripartite Chairmanship:** WHO took on enhanced leadership of the Quadripartite (WHO, FAO, WOA, UNEP), prioritizing measurable country-level impact, streamlined governance, and stronger advocacy and evidence generation.
- **Global Forum of WHO Collaborating Centres:** Running alongside the Summit (April 7–9), the inaugural Forum convened 800+ WHO Collaborating Centres from 80+ countries — the largest scientific network ever assembled under a UN agency — to accelerate innovation, data sharing, and capacity-building.

### Russia and China Veto UN Resolution to Reopen Strait of Hormuz

**In the News:** Russia and China vetoed a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution aimed at reopening the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global shipping lane effectively blockaded by Iran since the United States and Israel launched a war against Iran on February 28, 2026. The resolution, proposed by Bahrain and supported by the US, received 11 votes in favour but was blocked by the two permanent members who called it biased against Iran.

#### Key Points:

- **The Resolution:** The draft resolution was prepared by Bahrain and supported by the United States. It received 11 votes in favour, 2 against (Russia and China), and 2 abstentions came from Pakistan and Colombia of 15 UNSC members. The text called on states to "coordinate efforts, defensive in nature, commensurate to the circumstances, to contribute to ensuring the safety and security of navigation" through the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Watered-Down Draft:** The resolution had been significantly weakened before the vote. An earlier version referenced Chapter 7 of the UN Charter — which authorises measures including military force — and explicitly permitted the use of force to unblock the strait. Following objections from Russia, China, and initially France, all such language was removed, leaving only a call for defensive coordination.
- **Iran's Blockade:** Iran effectively shut the Strait of Hormuz following the US-Israel war launched on February 28, 2026. The strait normally carries one-fifth of the world's oil and gas shipments. The blockade has caused global fuel prices to soar and forced several countries, particularly in Asia, to introduce consumption restrictions and ration supplies.
- **Russia and China's Position:** Both nations argued the resolution was biased against Iran. China's UN envoy Fu Cong stated that adopting the draft while the US was threatening Iran would have sent the wrong message. Russia's UN Ambassador Vasily Nebenzya announced that Russia and China were proposing an alternative resolution on the broader Middle East situation, including maritime security.

- **US and Gulf Response:** US Ambassador Mike Waltz condemned the vetoes as "a new low," stating that Iran was "holding the global economy at gunpoint." Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, speaking on behalf of Gulf states, said the failure "sends the wrong signal to the world" and that the international body responsible for peace and security had failed to take decisive action. Waltz added that the veto did not prevent the US from acting in self-defence or in defence of its allies.

### Disquiet in Delhi: How Pakistan emerged as key mediator between US and Iran

**In the News:** Pakistan has emerged as a key mediator between the US and Iran, with Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif playing pivotal roles in brokering the two-week ceasefire announced on April 8, 2026. The development has caused distinct disquiet in New Delhi, as Pakistan — which India has long tried to isolate diplomatically — has secured a prominent foothold in international diplomatic power corridors.

#### Key Points:

- **Pakistan's Mediating Role:** Pakistan acted as a critical bridge between Washington and Tehran — two adversaries that do not maintain direct diplomatic relations. Pakistan represents Iran's interests in Washington, giving it a rare institutional foothold in both capitals. Both Trump and Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi publicly complimented Pakistan's role. Trump attributed the ceasefire pause to "conversations with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir," while Araghchi expressed "gratitude and appreciation" for their "tireless efforts to end the war."
- **How Pakistan Built Its Access:** Pakistan leveraged its newfound access to the White House — built through crypto deals in April 2025 and Operation Sindoor in May 2025 — to create a space for itself in the highly controlled echelons of the Trump administration. This allowed Islamabad to punch far above its weight in global diplomacy.
- **Ceasefire Framework:** By early April, Islamabad circulated a "ceasefire framework" proposing an immediate halt to hostilities, including de-escalation around key maritime routes. As deadlines loomed and fears of a broader regional war intensified, Pakistan's proposal gained traction and led to the April 7-8 ceasefire. The next phase of delegation-level talks between the US and Iran is expected to begin in Islamabad on April 10.
- **Broad Coalition of Support:** PM Sharif thanked China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, and Qatar for extending "invaluable and all-out support" towards reaching the ceasefire, signalling a broad multilateral coalition behind Pakistan's mediation effort. He also thanked the GCC nations and the US leadership for their "exceptional strategic foresight, sagacity and patience in giving peace a chance."
- **India's Response:** The Indian establishment is seeking ways to regain diplomatic ground. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri has already travelled to the US, and EAM Jaishankar is scheduled to travel to the UAE on April 11-12 as part of India's efforts to engage with Washington and regional partners in the coming weeks.

### Iran-US ceasefire: What each side was fighting for, and what they have won or lost

**In the News:** US President Donald Trump announced a two-week ceasefire, halting the 38-day war between the United States, Israel, and Iran. Both sides agreed to negotiate on the basis of Iran's 10-point demands (deemed "workable" by Trump) and the US's 15-point demands, marking the first sincere negotiations between Washington and Tehran under their current leaderships.

#### Key Points:

- **The Ceasefire:** All US attacks on Iran were "suspended" on April 8, 2026, after 38 days of war. Trump announced the ceasefire hours after threatening to end Iranian "civilisation" if Iran did not accept a deal. On Truth Social, Trump called it the beginning of a "Golden Age of the Middle East," adding that "Big money will be made. Iran can start the reconstruction process."
- **US's 15-Point Demands:** Washington's demands included Iran dismantling nuclear facilities at Fordow, Isfahan, and Natanz; committing to not build nuclear weapons; handing over enriched uranium to the IAEA with full inspector access; limiting Iran's missile programme; and reopening the Strait of Hormuz — in exchange for removal of US and UN sanctions and US support for nuclear power production at the Bushehr plant.
- **Iran's 10-Point Demands:** Tehran required the US to commit to non-aggression, recognise Iran's control of the Strait of Hormuz, accept Iran's sovereign enrichment rights, lift all primary and secondary sanctions, terminate punitive UN and IAEA resolutions, withdraw US forces, compensate Iran for war damages, and end Israel's war on Lebanon.
- **Iran's Strategic Tools:** Iran's decisive control of the Strait of Hormuz (blocking all US/Israel-linked shipping) and its widespread retaliatory strikes eventually breached Washington's tolerance threshold. Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi wrote on

April 3 — "Bridges can be built but the opportunity to discipline America will not come again" — reflecting Iran's intent to deny the US any easy off-ramp and prevent it from believing it could attack Iran at will.

- **Israel's Position:** Israel rejected Iran's demand to halt its ongoing fifth invasion of South Lebanon and its fight against Hezbollah, effectively removing itself from the US-Iran ceasefire. Iran has warned it will withdraw from the ceasefire if Israel continues to attack Lebanon, making Israel a key unpredictable variable going forward.

### Exercise Cyclone 2026 Strengthens India-Egypt Defence Cooperation

**In the News:** An Indian Army contingent departed for Egypt on April 8, 2026, to participate in the fourth edition of the India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise, Cyclone-IV, scheduled to be conducted at Anshas, Egypt, from April 9 to 17, 2026.

#### Key Points:

- **About Exercise Cyclone:** Exercise Cyclone is a bilateral joint military exercise conducted between the special forces of India and Egypt. It is held on a rotational basis, alternately in India and Egypt. The 2026 edition, Cyclone-IV, is the fourth iteration of this exercise and follows the previous edition successfully held in India.
- **Venue and Duration:** The exercise is being conducted at Anshas, Egypt, from April 9 to 17, 2026, in desert and semi-desert terrain that simulates realistic operational conditions relevant to both countries' strategic environments.
- **Indian Contingent:** The Indian side comprises 25 personnel drawn from elite Special Forces units of the Indian Army, who will train alongside their Egyptian counterparts in a realistic operational setting.
- **Objectives:** The primary aim of the exercise is to enhance joint mission planning capabilities and improve interoperability between the two forces. It also focuses on the exchange of best practices in special operations, including specialised tactics, techniques, and procedures suited to desert warfare conditions.
- **Broader Context:** Bilateral military exercises such as Cyclone are a key facet of India-Egypt defence cooperation, reflecting the growing strategic partnership between the two nations and contributing to building mutual trust between their armed forces.

### Is Trump practising the madman theory? An Expert Explains

**In the News:** Amid US President Donald Trump's escalatory rhetoric during the ongoing conflict in West Asia — including threats to "end a whole civilisation" and strike Iran's power plants and bridges — experts and analysts have raised the question of whether Trump is deliberately deploying the "Madman Theory" as a foreign policy strategy.

#### Key Points:

- **What is the Madman Theory?** The Madman Theory is a foreign policy strategy in which a leader deliberately projects an image of irrationality and unpredictability, making adversaries believe they might take extreme or even catastrophic actions. The theory argues that being perceived as irrational gives a leader a coercive bargaining advantage in international crises. The phrase originated from former US President Richard Nixon, who was recorded as cultivating such a reputation to pressure adversaries during wartime negotiations.
- **Two Types of 'Madness':** According to Professor Roseanne McManus of Pennsylvania State University, two forms of perceived madness can make a leader's threats more credible — unpredictability (the sense that a leader might do anything) and extremism (indifference to the consequences of war, including casualties). Trump's inconsistent statements and willingness to make extreme threats despite domestic and global backlash reflect both types.
- **Trump vs. Other Leaders:** Nixon sought a madman reputation but was inconsistent in projecting it — the Soviets even considered him their most preferred US president to work with. George W. Bush was seen as a hawk but not as unpredictable or extremist. Vladimir Putin's madman image faded when he refrained from using nuclear weapons despite setbacks in Ukraine. Kim Jong Un, through extreme threats and dramatic actions, built the strongest madman reputation — and is considered the closest analogy to Trump.
- **Limitations of the Theory in the Information Age:** Establishing a credible madman reputation requires consistent projection of irrational behaviour, which is harder in the modern era when every statement and action is instantly decoded and dissected across multiple information sources. Additionally, perceived madness that boosts the credibility of threats simultaneously undermines the credibility of peace commitments — adversaries may resist demands, believing conflict is inevitable regardless, which may partly explain Iran's reluctance to negotiate with the US.

## Preeti Saran Re-Elected as UN Committee Head in India's ECOSOC Sweep

**In the News:** India secured unopposed victories in four elections to bodies under the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), with all results declared by acclamation at the UN headquarters. The highlight was the re-election of former senior diplomat Preeti Saran to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in her personal capacity.

### Key Points:

- **Clean Sweep at ECOSOC:** India won all four contested positions without opposition, reflecting strong and unanimous international support. The elections were conducted by acclamation, signifying broad global confidence in India's diplomatic standing.
- **Four Bodies Secured:** India gained representation in the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), the Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations, and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC).
- **Preeti Saran Re-elected to CESCR:** Veteran diplomat Preeti Saran is re-elected to the CESCR in her individual expert capacity, not as a government representative. She is currently chairing CESCR sessions, and her re-election underscores India's intellectual and diplomatic credibility in the human rights space.
- **Preeti Saran's Profile:** Saran brings a distinguished 36-year career in the Indian Foreign Service. She served as Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs and as India's Ambassador to Vietnam, with diplomatic postings in Geneva, Moscow, Cairo, Dhaka, and Toronto.
- **About ECOSOC:** Established under the UN Charter in 1945, ECOSOC is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It coordinates the organisation's economic, social, humanitarian, and cultural activities. It has 54 member states elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly, with decisions taken by simple majority. Its headquarters is in New York, USA.

## OBITUARY

### End of an Era: 'Lion of Ladakh' Col Sonam Wangchuk No More

**In the News:** Colonel Sonam Wangchuk (Retd), celebrated as the 'Lion of Ladakh,' passed away following a heart attack at his residence in Leh at the age of 61. A recipient of the Maha Vir Chakra — India's second-highest wartime gallantry award — his death marks the passing of one of India's most decorated Kargil War heroes.

### Key Points:

- **Passing and Cause of Death:** Colonel Wangchuk had been complaining of chest pain for several days prior to his death. He had visited Leh around March 25, 2026, following the death of his father in January, and was under considerable stress due to a stream of condolence visitors. He was found unresponsive early on the morning of April 10, 2026.
- **Kargil War Heroism:** Then serving as a Major, Wangchuk led Ladakh Scouts troops across the glaciated heights of Chorbat La in the Batalik sub-sector on May 30, 1999 — at an altitude of approximately 18,000 feet — without artillery support. His mission resulted in one of the earliest Indian victories of the Kargil War, killing two enemy soldiers and forcing others to retreat.
- **Further Combat Actions:** He subsequently reinforced an observation post under heavy artillery fire and led an assault on an enemy-held position, successfully capturing it and eliminating six enemy soldiers — demonstrating exceptional tactical leadership under extreme conditions.
- **Named Posts — 'Sonam 1' and 'Sonam 2':** In a rare military tribute, two posts in the Chorbat La sector were named 'Sonam 1' and 'Sonam 2' in his honour, reflecting the significance of his contributions during Operation Vijay.
- **Maha Vir Chakra:** Wangchuk was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra for acts of conspicuous gallantry in the presence of the enemy — recognising his courage, leadership, and decisive role in securing strategic positions during the conflict.
- **Early Life and Military Career:** Born on January 27, 1964, Wangchuk completed his schooling at Modern School, New Delhi. He was commissioned into the Assam Regiment on September 4, 1987, and was later deputed to the Ladakh Scouts, known as the 'Snow Warriors.' The Ladakh Scouts received a Unit Citation from then Army Chief V P Malik for their performance in the Kargil War.

## SCIENCE AND TECH

### Why Artemis II crew went farther from Earth than anyone before

**In the News:** The four astronauts of NASA's Artemis II mission travelled 252,756 miles (406,771 km) from Earth aboard the Orion spacecraft — setting a new record for the farthest distance any humans have travelled from Earth — surpassing the previous record set by Apollo 13 in 1970.

#### Key Points:

- **The Record:** Artemis II broke the 54-year-old record of 4,00,171 km set by Apollo 13 (1970). Unlike Apollo 13, where the deviation was caused by a malfunction, Artemis II's record distance was intentional and part of the mission plan.
- **Mission Profile:** Artemis II is the first crewed lunar mission since December 1972. It is not a landing mission, but a crewed flyby designed to test the Orion spacecraft's capabilities in deep space conditions.
- **Free-Return Trajectory:** Unlike Apollo 8's circular lunar orbit, Orion follows an elliptical "free-return trajectory," which uses the Moon's gravity to naturally slingshot the spacecraft back to Earth — without requiring engine burns for course correction.
- **Phase 1 – High Earth Orbit (HEO):** Before heading to the Moon, Orion entered an elliptical orbit stretching ~74,000 km from Earth. This gave the crew a 42-hour window to test the Environmental Control and Life Support Systems (ECLSS), with the option of a quick abort and splashdown if needed.
- **Phase 2 – Translunar Slingshot:** Orion was then propelled by the European Service Module toward a precise point ~10,300 km beyond the lunar far side, where the Moon's gravity captured and whipped the spacecraft back toward Earth.
- **Safety Advantage:** The figure-eight free-return path is a passive safety mechanism — even in the event of total engine failure, the crew would still be brought back to Earth naturally by gravitational forces.

### INS Sunayna Reaches Male, Boosting Maritime Cooperation Between India and Maldives

**In the News:** Indian Navy's INS Sunayna arrived at Male, Maldives, as part of the Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR initiative, marking the first port call of its 50-day operational deployment. The ship was ceremonially flagged off from Mumbai on April 2, 2026, by Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth, and was accorded a warm welcome by the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF), underscoring the strong and enduring maritime partnership between India and Maldives.

#### Key Points:

- **About INS Sunayna:** INS Sunayna is a Saryu-class Offshore Patrol Vessel of the Indian Navy. It is currently manned by a multinational contingent from 16 Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs), with 39 international crew members on board, including two MNDF personnel, reflecting true multilateral maritime cooperation.
- **About IOS SAGAR Initiative:** The Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR is a unique operational engagement programme that enables naval personnel from Friendly Foreign Countries to train and sail together onboard an Indian Naval Ship. The second edition of IOS SAGAR commenced on March 16, 2026. It reflects India's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) and advances the broader framework of MAHASAGAR — Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions. The initiative operates under the guiding vision of "One Ocean, One Mission."
- **India's Strategic Vision:** The deployment underscores India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and its strategic vision in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). India aims to be the "Preferred Security Partner" and "First Responder" for neighbouring countries in developmental and security matters. The Indian Navy assumed the chair of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in February 2026, and this edition includes participation from 16 IONS nations of the IOR.
- **Joint Training and Exercises:** During transit to Male, the international crew undertook intensive training in seamanship, small arms firing, and damage control and firefighting drills, reflecting a strong emphasis on collective readiness and operational interoperability. A Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the MNDF Coast Guard is also scheduled upon the ship's departure from Male.

### UAE Introduces World's First 10G Internet Network Using U6GHz Spectrum

**In the News:** The United Arab Emirates has launched the world's first commercial upper 6GHz (U6GHz) internet network, announced at the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2026. The rollout was led by the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA), marking a landmark moment in global digital connectivity.



**Key Points:**

- **What is the U6GHz Spectrum?** The U6GHz band operates in the frequency range of 6425–7125 MHz. It is often referred to as the "golden spectrum" because it uniquely combines wide coverage with high-speed data transmission. It can handle large volumes of data simultaneously without slowing down, making it well-suited for modern, data-heavy internet demands.
- **Speed and Technical Capabilities:** The network offers download speeds of up to 10 Gbps and upload speeds of up to 1 Gbps under advanced 5G technology. It also features low latency — meaning minimal delay — which is critical for real-time applications such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, virtual reality, and online gaming.
- **Development Timeline:** The U6GHz spectrum was first allocated for mobile services in the UAE in 2024. Field tests conducted in 2025 successfully demonstrated speeds of up to 10 Gbps. The network was commercially deployed in 2026, making the UAE the first country in the world to achieve this milestone.
- **Key Partners and Stakeholders:** The commercial rollout has been supported by global technology companies including Huawei, Nokia, and GSMA, along with UAE telecom operators du and e&. Their collaboration enabled the transition from testing to full-scale commercial deployment.

**National Quantum Mission Achieves 1,000 km Secure Communication Breakthrough**

**In the News:** Under the National Quantum Mission, India has successfully demonstrated a 1,000-km quantum communication network — one of the longest in the world — within less than two years of the mission's launch in October 2024. The milestone was highlighted during a review of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) chaired by Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh on April 8, 2026.

**Key Points:**

- **The Milestone:** A 1,000-km Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) network has been successfully demonstrated using indigenous technology developed by QNu Labs, a startup supported under the National Quantum Mission focused on quantum-safe cybersecurity solutions. DST Secretary Dr. Abhay Karandikar described it as "a landmark advancement in secure quantum communication," noting that it reflects progress ahead of envisaged timelines. The mission's overall target is to achieve a 2,000-km quantum communication network over an eight-year period.
- **About the National Quantum Mission:** Launched by the Department of Science and Technology, the National Quantum Mission has a total outlay of ₹6,003 crore for the period 2023–24 to 2030–31. It is one of the nine key initiatives under the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC). The mission is implemented through four Thematic Hubs (T-Hubs) operating on a Hub-Spoke-Spike model to foster collaboration between academia, industry, and research organisations.
- **Four Focus Areas of the Mission:** Quantum Computing is led by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. Quantum Communication is spearheaded by IIT Madras in collaboration with the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT), New Delhi. Quantum Sensing and Metrology is led by IIT Bombay, and Quantum Materials and Devices are coordinated by IIT Delhi.
- **Startup Ecosystem Expansion:** The government has extended support to nine additional startups under the mission, taking the total number of supported ventures to 17. The newly supported startups — including Sense-XT, QuBeats, Quantum Biosciences, GDQ Labs, and others — are working on areas such as quantum biosensors for disease detection, photon sensing, quantum positioning systems, atomic memory, and precision electronic systems.
- **RDI Funding Progress:** Under the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) funding framework, the Technology Development Board (TDB) has received over 100 proposals within two months of issuing a call, while BIRAC has received nearly 200 applications including projects in cancer research, gene therapy, and bio-manufacturing.

**What Is AAKA Space Studio's 3D-Printed Mars Radiation Shield? Explained**

**In the News:** Ahmedabad-based AAKA Space Studio has developed and successfully tested Asia's first 3D-printed radiation shield for Mars habitats, demonstrated during one of the world's largest analog space missions. The innovation is built on the principle of In-Situ Resource Utilisation (ISRU) and marks a significant milestone in India's contribution to sustainable extraterrestrial construction.

**Key Points:**

- **The Innovation:** AAKA Space Studio created a monolithic radiation shield using regolith-based materials and advanced robotic 3D printing. The shield is capable of protecting astronauts from harmful cosmic radiation while also providing thermal stability — two critical requirements for long-duration habitation on Mars or the Moon.
- **Why Radiation Shielding Matters for Mars:** Unlike Earth, Mars lacks a strong magnetic field and thick atmosphere, leaving its surface exposed to dangerous levels of cosmic and solar radiation. Without adequate shielding, astronauts face serious health risks including radiation sickness and long-term cellular damage. This makes radiation shielding one of the most critical components of any crewed Mars habitat.
- **ISRU — The Core Concept:** In-Situ Resource Utilisation (ISRU) refers to the use of materials already available on a celestial body for construction, rather than transporting supplies from Earth. Since carrying construction materials from Earth is prohibitively expensive for large-scale missions, ISRU enables on-site manufacturing using local planetary resources — drastically reducing mission costs and payload requirements. Mars is rich in construction-grade materials such as olivine-rich basalt (for structural strength) and carbonate deposits (for binding material).
- **Recreating Martian Conditions on Earth:** AAKA developed high-fidelity Martian soil analogues using Indian geological resources to simulate the composition of Martian soil. Key materials used included olivine-rich rocks from ultramafic complexes in Salem, Tamil Nadu, marly limestone analogues from the Ariyalur basin, and specially engineered lime-based binders designed to mimic the behaviour of cement on Mars.
- **3D Printing Technology:** Working in collaboration with MiCoB and its MiCO-V 3D concrete printing systems, along with Government Arts College, AAKA integrated these materials into robotic and gantry-based 3D printing processes. The technology enables autonomous, layer-by-layer construction of regolith-based structures — ensuring precision, scalability, and minimal human intervention, all critical factors for space construction.

### NASA Marks Historic Milestone With Successful Artemis II Crew Return

**In the News:** NASA successfully completed the Artemis II mission with the safe splashdown of the Orion spacecraft in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of San Diego, California, at 00:07 GMT. The four-member crew returned after a 10-day journey around the Moon — the first crewed lunar mission in more than half a century — marking what NASA described as "the start of a new era of human space exploration."

#### Key Points:

- **The Crew:** The Artemis II mission was crewed by Commander Reid Wiseman, Pilot Victor Glover, and Mission Specialists Christina Koch and Jeremy Hansen. Victor Glover became the first Black astronaut to fly on a Moon mission; Christina Koch became the first woman to travel around the Moon; and Jeremy Hansen became the first Canadian to go to the Moon.
- **Record-Breaking Distance:** On April 6, 2026, the Orion spacecraft reached its maximum distance of 406,771 km (252,756 miles) from Earth during the lunar flyby — surpassing the previous record for the farthest humans have ever travelled into space. The total journey covered approximately 694,481 miles (around 1.12 million km).
- **Mission Profile:** Artemis II did not include a Moon landing. Instead, it followed a carefully designed free-return trajectory around the Moon, allowing astronauts to test spacecraft systems under real deep-space conditions and prepare for future lunar landings. The crew orbited the far side of the Moon, losing contact with Earth for 40 minutes, during which they photographed craters and ancient lava flows. They also witnessed a total solar eclipse from behind the Moon for nearly 54 minutes.
- **Re-Entry and Splashdown:** The Orion capsule re-entered Earth's atmosphere at approximately 35 times the speed of sound. After a scheduled six-minute communications blackout caused by plasma build-up, parachutes deployed in stages to slow the spacecraft. It splashed down within a mile of NASA's target site and the crew was subsequently recovered aboard the USS John P Murtha.
- **Key Hardware:** — **Space Launch System (SLS):** NASA's most powerful rocket, which launched the mission from Florida on April 1, 2026. — **Orion Spacecraft:** Designed to carry astronauts safely beyond Earth orbit; the service module steered the crew around the Moon and burned up in the atmosphere upon re-entry.
- **Artemis Programme Context:** Artemis II follows the successful uncrewed Artemis I flight. It is the first crewed mission of the Artemis programme, which aims to return humans to the Moon's surface by 2028 — a target aligned with US President Trump's renewed space policy. NASA also aims to eventually establish a dedicated Moon base. The next mission — Artemis III — aims to achieve an actual lunar landing.

### Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor

**In the News:** India's 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, successfully achieved its first criticality — the initiation of a sustained and controlled nuclear fission chain reaction — at 8:25 PM. The milestone officially marks India's entry into the second stage of its three-stage nuclear power programme, a vision originally conceived by Dr. Homi J. Bhabha.

#### Key Points:

- **What is the PFBR?** The PFBR is a 500 MWe advanced nuclear reactor indigenously designed by the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR) and built and commissioned by Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI), both under the Department of Atomic Energy. The reactor achieved criticality after receiving clearance from the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) following a rigorous safety review.
- **What is Criticality?** Criticality is the point at which a sustained, controlled nuclear fission chain reaction begins — where neutrons produced by fission equal those lost, resulting in stable power output. It marks the transition from the construction phase to the operational power-generation phase.
- **Fuel and Breeding Mechanism:** Unlike conventional thermal reactors, the PFBR uses Uranium-Plutonium Mixed Oxide (MOX) fuel, sourced by reprocessing spent fuel from Stage 1 Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs). The reactor core is surrounded by a blanket of Uranium-238; fast neutrons convert this fertile U-238 into fissile Plutonium-239, enabling the reactor to produce more fuel than it consumes — the defining characteristic of a Fast Breeder Reactor.
- **Bridge to Thorium (Stage 3):** The PFBR is designed to eventually incorporate Thorium-232 into its blanket. Through transmutation, Thorium-232 will be converted into Uranium-233, which will serve as the primary fuel for Stage 3 thorium-based reactors — critical given that India holds over 25% of the world's thorium reserves.
- **India's Three-Stage Nuclear Programme:** — **Stage 1 — PHWRs:** Use natural uranium to generate power; spent fuel produces plutonium as a by-product. — **Stage 2 — FBRs:** Use plutonium from Stage 1; breed more plutonium and irradiate Thorium-232 to produce Uranium-233. — **Stage 3 — Thorium-Based Reactors:** Run on Uranium-233 bred in Stage 2 alongside India's vast thorium reserves to generate electricity at a massive scale.
- **Broader Nuclear Vision:** The SHANTI Act, 2025 (Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Act) modernises the legal framework and opens avenues for limited private sector participation. — Rs 20,000 crore has been allocated for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), with at least five indigenously designed SMRs targeted to be operational by 2033. — BARC is developing next-generation reactors including the BSMR-200, SMR-55, and a High-Temperature Gas-Cooled Reactor for hydrogen generation.

## ENVIRONMENT

### National Biodiversity Authority launches short term Internship Programme in Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resources Management sectors for college students

**In the News:** The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has launched a short-term Internship Programme of up to three months for students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The initiative is aimed at offering hands-on, project-based learning through active engagement with NBA programmes, while building capacity and deepening environmental awareness among young learners.

#### Key Points:

- **About the Short-Term Internship Programme:** The NBA's newly launched short-term internship is open to graduation and post-graduation students for a duration of up to three months. It is designed to provide project-based, hands-on learning in the fields of biodiversity conservation and natural resources management, enhance employment opportunities for young people in these sectors, and develop participants as future biodiversity ambassadors.
- **About the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA):** The NBA is a statutory body established under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. It functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and is responsible for regulating access to biological resources and associated traditional knowledge, ensuring equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use.

- **Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Programme (BSIP):** In addition to the new short-term programme, the NBA runs its flagship BSIP — a year-long internship that can be extended for up to two additional years. The programme was launched in active partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the aim of developing a cadre of trained young professionals through hands-on field engagement.
- **Current Cycle:** The current sixth cycle of BSIP has selected 24 interns and placed them across various State Biodiversity Boards and Union Territory Biodiversity Councils for practical exposure in biodiversity conservation.  
**First Cycle:** The first BSIP cycle (2019–20) was inaugurated on May 22, 2020, during the International Day for Biological Diversity 2020, by the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

### What Is NHAI's 'Arogya Van' Initiative? Medicinal Trees to Line India's Highways

**In the News:** The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) announced the launch of the 'Arogya Van' initiative, a thematic medicinal tree plantation drive on vacant land parcels along national highways, aimed at enhancing biodiversity and promoting awareness of traditional medicine systems like Ayurveda.

#### Key Points:

- **Initiative Overview:** NHAI has launched 'Arogya Van', a shift from conventional greening drives to a thematic, knowledge-driven plantation model focusing on medicinal tree species with ecological, educational, and cultural value along national highways.
- **First Phase Plan:** In the first phase, an action plan covers 17 land parcels spanning 62.8 hectares, where approximately 67,462 medicinal trees will be planted across national highway projects in states including Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi-NCR, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Chhattisgarh.
- **Species Selected:** Around 36 tree species with established medicinal properties have been identified for plantation, including Neem (antibacterial), Amla (Vitamin C and immunity), Jamun (diabetes management), Imli/Tamarind (digestive benefits), Gular, Maulsari, and Lemon, selected based on adaptability to respective agro-climatic zones.
- **Strategic Locations:** Priority will be given to land parcels near toll plazas, wayside amenities, interchanges, cloverleaf junctions, and other prominent highway stretches to maximise public visibility, awareness, and outreach.
- **Future Expansion:** Approximately 188 hectares of additional vacant land have been identified for plantation during the forthcoming monsoon season, chosen to ensure higher plant survival rates and long-term sustainability.
- **Ecological Benefits:** The medicinal plantations will support pollinators such as bees and butterflies, provide shelter to birds and small fauna, create micro-habitats, improve soil quality, and strengthen overall ecosystem resilience along highways.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### Death Anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

**In the News:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah paid homage to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on his Punyatithi (Death Anniversary) on April 3, 2026, describing the 17th-century Maratha ruler as an "immortal symbol of Indian pride and the protector of national honour." Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also paid their tributes, highlighting Shivaji Maharaj's courage, leadership, and dedication to India's cultural heritage.

#### Key Points:

- **About Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj:** Born on 19th February 1630 at Shivneri Fort near Pune, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was the founder of the Maratha Empire and a visionary leader who resisted Mughal rule and championed self-governance. He passed away on 3rd April 1680 at Raigad Fort due to severe health complications.
- **Vision of Hindavi Swarajya:** At a young age, Shivaji Maharaj took a pledge to establish Hindavi Swarajya — a progressive concept of indigenous sovereignty, ethical governance, and political independence free from foreign domination. He united the masses around the ideals of Swadharma (one's own duty), Swaraj (self-rule), and Swabhasha (one's own language), replacing Persian with Marathi and Sanskrit as the languages of administration.
- **Military Genius and Guerrilla Warfare:** Shivaji Maharaj is globally recognised for his innovative Guerrilla Warfare tactics known as Ganimi Kava. He fought several major battles including the Battle of Pratapgad (1659), Battle of Pavan Khind (1660), Battle of Surat (1664), Battle of Purandar (1665), Battle of Sinhagad (1670), and Battle of Sangamner (1679). The Wagh Nakh (tiger claws) was the weapon used by Shivaji to kill Afzal Khan in the Battle of Pratapgad in 1659.

- **Father of the Indian Navy:** Shivaji Maharaj is celebrated as the Father of the Indian Navy for building a robust naval fleet and constructing coastal forts such as Sindhudurg to protect the western seaboard, reflecting his unparalleled strategic acumen and visionary leadership.
- **Titles Conferred:** He was honoured with titles such as Chhatrapati, Shakakarta, Kshatriya Kulavantas, and Haindava Dharmodhhaarak, reflecting his sovereignty, warrior lineage, and role as a protector of dharma.

## SPORTS

### India Withdraws Bid to Host COP33 Summit

**In the News:** India has reportedly withdrawn its bid to host the 33rd Conference of Parties (COP33) scheduled for 2028, marking a significant shift in its recent climate diplomacy stance. The withdrawal was confirmed through an April 2 letter by Rajat Agrawal, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), to the UNFCCC, citing a "review of its commitments for 2028." No formal public statement has been issued by the ministry.

#### Key Points:

- **Background:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced India's interest in hosting COP33 during COP28 in Dubai in 2023. In July 2025, the MoEFCC had set up a dedicated cell for the "professional and logistical requirements" for organising COP33. India's candidature had also received support at the 17th BRICS Summit on July 7, where member countries "welcomed" India's candidacy.
- **Reason for Withdrawal:** According to the letter sent to the UNFCCC, India withdrew its candidacy following a "review of its commitments for 2028," suggesting a recalibration of priorities amid evolving domestic and international obligations.
- **COP Hosting Rotation System:** The hosting of COP summits rotates among the UN's five regional groups — African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, and Western European and Other States. India belongs to the Asia-Pacific group, which was eligible to host the 2028 summit. COP30 was held in Brazil; COP31 hosted by Turkey and Australia is the president of negotiations; COP32 is scheduled in Ethiopia. Following India's withdrawal, South Korea remains the only one that has expressed interest for COP33.
- **India's COP History:** India has hosted a COP only once — in 2002 (COP8) — when it was a relatively low-key affair.
- **About COP:** COP stands for Conference of Parties and refers to the annual summit held under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Venues for future COPs are typically decided two years in advance.

## STATIC

### Jyotiba Phule

**In the News:** Recently, the bicentenary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule (1827–1890) was observed, highlighting his contributions as a pioneering social reformer and a forerunner of constitutional thought in India. His ideas reimagined society based on equality, dignity, and redistribution of power, underlining the interlinkage of social hierarchy, economic exploitation, and state indifference.

#### Key Points:

- **About:** Jyotirao Govindrao Phule was born on 11th April, 1827, in Pune, Maharashtra, into a lower-caste Mali family. He emerged as a pioneering social reformer who challenged Brahmanical orthodoxy, fought for the rights of Dalits and women, and laid the foundation for India's social justice movements. He passed away on 28th November, 1890.
- **Early Life & Education:** His mother Chimnabai died when he was young. Despite societal barriers, he studied at the Scottish Mission High School in Pune. Exposure to Western thinkers like Thomas Paine (The Rights of Man) and John Stuart Mill deeply fuelled his commitment to social justice. He married Savitribai Phule at age 13, who became his lifelong partner in social reform.
- **Educational Reforms:** In 1848, Phule and his wife Savitribai opened India's first girls' school in Pune — a groundbreaking step when educating girls was considered taboo, with a curriculum including mathematics, science, and social studies. He also established schools for marginalised communities including Dalits and lower-caste groups who were traditionally denied education.



- **Social Reforms:** He founded the Satyashodhak Samaj on September 24, 1873 — the "Society of Seekers of Truth" — which fought caste hierarchy, opposed idol worship and priestly mediation, and was open to all castes and religions. Deenbandhu, a Marathi weekly newspaper founded by Krishnarao Pandurang Bhalekar in 1877, served as its media outlet.
- **Major Publications:** Tritiya Ratna (1855), Powada: Chatrapati Shivajiraje Bhosle Yancho (1869), Gulamgiri (1873), Shetkaryacha Asud (1881), and Sarvajanic Satya Dharma Pustak.

### Jyotirao Phule Jayanti 2026: India Begins 200th Birth Anniversary Year

**In the News:** The Government of India formally launched a two-year nationwide commemoration of the 200th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, spanning from April 11, 2026 to April 11, 2028. The inaugural programme, titled "Phule Across India," was held at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.

#### Key Points:

- **Announcement Origin:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the upcoming commemoration in his Independence Day speech on August 15, 2025, calling Phule's mantra of "priority to the backward" an inspiration for transformative governance.
- **Inaugural Programme:** The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment organised the launch under the Inter-State Cultural Diversity Programme titled "Phule Across India," featuring region-wise thematic presentations inspired by Phule's life, philosophy, and **social reform** legacy.
- **National Implementation Committee:** The commemoration was approved by the National Implementation Committee (NIC) chaired by the Union Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation, vide approval dated April 6, 2026.
- **High-Level Committee:** A High-Level Committee of 126 members has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, comprising former Presidents, a former Prime Minister, Union Ministers, Governors, Chief Ministers, Members of Parliament, academicians, jurists, spiritual leaders, and social activists.
- **Mahatma Jyotirao Phule (1827–1890):** A pioneering social reformer from Maharashtra, Phule dedicated his life to the upliftment of marginalised communities. Along with Savitribai Phule, he opened India's first school for girls in 1848. In 1873, he founded the Satyashodhak Samaj, a movement promoting truth, equality, and social justice and working to eliminate caste discrimination.

## APPOINTMENT

### Deep Jariwala Appointed as US Governor's Chair

**In the News:** Indian-origin scientist Deep Jariwala has been appointed as the UT-ORNL Governor's Chair for Quantum Devices, a joint position between the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory. He will officially assume the role in January 2027.

#### Key Points:

- **The Appointment:** Deep Jariwala, currently an associate professor and Peter and Susanne Armstrong Distinguished Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, has been named the UT-ORNL Governor's Chair for Quantum Devices. He will hold a joint appointment at UT's Tickle College of Engineering and at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL).
- **The Governor's Chair Programme:** The programme is designed to align the strengths of the University of Tennessee and ORNL to advance research and talent development, and to attract accomplished researchers to the region. It combines academic teaching with high-level scientific research.
- **Research Focus:** Jariwala specialises in quantum materials, microelectronics, and next-generation computing technologies. His work aims to make AI more energy-efficient by improving microchips — either by structuring chips to mimic the human brain or by leveraging the unique physics of quantum materials in computing.
- **Academic Contributions:** He has authored over 200 peer-reviewed journal and conference publications and serves as associate editor for ACS Nano Letters. He has received honours from the American Physical Society, IEEE, and Optica.
- **Entrepreneurship and Industry Connect:** As co-founder of Agni Semiconductor, Jariwala brings an entrepreneurial dimension to his academic role. At UT, he plans to establish a new research laboratory at the Institute for Advanced Materials and Manufacturing, located at the UT Research Park at Cherokee Farm — a hub for UT, ORNL, and industry collaboration.