
CURRENT AFFAIRS

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CONTENTS

➤ National News	3
➤ Government Schemes	7
➤ International News	11
➤ India and the World	14
➤ Finance, Economy and Banking	15
➤ Defence News	19
➤ Appointments	21
➤ Books and Authors	22
➤ Obituaries (National)	22
➤ Obituaries (International)	23
➤ Days and Themes	23
➤ Reports, Rankings and Index	24
➤ Events	26
➤ Awards	27
➤ Sports News	30

NATIONAL NEWS

NAI celebrates its 135th Foundation Day and launches 'Gyan Bharatam Mission'

- The National Archives of India (NAI) celebrated its 135th Foundation Day on March 11, 2025, with an exhibition titled "Indian Heritage through Architecture."
- On this occasion, the National Archives of India also launched a book titled "Thumb Printed: Champaran, Indigo Peasants Speak to Gandhi Volume III." This volume contains 423 testimonies, including 143 principal testators, among whom five were women, 11 were minors, 76 signed the documents, and four had no signature or thumb impression. This third volume in the series focuses on the historic Champaran Satyagraha.
- Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched 'Gyan Bharatam Mission,' a visionary initiative aimed at expanding access to India's vast repository of knowledge.

Key Points

Director General of Archives — Arun Singhal
Headquarters — New Delhi

Indore launches India's first PPP green waste processing plant

- Indore has opened the first Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model-based green waste processing plant in India under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U).
- The green waste processing plant is based in Bicholi Hapsi, and was launched in conjunction with Astronomical Industries Private Limited, Indore.
- It caters for recycling green timber and branches into usable products and covers 55,000 square feet. Wood waste gets converted into wood pellets at the newly built plant, which makes it possible to use a biomass product as an eco-friendly substitute for coal.

Annual report on the status of tigers in Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve (NSTR)

- According to the Annual Report on Status of Tigers, Prey and Other Mammals-2024, the population of tigers in NSTR has increased from 74 in 2023 to 76 in 2024.
- Of them, 40 are male, 32 are female and four could not be identified. 11 tiger cubs were not included in the

report. As of 2018, the reserve had 47 tigers, which has swelled to 76 in the last six years, an increase of 61.7%.

- NTSR is the largest tiger reserve in India and is located in the Nallamala hill ranges (an offshoot of the Eastern Ghats) of Andhra Pradesh. It constitutes two wildlife sanctuaries – Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary (GBM).

India becomes the world's second-largest tea exporter in 2024

- According to the data released by the Tea Board of India, India has emerged as the second-largest tea exporter in the world in 2024, surpassing Sri Lanka and trailing behind Kenya, which retained the top position.
- India exported 254 million kilograms (Mkg) of tea in 2024, marking a significant jump from its 231 Mkg exports in 2023.
- Kenya, which remains the world's largest tea exporter, shipped over 500 Mkg of tea in 2024.
- India's 2024 export figures (254 Mkg) were the second highest in its history, only behind 2018, when the country exported around 256 Mkg.
- The Indian tea industry aims to achieve an export target of 300 Mkg by 2030, given the recent upward trend.

PM Modi announces lion census at National Wildlife Board meet

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) meeting at Sasan in Junagadh district, Gujarat.
- The NBWL is a statutory body that advises the government on wildlife conservation. It has 47 members, including the Chief of Army Staff, members from different states, representatives from NGOs working in this field, chief wildlife wardens and secretaries from various states.
- PM Modi laid the foundation stone for the National Referral Centre-Wildlife at Junagadh and announced the 16th Asiatic lion population estimation to be carried out in May this year.
- He also announced the setting up of a Centre of Excellence for Human-Wildlife Conflict Management, SACON, at Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu, and unveiled a book on river dolphins.

Supreme Court advocates for Disability Rights as Fundamental

- The Supreme Court of India ruled that the right against disability-based discrimination should be considered a fundamental right, aligning with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016.
- The judgment allows visually impaired candidates to participate in judicial service recruitment, reinforcing the principle of equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation.
- The verdict was delivered by a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan while hearing petitions related to the Madhya Pradesh Judicial Service Examination Rules, 1994, and Rajasthan Judicial Service Rules, 2010.

Key Points

Chief Justice of India — Sanjiv Khanna

First ever comprehensive survey of India's river dolphins

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the results of the first-ever comprehensive population estimation of riverine dolphins – Gangetic and Indus dolphins – done in India.
- The survey was conducted across the Ganga and Brahmaputra river basins between 2021 and 2023. It estimated an average of 6,324 Gangetic dolphins, ranging from 5,977 to 6,688.
- The survey only found three Indus River dolphins in the Indus basin, all in the Beas River in Punjab.
- It is a first-of-its-kind exercise that provides timely estimates of the endangered aquatic mammals, which face threats from pollution, riverbed mining, low water depth, habitat damage, prey decline and climate change.
- Gangetic dolphins and Indus dolphins are classified as endangered and accorded the highest protection under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

ISRO's semi-cryogenic engine

- In a ground-breaking development for India's space exploration ambitions, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) completed a critical hot test of its semi-cryogenic engine at its Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu Propulsion complex.
- The test, conducted by ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), confirmed the smooth ignition and successful operation of the engine's boost

strap mode. It lasted for 2.5 seconds and validated the functionality of critical subsystems such as the pre-burner, turbo pumps, start system and control components.

- This achievement brings ISRO closer to upgrading its Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3) and setting new standards for future space missions.
- This technological milestone also marks strong collaboration with Indian industries, reinforcing ISRO's capabilities and positioning India as a leader in space exploration.

Key Points

ISRO's headquarters — Bengaluru, Karnataka
ISRO's chairman — V. Narayanan

ISRO successfully rolls SpaDeX satellites, pushes them to the limit

- ISRO has achieved another milestone in its Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission by successfully conducting the "rolling" or "rotating" experiment.
- This test involved one satellite circumnavigating the other and returning to its original position while remaining in the line of sight.
- The rolling experiment is being compared to Chandrayaan-3's "hop" test on the Moon for its significance in advancing future space missions. It validates ISRO's ability to control satellite manoeuvring from ground stations using advanced software, sensors and positioning technologies.
- This capability is crucial for future missions like Chandrayaan-4, human space-flight programmes under Gaganyaan and satellite servicing projects.
- SpaDeX involves two satellites, SDX01 (Chaser) and SDX02 (Target), launched together on December 30, 2024. The mission aims to demonstrate technologies related to orbital rendezvous, docking and proximity operations. Earlier in January 2025, ISRO became the fourth country globally to achieve successful space docking using indigenous technology.

Chandrayaan-3 discovers ice beneath the moon's surface

- Chandrayaan-3's Vikram lander carried the ChaSTE (Chandra's Surface Thermophysical Experiment) probe to measure surface and subsurface temperatures. The instrument, developed by ISRO, analyses the Moon's thermal properties.

- The probe suggests ice deposits may be more widespread beneath the Moon's polar surface than previously thought.
- It features a temperature probe with ten sensors and a controlled penetration system reaching 10 cm below the surface.
- ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 mission achieved a historic soft landing near the Moon's south pole on 23 August 2023. The landing site was later named Shiv Shakti Point.

Delhi Lieutenant Governor inaugurate Amrut Biodiversity Park

- Lieutenant Governor (L-G) of Delhi, V K Saxena inaugurated the Amrut Biodiversity Park in Delhi.
- The park, built as part of the Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) Yamuna Floodplain Restoration initiative, is a joint venture between the authority and the CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute in Lucknow.
- The park spans around 115 hectares, and it is located along National Highway 24 and next to the Commonwealth Games Village.

Vikram and Kalpana: ISRO develops high-speed microprocessors for space missions

- ISRO and the Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL) in Chandigarh have jointly developed two cutting-edge 32-bit microprocessors, Vikram 3201 and Kalpana 3201, specifically designed for space applications.
- Vikram 3201 is India's first fully indigenous 32-bit microprocessor qualified for use in the harsh conditions of launch vehicles. A 32-bit microprocessor is a type of microprocessor with a data bus, registers, and address bus that are 32 bits wide. This means it can process 32 bits of data at a time, handle memory addresses of up to 4 GB, and execute 32-bit instructions.
- Kalpana 3201 is also a 32-bit SPARC V8 RISC microprocessor based on the IEEE 1754 Instruction Set Architecture. It is designed to be compatible with open-source software tool sets and has been tested with flight software, making it versatile for various applications.

India's Aditya-L1 spots solar flare 'kernel,' sheds light on Sun's explosive activity

- The Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) on-board India's first dedicated solar space mission, Aditya-L1, has captured an unprecedented view of a powerful

solar flare 'kernel' in the lower solar atmosphere, namely the photosphere and the chromosphere.

- Solar flares, caused by sudden releases of magnetic energy, can impact space weather, affecting satellite operations, radio communications and power grids, while also posing risks to astronauts and airline passengers. This marks a historic leap in solar physics.
- SUIT observed an X6.3-class solar flare detecting brightening in the near-ultraviolet (NUV) wavelength range (200-400 nm).
- This is the first time the Sun's full disk has been imaged in this entire wavelength range with such remarkable detail.
- These observations provide new insights into explosive solar activities and the complex processes governing energy transfer across different layers of the Sun's atmosphere.

Literacy rate among Muslims increased by 9.4% points in the 2011 Census

- According to the Annual Report, Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the literacy rate among Muslims was 79.5% for persons aged 7 years and above, while the literacy rate for all religions for the same age group was 80.9%.
- As per Census 2011, the literacy rate among Muslims aged 7 years and above was 68.5% as compared to the all-India literacy rate of 73.0%. As per Census 2001, the literacy rate among Muslims aged 7 years and above was 59.1% while the all-India literacy rate for the same age group was 64.8%.

Key Points

Union Minister of Minority Affairs — Kiren Rijiju

Madhav National Park declared as India's 58th Tiger Reserve

- Madhav National Park in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh has officially been declared a tiger reserve, making it Madhya Pradesh's ninth and India's 58th tiger reserve.
- It was designated a National Park in 1959. It is part of one of India's 32 major tiger corridors, operationalised through the Tiger Conservation Plan under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It is spread over an area of 375.23 square kilometres.
- Madhya Pradesh boasts the highest tiger population in the country, surpassing Karnataka (563) and Uttarakhand (560).

Key Points

Madhya Pradesh capital	— Bhopal
Chief Minister	— Mohan Yadav
Governor	— Mangubhai C. Patel

India launches Cities Coalition for Circularity (C-3)

- India launched the Cities Coalition for Circularity (C-3), a multi-nation alliance for city-to-city collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and private-sector partnerships for sustainable urban development.
- This forum would provide a critical platform for policymakers, researchers, industry leaders and development partners to discuss and implement sustainable solutions for waste management and resource efficiency as economies in the Asia-Pacific region.
- The announcement of C-3 was made during the 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

India achieves milestone in TB research

- In a significant breakthrough in the fight against tuberculosis, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced the completion of genome sequencing of 10,000 isolates of "Mycobacterium tuberculosis".
- The genome sequencing initiative is part of the Dare2eraD TB programme (Data Driven Research to Eradicate TB), launched on March 24, 2022, which focuses on data-driven research to eradicate TB.
- A key component of this initiative is the Indian Tuberculosis Genomic Surveillance (InTGS) Consortium, spearheaded by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), in collaboration with major clinical institutions.
- The programme aims to sequence over 32,000 TB isolates to identify drug-resistance mutations and improve treatment outcomes.

News in Short

- Kerala becomes India's first state to establish a Senior Citizens Commission to safeguard elderly rights and promote their welfare.
- Union Minister of Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh laid the foundation stone for the North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR) permanent campus at Mawdiangdiang, Shillong. NECTAR, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST),

Government of India, is dedicated to leveraging technology for socio-economic development in the North East Region.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Vantara, an animal rescue, conservation, and rehabilitation centre in Jamnagar, Gujarat. Spread over 3,000 acres, Vantara (meaning "Star of the Forest") is one of the largest such facilities in the world. It was developed by the Reliance Foundation.
- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu announced that a 58-foot statue of Potti Sriramulu will be installed in Amaravati as a tribute to his 58-day hunger strike that led to the formation of a separate Andhra state.
- The Maharashtra government on Chhatrapati Shivaji Jayanti had announced plans to build a grand memorial for Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the Maratha Warrior King, in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.
- The Supreme Court has set up a national task force headed by its former judge Justice S Ravindra Bhat to address students' mental health concerns and prevent suicides in higher educational institutions, noting that student suicides have surpassed instances of farmers killing themselves due to agrarian distress.
- Punjab has become the first state to introduce language in its Legislative Assembly to facilitate persons who are unable to speak or hear.
- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has published an addendum to the ICMR National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health Research Involving Human Participants (2017) to provide a structured ethical framework for Research in Integrative Medicine (RIM). This initiative marks a significant milestone in strengthening the scientific foundation of Ayush-based integrative healthcare by ensuring ethical rigour and regulatory compliance in research that explores the integration of traditional and modern medical practices.
- Salman Khan has partnered with GRM Overseas (GRM) as the brand ambassador for their 10X Classic Chakki Fresh Atta, launching a campaign titled "Better Half Ki Better Choice" to promote their packaged wheat flour.
- Nagaland created history by becoming the first State Assembly in the entire country to implement the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) programme to become completely paperless.

- ISRO is developing a LOX-methane engine and stages for the Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV), which would feature a reusable booster stage and two expendable upper stages. A LOX-methane engine is a rocket engine that uses liquid oxygen as an oxidiser and methane as fuel.
- India's first World Peace Centre was inaugurated in Gurgaon by former President Ram Nath Kovind and other prominent leaders. The centre aims to promote world peace and harmony, with its voice reaching platforms such as the United Nations and the World Parliament of Religions. It was established by Ahimsa World University under the guidance of Jain Acharya Lokesh.
- Gujarat has achieved 95% of the tuberculosis registration target and 90% of the treatment target set by the Niti Aayog for 2024.
- India has imposed anti-dumping duties on four Chinese goods—Soft Ferrite Cores, vacuum insulated flasks, aluminium foil, and Trichloro Isocyanuric Acid—to protect domestic industries from cheap imports. These duties range from USD 276 to USD 1,732 per tonne and are set for five years, with aluminium foil subject to a provisional six-month duty.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) identified more than 1,000 species of fungi as threatened with extinction. The IUCN red list includes 1,300 fungi species, of which at least 411 are critically endangered.
- The Union Ministry of Law and Justice withdrew the draft Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2025 following strikes by lawyers and objections from the Bar Council of India (BCI). The draft bill proposed provisions allowing the Centre to influence the functioning of the Bar Council of India (BCI), govern the entry of foreign lawyers, and restrict lawyers' right to protest.
- India is the top producer of milk in the world and has set a target of producing 300 million metric tons (MMT) of milk in the next five years from the present 239 MMT.
- The Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary in the scenic coastal Raigad district, Mumbai, Maharashtra got the first honey harvest. The initiative was a collaborative project of Green Works Trust in partnership with the SBI Foundation and is designed to empower the local tribal community while promoting sustainable bee-keeping practices.
- According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data, February 2025 was the hottest in India in the last 125 years. It was also one of the driest in the last 125 years, with less than half rainfall compared to normal.
- Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan has captured its first photographic evidence of a caracal, a rare wild cat, marking a conservation milestone. This elusive wild cat was captured on a camera trap during the reserve's winter Phase IV survey, marking a significant milestone in conservation efforts. The presence of the caracal, a medium-sized wild cat known for its striking tufted ears and stealthy nature, highlights the effectiveness of the reserve's strong protection measures.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Karnataka launches digital detox initiative to tackle screen addiction

- The Karnataka government has launched "Beyond Screens", India's first industry-led digital detox initiative, to promote responsible gaming and digital well-being.
- The initiative, a partnership between Karnataka's department of electronics, IT, biotechnology, and science & technology and the All India Gaming Federation (AIGF), aims to encourage "balanced technology" use and address the growing challenge of digital addiction through structured interventions.
- Beyond Screens will serve as a comprehensive resource hub for individuals struggling with digital addiction.

The goals include raising awareness of excessive digital use, supporting individuals in inculcating healthier digital habits and developing research-driven strategies to tackle the problem.

Key Points

Karnataka's capital	— Bengaluru
Governor	— Thawar Chand Gehlot
Chief Minister	— Siddaramaiah

Cabinet approves inclusion of Kosi Mechi Intra-State Link Project

- The Cabinet has approved the inclusion of Bihar's Kosi Mechi Intra-State Link Project under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana-Accelerated Irrigation

Benefits Programme (PMKSY-AIBP) to enhance irrigation and flood management in the region.

- The project envisages diversion of a part of surplus Kosi water for extending irrigation to Mahananda basin in Bihar by way of remodelling the existing Eastern Kosi Main Canal.
- The project's estimated cost is ₹6,282.32 crore, in which the central assistance to Bihar includes ₹3,652.56 crore and is scheduled for completion by March 2029.

PM Internship Scheme (PMIS): FM Nirmala Sitharaman launches mobile app for candidates

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched a new mobile application for candidates to access the PMIS and urged the industry to participate in the programme.
- The scheme helps youth, especially in Tier-II and -III cities, to better understand the job market, and the industry can contribute to the country and the economy by participating in the scheme.
- The second pilot round of the PMIS is underway and the FM said 325 companies have put up nearly 118,000 internship opportunities. The scheme has covered all 735 districts of the country.
- The app includes features such as easy registration through Aadhaar face authentication, personalised dashboard, access to a dedicated support team as well as real time alerts to keep candidates abreast of new updates.

Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT) launches Samarth Incubation Programme

- C-DoT, an autonomous Telecom R&D centre of the Department of Telecommunication (DoT), Govt. of India launched the first cohort of the Incubation Programme named "Samarth" with a focus on fostering innovation and promoting technological advancements in India's telecommunications and IT sectors.
- Samarth Incubation Programme is designed to provide comprehensive support for startups and innovators engaged in creating next-generation technologies in the fields of telecom software applications, cyber security, 5G/6G technologies, AI, IoT applications and quantum technologies.
- The programme aims to encourage the development of sustainable and scalable business models, offer access to cutting-edge resources, and help startups bridge the gap from ideation to commercialisation.

Cabinet approves the Revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission with ₹3,400 crore allocation

- The central government has approved the revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission with an additional ₹1,000 crore, taking the total allocation to ₹3,400 crore.
- This move aims to strengthen livestock development and increase farmers' income through enhanced milk production.
- Two new incentives have been added to the scheme. The first is a one-time assistance of 35% of the capital cost for setting up Heifer Rearing Centres for 15,000 heifer cows across 30 housing facilities.
- The second is a 3% interest subsidy on loans taken by farmers to purchase high genetic merit (HGM) IVF heifers. This would help in the "systemic induction of high-yielding breeds."
- The revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) has been approved for the 15th Finance Commission cycle, with increased funds for the financial years 2025 and 2026. The scheme will continue supporting key activities such as semen station strengthening, artificial insemination, bull production, breed improvement through sex-sorted semen, farmer training and cattle breeding farms.

Minister for Electronics & Information Technology (MEITY) unveils AIKosha

- Union Minister for Electronics & Information Technology, Railways, and Information & Broadcasting, Ashwini Vaishnaw marked a major milestone in India's AI (Artificial Intelligence) journey with the launch of several key initiatives under the IndiaAI Mission.
- The newly introduced initiatives include AIKosha: IndiaAI Datasets Platform, the AI Compute Portal, the AI Competency Framework for Public Sector Officials, iGOT-AI Mission Karmayogi, the IndiaAI Startups Global Acceleration Programme with Station F, the IndiaAI Application Development Initiative and IndiaAI FutureSkills all aimed at strengthening AI-driven research, innovation and skill development.
- IndiaAI Mission was launched in March 2024, with a budget of ₹10,371.92 crore.

'Sashakt Panchayat-Netri Abhiyan' launched

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj launched the "Sashakt Panchayat-Netri Abhiyan" at a landmark National Workshop of Women Elected Representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions in New Delhi.

- The historic gathering brought together more than 1,200 women Panchayat leaders from across the country ahead of International Women's Day 2025.
- The Sashakt Panchayat-Netri Abhiyan is a comprehensive and targeted capacity-building initiative aimed at strengthening Women Elected Representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions across the nation. It focuses on sharpening their leadership acumen, enhancing their decision-making capabilities and reinforcing their role in grassroots governance.
- Lok Sabha Secretariat and MEITY have agreed to integrate and collaboratively develop products/tools leveraging the Parliamentary corpus of data. Parliamentary data and resources, provided by Sansad, will be used for learning and fine-tuning the AI tools/products. Meanwhile, translation capabilities and other technical expertise will be contributed by Bhashini.

Key Points

Union Minister for MEITY — Ashwini Vaishnaw
Lok Sabha Speaker — Om Birla

Indian government to launch Sahkar Taxi

- The Indian government will launch Sahkar Taxi, a cooperative-based ride-hailing platform, which aims at empowering drivers with direct control over their earnings and operations.
- Sahkar Taxi will register two-wheeler, rickshaw, and four-wheeler taxis under a Multi-State Cooperative Society (MSCS).
- Unlike traditional platforms that take commissions of 20%-40% or charge subscription fees, this cooperative model will allow drivers to retain their full earnings.
- The government has emphasised that the drivers will run the cooperative, rather than merely working for it. The goal is to create a fairer alternative to existing ride-hailing giants such as Uber, Ola and Rapido.
- The initiative will be backed by the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), which will assist in planning, promotion and financial support. This will include funding for setting up the platform, developing the mobile app and providing loans to drivers for vehicle purchases.

Key Points

NCDC's headquarters — New Delhi
Managing Director — Pankaj Kumar Bansal

Sansad Bhashini Initiative

- In a major boost for India's ambitions in the domain of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Lok Sabha Secretariat and the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) recently inked an MoU for an initiative expected to revolutionise parliamentary operations.
- The initiative named 'Sansad Bhashini' is aimed at providing in-house AI solutions to the Parliament for multilingual support and streamlined processes.

India's first frozen zoo

- Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park in Darjeeling is India's first "frozen zoo" — a genetic park preserving the DNA of Himalayan wildlife in steel tanks filled with liquid nitrogen at temperatures plunging to -196°C .
- A collaboration between the zoo and Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, the cryogenic conservation initiative aims to ensure that even if these species dwindle in the wild, their genetic blueprints remain intact.
- The zoo is spread across 67.8 acres and is situated at an altitude of 2,150 metres (7,050 ft), making it India's highest-altitude zoological park. The zoo is a leader in conservation breeding programmes for red pandas, snow leopards, and Tibetan wolves. It has also undertaken conservation work for species such as the Markhor (screw-horned goat), Mishmi takin and Himalayan black bear.

Department of Telecommunications (DoT) in India partners with WhatsApp

- DoT has partnered with Meta-backed WhatsApp for a campaign called "Scam Se Bacho" to combat online scams and spam in India. The initiative aims to educate citizens on identifying and reporting fraud, enhancing digital safety and awareness.
- The collaboration includes workshops, citizen-centric services, and proactive action against telecom resource misuse.

Key Points

Union Communications minister — Jyotiraditya Scindia
Chief Global Affairs Officer, Meta — Joel Kaplan

India launches Aadhaar Good Governance portal

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched the Aadhaar Good Governance portal to streamline the approval process for Aadhaar authentication requests.
- The Aadhaar Good Governance portal allows both government and private entities to seek Aadhaar authentication for public interest services. It will simplify the approval process for Aadhaar authentication requests by government and private entities.
- It is applicable under Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 (Amended in January 2025).

Key Points

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| CEO of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) | — Bhuvnesh Kumar |
| Chairman of UIDAI | — Neelkanth Mishra |

- This initiative empowers female students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) by providing them with the necessary entrepreneurial mindset, resources, and mentorship to successfully build and scale their ventures.
- Under the aegis of MSDE and implemented by the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) and in joint partnership with NITI Aayog, Swavalambini aims to establish a structured and stage-wise entrepreneurial journey for young women.

Key Points

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|--|------------------------|
| Union Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship | — Jayant Chaudhary |
| Niti Aayog's CEO | — B.V. R. Subrahmanyam |
| Niti Aayog's Vice Chairman | — Suman Bery |

Cabinet approves Revision of Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDCP)

- The Union Cabinet approved the Revision of Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDCP).
- The scheme has three components namely National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP), LH&DC and Pashu Aushadhi.
- LH&DC has three sub-components i.e. Critical Animal Disease Control Programme (CADCP), Establishment and Strengthening of existing Veterinary Hospitals and Dispensaries - Mobile Veterinary Unit (ESVHD-MVU) and Assistance to States for Control of Animal Diseases (ASCAD).
- The Pashu Aushadhi is new component added to the LHDCP scheme. The total outlay of the scheme is ₹3,880 crore for two years i.e. 2024-25 and 2025-26, which includes provision of ₹75 crore to provide good quality and affordable generic veterinary medicine and incentive for sale of medicines under Pashu Aushadhi component.

Swavalambini Women Entrepreneurship Programme

- The Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), in collaboration with NITI Aayog, launched Swavalambini — a Women Entrepreneurship Programme at Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut, taking a significant step towards strengthening women entrepreneurship in India.

Project Lion launched

- The Union Government has approved 'Project Lion' with a significant budget of ₹2,927.71 crore, marking a major step in the conservation and expansion of the Asiatic lion population.
- The initiative is dedicated to ensuring the well-being of Asiatic lions, whose numbers, as per the 2020 census, stand at 674. These lions are spread across 53 talukas in nine districts, covering nearly 30,000 sq km of Gujarat.
- Project Lion is a transformative effort that integrates habitat and population management, wildlife health monitoring, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, local community involvement, scientific research, eco-tourism development and biodiversity conservation.

News in Short

- The Indian Railways will dig ponds as part of the Union government's Mission Amrit Sarovar that aims to address the critical issue of water scarcity in the country. Amrit Sarovar was launched in April 2022 with the ambitious goal of constructing or rejuvenating 75 ponds in each district of the country.
- The Maharashtra government will set up a media monitoring centre at an estimated cost of ₹10 crore that will monitor news coverage related to the state government in print, electronic, social and digital mediums. It will also prepare a report by analysing the coverage and bring to the notice and take action on the

spread of negative or misleading news related to the state government.

- The Punjab government has launched 'Project Hifazat', aimed at providing immediate assistance and protection to victims of violence against women and children.
- The Ministry of Mines is launching India's first auction of Exploration Licences (ELs) in Goa. This reform aims to unlock critical mineral resources.
- The Centre has advised states and Union territories (UTs) to cut cooking oil usage by 10% in school meals under the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) scheme. The move aims to promote healthier eating habits among students amid growing concerns over childhood obesity.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the construction of 12.4 km ropeway project from Govindghat to Hemkund Sahib Ji in Uttarakhand. The project will be developed on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) mode at a total capital cost of ₹2,730.13 crore.
- Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the One Nation-One Port (ONOP) initiative to standardise and streamline port operations across India.
- Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has launched the state-of-the-art artificial intelligence-

powered chatbot 'Sarathi'. This chatbot is aimed at bringing revolutionary changes in citizen engagement by providing easy access to important government directives, notifications, and circulars published over the years.

- The Delhi government launched the Mahila Samridhhi Scheme on the International Women's Day. Under this scheme, eligible women in Delhi belonging to weaker economic sections will be able to get monetary assistance of ₹2,500 monthly.
- The Union Cabinet has approved a 2% increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) for central government employees, raising it from 53% to 55% of their basic pay. This decision, aimed at providing relief against inflation, will also apply to Dearness Relief (DR) for pensioners.
- The Union Cabinet approved the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme with a funding of ₹22,919 crore to make India Atmanirbhar in the electronics supply chain. This scheme aims to develop a robust component ecosystem by attracting large investments (global/domestic) in the electronics component manufacturing ecosystem, increasing Domestic Value Addition (DVA) by developing capacity and capabilities, and integrating Indian companies with Global Value Chains (GVCs).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UN Statistical Commission adopts a new indicator on MDD to track progress towards SDGs

- The United Nations Statistical Commission adopted a new indicator on the Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD).
- This indicator on MDD would help track progress toward Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 on zero hunger—one of the 17 goals under the 2030 Agenda.
- MDD represents the variety of foods that we consume and is important as the quality of our diet is essential for health, growth, development, and well-being. Under this indicator, intake of 10 food groups—grains; white roots, tubers and plantains; pulses (beans, peas and lentils); nuts and seeds; milk and milk products; meat, poultry and fish; eggs; dark green leafy vegetables; other vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables; other vegetables; and other fruits—over 24 hours would be monitored in sample populations.

European Space Agency (ESA) officially concluded its Gaia mission

- European Space Agency (ESA) officially shut down the Gaia space observatory, which had been operational for over a decade.
- It was launched in December 2013 and began its astronomical observations in July 2014, with operations ceasing on January 15, 2025.
- It played a pivotal role in mapping the Milky Way, revolutionising our understanding of the galaxy's structure and evolution.

Key Points

Headquarters	—	Paris, France
Director General, ESA	—	Josef Aschbacher

World's largest reserve of Hydrogen valued \$92 billion found in France

- Scientists in France have discovered the world's largest reserve of Hydrogen beneath the soil of Folschviller, in the Moselle region.

- They have uncovered an astonishing 46 million tons of natural hydrogen. This unexpected find has the potential to reshape global energy strategies by providing a new source of carbon-free fuel.
- The scientists from the GeoRessources laboratory and the CNRS made this discovery while they were searching for methane.
- This form of hydrogen is naturally occurring and does not require industrial production, unlike green hydrogen, which is made using renewable energy, or grey hydrogen, which is derived from fossil fuels.

Armenia and Azerbaijan finalise Peace Treaty to end 40-Year Conflict

- Armenia and Azerbaijan have agreed to a peace agreement set to end nearly four decades of conflict between the two post-Soviet countries.
- Both the neighbouring countries have been engaged in a decades-long conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, a breakaway region in the Caucasus Mountains that was home to around 120,000 ethnic Armenians.
- The region is internationally considered part of Azerbaijan but for decades was under the control of Armenian separatists.
- Armenia accepted Azerbaijan's proposals on "the two unresolved articles" of the draft agreement.

ADB launches "Frontier Seed" to boost private sector growth

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced the Frontier Seed (Pacific) programme and identified the first two companies to receive funding and support.
- The programme aims to develop local capital markets and support businesses that are building local industries contributing to inclusive and sustainable growth in frontier markets.
- ADB Frontier Seed (Pacific) programme signed a \$200,000 cost-recoverable technical assistance agreement with SeaPAC Pte Ltd, a saltwater prawn producer in Fiji, to support the commercialisation of Fiji's prawn industry and promote food security.
- ADB Frontier also signed a \$200,000 cost-recoverable technical assistance agreement with Kahuto Pacific, an aerial mapping company, to help develop new mapping offerings, to increase the availability of coastal data for the Pacific.

Key Points

Headquarters	—	Mandaluyong, Philippines
President	—	Masato Kanda

US's 'Golden Dome' missile shield

- The United States is set to develop an advanced missile defence system, called the 'Golden Dome.'
- The Golden Dome is a missile defence system to protect the US from threats like ballistic, hypersonic and cruise missiles.
- It will use space-based sensors and interceptors to detect and stop attacks early, while ground and naval defences add extra protection. Advanced communication networks would ensure quick data sharing and fast responses.
- The Golden Dome is designed to provide nationwide protection, countering advanced missile threats.

China activated Large Phased Array Radar (LPRAR)

- China has reportedly deployed a new Large Phased Array Radar (LPRAR) in Yunnan province near the Myanmar border, significantly enhancing its surveillance capabilities over India.
- It has a range of over 5,000 km which can monitor deep into Indian territory and track missile tests.
- Unlike traditional radars, which rely on mechanical rotation, LPRARs use electronically controlled antennas to scan vast areas almost instantly.
- This allows them to track multiple targets, including ballistic missiles, with high precision. Such radars play a critical role in early warning systems and air defence networks. Besides China, only the US and Russia have the LPRAR system.

US President Donald Trump invoked the Alien Enemies Act

- US President Donald Trump has invoked the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, a law that has been used throughout U.S. history to detain or deport nationals of an enemy nation during wartime or an invasion.
- Trump's directive targets members of Tren de Aragua, a Venezuelan prison gang that has grown into a multinational crime organisation over the last decade and was designated a terrorist organisation by the U.S. State Department in February, 2025.
- The proclamation authorises expedited removal of all Venezuelan citizens ages 14 and older deemed

members of the group and who are not U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents, calling them “a danger to the public peace or safety of the United States.”

United States’ Crypto Strategic Reserve

- US President Donald Trump has announced the establishment of a United States ‘Crypto Strategic Reserve’, incorporating major cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin (BTC), Ethereum (ETH), XRP, Solana (SOL), and Cardano (ADA).
- The move aims to position the US at the forefront of the burgeoning digital asset industry.

English designated as the official Language in the US

- President Donald Trump has signed an executive order making English the official language of the United States.
- It means government agencies and organisations that receive federal funding can choose whether they want to offer documents and services in languages other than English.
- This marks the first time the US has designated an official language at the federal level since the country was founded almost 250 years ago.

US spacecraft Blue Ghost lands on the Moon

- An American private space company called Firefly Aerospace successfully landed its spacecraft on the Moon. Firefly’s Blue Ghost mission is just the second time that a private space company has landed on the Moon, and the first such almost flawless landing.
- Blue Ghost carries ten instruments, including a lunar soil analyser, a radiation-tolerant computer and an experiment testing the feasibility of using the existing global satellite navigation system to navigate the Moon.
- Last year, Intuitive Machines, a ten-year-old company based in Houston, had landed its Odysseus spacecraft, marking a return of the United States on the lunar surface after five decades.
- These private space missions have been facilitated by NASA, which is trying to build a larger ecosystem of space transportation companies in preparation for frequent travels to the Moon, for humans as well as cargo, in the coming years.

FireSat project launched by Google

- The FireSat satellite was launched from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, US, aboard Elon Musk-owned SpaceX’s Transporter-13 mission.

- FireSat is a part of an artificial intelligence (AI)–powered network aimed at detecting and monitoring wildfire. The satellite is the first of a planned constellation of over 50, designed to identify wildfires as small as 5x5 meters using artificial intelligence.
- The first FireSat satellite was built by Muon Space, a California-based aerospace startup that designs and operates satellites. The satellite carries six-band multispectral infrared cameras which are specially tuned to detect wildfires from a long distance.
- The FireSat initiative comes on the heels of recent catastrophic wildfires in California. In January 2025, a series of severe wildfires—most notably the Palisades and Eaton Fires—ripped through parts of Los Angeles County, resulting in significant loss of life and the destruction of thousands of structures.

Key Points

Google CEO — Sundar Pichai

UAE introduces Blue Visa

- The United Arab Emirates has introduced the first phase of the Blue Visa system, a 10-year residence visa for individuals contributing to environmental sustainability.
- This initiative aims to leverage their contributions to achieve ambitious national goals and build a sustainable future for the people of the UAE and the world.
- The Blue Visa expands on the UAE’s existing residency programmes, such as the Golden and Green Visas. It is part of the country’s broader sustainability initiatives.

News in Shorts

- Mount Fentale, a volcano in northern Ethiopia has been emitting methane at an alarming rate. Starting from 31 January, emissions peaked at 58 metric tonnes per hour. The emissions consist of carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide. Methane is known to be 28 times more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide over a century.
- The Donald Trump administration has cancelled several international aid projects, including contracts supporting HIV, polio, and malaria programmes in some of the world’s most impoverished communities.
- Louisiana is set to execute a man using nitrogen gas for the first time. This execution will be the second in

the United States using this method. The execution of Jessie Hoffman Jr., convicted in the 1996 murder of a woman abducted from a New Orleans parking garage.

- Papua New Guinea (PNG) has temporarily blocked access to Facebook in a surprise move it calls a “test” to curb hate speech, misinformation, and explicit content. The shutdown was enforced under anti-terrorism laws.
- The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) recorded 8,938 migrant deaths in 2024. The real death toll is likely much higher given that many deaths go unreported or undocumented.
- US President Donald Trump has promised to roll out reciprocal tariffs or taxes on imports from other countries, saying that it would free America from depending on foreign goods. He will impose “reciprocal” tariffs to match the duty rates other countries have imposed on US product.

- The world’s biggest iceberg appears to have run aground roughly 70 km (43 miles) from a remote Antarctic island, potentially sparing the crucial wildlife haven from being hit. The iceberg measures roughly 3,300 sq km and weighs nearly 1tn tonnes – has been drifting north from Antarctica towards South Georgia island since 2020.
- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has announced a new initiative ‘UN80 Initiative’ aimed at improving the efficiency of the United Nations and making it more cost-effective.
- Sweden has selected the Taurus KEPD-350 air-launched cruise missile for integration with its Gripen fighter jets. These are designed and produced by Taurus Systems GmbH, a joint venture between Germany’s MBDA Deutschland GmbH and Sweden’s Saab Bofors Dynamics.
- Indonesia has announced its decision to join the New Development Bank (NDB), a multilateral financial institution established by the BRICS nations.

INDIA AND THE WORLD

US invokes Hague Service Convention in Adani bribery probe

- The United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has sought assistance from Indian authorities to serve legal documents to Adani Group founder Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar Adani over alleged securities fraud.
- The US panel has invoked the Hague Service Convention to formally notify them of the lawsuit.
- The Hague Service Convention, formally known as the ‘Convention on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters,’ was established to standardise the process of delivering legal documents across international borders.
- The convention is the most widely recognised method for international legal service.

PM Modi visits Mauritius

- Indian PM Narendra Modi commenced his two-day state visit to Mauritius with a ceremonial welcome in Port Louis.
- He received a warm welcome by the Indian diaspora in Mauritius, with the women from the community honouring him through a traditional Bihari cultural

performance known as Geet Gawai. Geet Gawai is a traditional Bhojpuri musical ensemble that embodies the rich cultural heritage brought to Mauritius by women from the Bhojpuri belt of India. In December 2016, Geet Gawai was inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in recognition of its cultural significance.

- Mr. Modi began his visit to the island nation with a sapling planting ceremony at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical, alongside his Mauritius counterpart Navinchandra Ramgoolam.
- He also paid homage at the concrete ‘Samadhi’ of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the founding father of Mauritius and at the ‘Samadhi’ of Anerood Jugnauth, former President and Prime Minister of Mauritius. Later he met the President of Mauritius Dharam Gokhool and gifted him Gangajal from Maha Kumbh.
- PM Modi, along with Mauritius Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam, also jointly inaugurated the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation.
- PM Modi was conferred The Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean, the island nation’s highest civilian honour.

- This marked the second time PM Modi was invited as the Chief Guest for Mauritius' National Day, a role he first held in 2015.

India and Singapore sign LOI on Green Shipping Corridor

- India and Singapore have signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) on maritime digitalisation (Digital Corridor Collaboration) and decarbonisation (Green Shipping).
- Under the LOI, both sides will collaborate on maritime digitalisation and decarbonisation projects, including identifying relevant stakeholders who could contribute to the effort, and work towards formalising the partnership through a memorandum of understanding on a Singapore-India Green and Digital Shipping Corridor (GDSC).

India launches 'Operation Brahma' for quake-hit Myanmar

- The government of India launched 'Operation Brahma', as the biggest response by a foreign country to help Myanmar following a 7.7-magnitude earthquake that has killed more than 2,000 people and injured nearly 4,000 others.
- A field hospital manned by experts from the Indian Army is operational at the old airport in Mandalay, the region hit hardest by the quake. The 80-member search and rescue team from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is combing through rubble at more than a dozen sites in Mandalay to look for survivors.
- INS Ghariyal, an amphibious warfare vessel of the Indian Navy, departed from Vishakhapatnam port with 442 tonnes of food items. A C-130 transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) left for Mandalay with 16 tonnes of humanitarian aid, rice and food items.

India and Japan sign loan agreements

- The Government of India and the Government of Japan signed loan agreements worth JPY 191.736

billion for six projects under Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to India in the sectors of forest management, water supply, urban transport, aquaculture, biodiversity conservation and investment promotion.

- The six loan agreements were signed between the Government of India and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) at New Delhi for:
 - I. "Tamil Nadu Investment Promotion Programme (Phase 3) (TNIPP-III)" (JPY 36.114 billion)
 - II. "Project for Capacity Enhancement for Effective Forest Management (JPY 8.280 billion)
 - III. Project for Construction of Chennai Seawater Desalination Plant (II)" (JPY 52.556 billion)
 - IV. "Delhi Mass Rapid Transport System Project (Phase 4 Additional Corridors) (I)" (JPY 79.726 billion)
 - V. "Assam State Aquaculture Promotion and Livelihood Improvement Project" (JPY 3.580 billion) and
 - VI. "Punjab Biodiversity and Natural Resources Conservation Project" (JPY 11.480 billion).

New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon's visit to NMIC celebrates India-New Zealand cinematic bonds

- The National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC), under the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting hosted the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr. Christopher Luxon, for a special visit to its campus.
- Mr. Luxon was given a guided tour of Gulshan Mahal, which showcases the 100-year history of Indian cinema. The tour continued into the museum's auditorium, where he explored various exhibits showcasing Indian Cinema's rich legacy.

FINANCE, ECONOMY & BANKING

RBI announces 'on Tap' Cohort within Regulatory Sandbox

- The Reserve Bank will set up a dedicated 'on Tap' cohort on climate change risks and sustainable finance under its regulatory sandbox initiative.
- The bank has been encouraging and facilitating innovations through its Regulatory Sandbox and Hackathon initiatives in the fintech space.
- There are two dimensions to climate change-related risks that regulators, policymakers and practitioners

have to be aware of – the first is facilitative involving capacity building, development of the ecosystem and financing of green and sustainable transition; and the second is the prudential aspect, which is related to risk management.

Key Points

RBI Governor	—	Sanjay Malhotra
RBI's headquarters	—	Mumbai

Reliance acquires Nauyaan Tradings

- Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has announced the acquisition of 100% equity stake in Nauyaan Tradings Private Limited (NTPL) through its wholly owned subsidiary Reliance Strategic Business Ventures Limited (RSBVL).
- The transaction, valued at just ₹1 lakh, was completed with Welspun Tradings Limited, a subsidiary of Welspun Corp Limited (WCL).
- With this acquisition, NTPL has become a step-down wholly owned subsidiary of RIL, effective immediately.
- NTPL has also entered into a share purchase agreement with WCL to acquire a 74% stake in Nauyaan Shipyard Private Limited (NSPL) for a total consideration of ₹382.73 crore.

Adar Poonawalla to sell Magma Insurance stake to Patanjali Ayurved

- Adar Poonawalla-owned Sanoti Properties has decided to sell its stake in its insurance subsidiary Magma General Insurance to Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved and other entities.
- Post the sale, Baba Ramdev's Patanjali will control a 98% stake - valued at ₹4,500 crore as per the transaction – in the insurance company.
- Adar Poonawalla holds 90% in Sanoti Properties, one of the entities selling Magma stake.
- The Dharampal Satyapal Group (DS Group), with a presence in food and beverages, dairy and hospitality, among others, is the other prominent buyer.

Moody's projects India's 6.5% Growth

- Moody's Ratings said India's growth at 6.5% will remain the highest amongst the advanced and emerging G-20 countries, supported by tax measures and continued monetary easing.
- The country will continue to attract capital and withstand any cross-border outflow.

CCI approves Tata Sons' additional 10% stake purchase in Tata Play

- Fair trade regulator the Competition Commission of India cleared Tata Sons' proposed acquisition of an additional 10% stake in DTH operator Tata Play from Singapore's sovereign wealth fund Temasek Holdings.
- Currently, Tata Sons — the promoter of Tata Group — owns a 60% stake in Tata Play.

- Tata Sons is an investment holding company, which is registered as a core investment company with the Reserve Bank of India and classified as a "Systemically Important Non-Deposit Taking Core Investment Company".
- Tata Sons will have a 70% holding in the entertainment content distribution platform. Tata Play (formerly Tata Sky) is one of India's leading content distribution platforms providing Pay TV and over-the-top (OTT) services through Tata Play Binge, an OTT platform.

Key Points

Chairperson	—	Ravneet Kaur
Headquarters	—	New Delhi

Incentive Scheme for Low-Value BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money)-UPI (Unified Payments Interface) transactions

- The Union Cabinet approved an incentive scheme for the promotion of low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (person to merchant - P2M) for the financial year 2024-25, with an estimated outlay of ₹1,500 crore.
- Under the scheme, incentives will be provided for UPI transactions up to ₹2,000, specifically benefiting small merchants.
- The government aims to increase digital payment penetration while minimising the financial burden on merchants and consumers. The scheme aligns with India's digital payment growth strategy, with a target of ₹20,000 crore in total transaction volume for FY25.
- The initiative follows previous government-led efforts to incentivise digital transactions, including zero MDR on RuPay debit cards and BHIM-UPI payments since January 2020.

First-ever export of Anthurium flowers from Mizoram to Singapore

- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has facilitated the first-ever export of Anthurium flowers from Mizoram to Singapore.
- They were exported via Kolkata in a consignment, consisting of 1,024 cut flowers (70 kg) in 50 corrugated boxes.
- This will be a major milestone for India's floriculture sector and strengthen India's agricultural exports, and provide economic benefits to local farmers, including women.

India to launch a statistical business register by the end of 2025

- The government of India will roll out a statistical business register by the end of 2025 to monitor the opening and closure of businesses across the country.
- The register will provide a framework for the economic census, which will further be used for surveys, such as the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) and the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE).
- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has identified multiple data sources for the register, including the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), the Ministry of Corporate Affairs database, Goods and Services Tax (GST) records, and the micro, small, and medium enterprises database.
- The initiative aims to enhance data accuracy, reduce errors, and ensure businesses' information is consolidated and regularly updated. It will also support sectoral analysis and aid in GDP calculations.

Key Points

Union Minister of Statistics — Rao Inderjit Singh and Programme Implementation

Valueattics Reinsurance becomes India's First Private Reinsurer

- Valueattics Re, a company promoted by Prem Watsa-backed FAL Corporation and GoDigit Founder Kamesh Goyal has received the insurance regulator Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) nod to commence reinsurance business in India.
- This is the first private reinsurer in India to be granted a reinsurance license.
- Currently, the public sector General Insurance Corporation (GIC Re) is the only reinsurance company operating in India.

Key Points

IRDAI's headquarters — Hyderabad, Telangana
Chairperson — Debasish Panda

SEBI Chairperson launches Bond Central, free repository open to all investors

- The SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch launched Bond Central – a centralised database portal for corporate bonds.

- 'Bond Central' aims to create a single, authentic source of information on corporate bonds issued in India and is intended as an information repository for the public at large and is accessible free of cost.
- The platform has been developed by the Online Bond Platform Providers Association (OBPP Association) in collaboration with Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs-Stock Exchanges and Depositories).
- The OBPP Association represents a selection of SEBI-registered platforms that facilitate the online buying and selling of bonds.

Key Points

SEBI's headquarters — Mumbai, Maharashtra

LIC, GIC Re and New India Assurance Company retain the 'D-SII' tag

- The public sector insurance companies – Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re) and the New India Assurance Company continue to be identified as Domestic Systemically Important Insurers (D-SIIs) by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- D-SIIs are insurance companies which are perceived as 'too big or too important to fail' (TBTF) based on their size, market importance, and domestic and global interconnectedness.
- LIC and New India are the largest life and general insurance companies in the country, respectively. The distress or failure of these D-SIIs would lead to a significant dislocation in the domestic financial system. Therefore, the continued functioning of D-SIIs is critical for the uninterrupted availability of insurance services to the national economy.

Key Points

LIC's headquarters	— Mumbai, Maharashtra
Chairperson	— Siddharth Mohanty
GIC headquarters	— Mumbai, Maharashtra
Chairman and Managing Director	— Ramaswamy Narayanan
New India Assurance headquarters	— Mumbai, Maharashtra
Chairman and Managing Director	— Girija Subramanian

Govt announces borrowings of ₹8 trillion in the first half of FY26

- The government announced plans to borrow ₹8 trillion from the market in the first half (H1) of 2025-26 (FY26), accounting for around 54% of the total gross market

borrowing target of ₹14.82 trillion. This includes the issuance of ₹10,000 crore in sovereign green bonds (SGBs).

- The gross market borrowing of ₹8trillion will be completed through 26 weekly auctions.
- Market borrowing would be spread across 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, 30, 40 and 50 year securities.
- The share of borrowing, including SGBs, under different maturities will be: three-year (5.3 %), five-year (11.3%), seven-year (8.2%), 10-year (26.2%), 15-year (14%), 30-year (10.5%), 40-year (14%), and 50-year (10.5%).

India to become the world's third-largest economy by 2028: Morgan Stanley

- India will be the world's third-largest economy by 2028 as it becomes the world's most sought-after consumer market and gains share in global output, driven by macro stability influenced policy and better infrastructure.
- From a \$3.5 trillion economy in 2023, the Indian economy is projected to expand to \$4.7 trillion in 2026, which will make it the fourth largest in the world behind the US, China and Germany. In 2028, India will overtake Germany as its economy will expand to \$5.7 trillion.
- According to Morgan Stanley, India was the 12th largest economy in the world in 1990, slipped to 13th position in 2000 before rising to ninth rank in 2020 and fifth in 2023.
- India's share in the world GDP is projected to rise from 3.5% to 4.5% in 2029.

Centre grants 'Navratna' status to IRCTC and IRFC

- Public sector undertakings Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) were granted 'Navratna' status by the Government of India.
- Navratna status is conferred upon public sector undertakings that demonstrate outstanding financial and market performance. This recognition enhances their autonomy and financial authority.
- The Centre classifies CPSEs into three categories based on their financial performance and operational capabilities — Maharatna, Navratna, and Miniratna.
- Companies that fulfil specific financial and performance benchmarks are granted 'Navratna' status, providing them with greater autonomy in investment and expansion decisions.

Key Points

IRCTC Headquarters	—	New Delhi
Chairman and MD	—	Sanjay Kumar Jain
IRFC Headquarters	—	New Delhi
Chairman and MD	—	Manoj Kumar Dubey

News in Short

- PhonePe launched its 'Insuring HEROES' campaign ahead of International Women's Day to promote financial security among women by offering exclusive discounts on select term life and health insurance plans.
- India is the primary source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Dubai, with a 21.5% share in 2024, surpassing the United States, France, and the United Kingdom.
- Transactions through popular Unified Payments Interface (UPI) touched a record high of ₹24.77 lakh crore in March, recording a growth of 12.7% over the preceding month, according to data released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). The UPI transaction value was ₹21.96 lakh crore in February.
- The Centre has decided to discontinue the Gold Monetisation Scheme for medium-term and long-term deposits effective March 26, 2025. The government cited soaring gold prices as a contributing factor to this decision, with the possibility of the ₹1 lakh/10 gm mark becoming a reality in the near future.
- Over ₹45,000 crore worth of "unclaimed deposit" has been transferred by public sector banks to the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund between 2019-20 and 2024-25 (till December 31, 2024).
- To address regulatory concerns and long-term strategy for the financial technology sector, the government has set up an inter-ministerial-industry committee on fintech (IMICF), which will be chaired by the secretary of the department of financial services (DFS).
- Star Health and Allied Insurance Limited (Star Health Insurance) launched 'SheTARA', a large-scale women's health initiative designed to provide free and accessible healthcare to women across Tamil Nadu through 40+ health camps. The initiative will provide essential medical screenings and raise awareness about preventive healthcare.
- S&P Global Ratings cut India's GDP growth projections to 6.5% for the next fiscal as it expects that economies in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region will feel the strain of rising US tariffs and pushback on globalisation.

DEFENCE NEWS

India's first indigenously developed air-launched anti-ship missile system tested

- Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy carried out successful flight-trials of a first-of-its-kind Naval Anti-Ship missile (NASM-SR) from Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha.
- The trials demonstrated the missile's capability against ship targets while launched from an Indian Naval Sea King Helicopter.
- The missile was launched in Bearing-only Lock-on after launch mode with several targets in close vicinity for selecting one among them.
- The missile initially locked on to a large target within a specified zone of search and during the terminal phase, the pilot selected a smaller hidden target resulting in its being hit with pinpoint accuracy.

Key Points

DRDO's headquarters	— New Delhi
DRDO's chairman	— Sameer V. Kamat
Chief of the Naval Staff	— Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi
Headquarters of Indian Navy	— New Delhi

DRDO conducts high-altitude trials of Indigenous Integrated Life Support System for LCA Tejas

- The Defence Bio-Engineering & Electro Medical Laboratory (DEBEL), a Bengaluru-based lab under DRDO successfully conducted high-altitude trials of the Indigenous On-Board Oxygen Generating System (OBOGS)-based Integrated Life Support System (ILSS) for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas aircraft.
- The OBOGS-based ILSS is a cutting-edge system designed to generate and regulate breathable oxygen for pilots during flight, eliminating dependence on traditional liquid oxygen cylinder-based systems.
- The ILSS underwent rigorous testing on the LCA-Prototype Vehicle-3 aircraft of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)/Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), meeting stringent aeromedical standards in varied flight conditions, including altitudes of up to 50,000 feet Above Mean Sea Level and high-G manoeuvres.

- The system has been manufactured by L&T as a Development cum Production Partner, reflecting a significant collaboration between DRDO and Indian defence industries.

Astra, Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile, test-fired on-board LCA Tejas

- In a significant boost to the Air Force's striking capabilities, the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) has successfully conducted a test-launch of the home-grown ASTRA Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM) from a Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) AF MK1 prototype fighter plane.
- The test launch was carried out off the coast of Chandipur in Odisha. Being a Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile means it can hit targets beyond a fighter pilot can see.
- Designed and developed by DRDO, ASTRA is capable of engaging targets over 100 km and, equipped with advanced guidance and navigation capabilities, allows the missile to destroy targets with greater accuracy. The missile is already inducted into the Air Force.
- The successful test-firing is a significant milestone towards the induction of the LCA AF MK1A variant.

Key Points

Chief of the Air Staff (CAS)	— Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh
Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)	— General Anil Chauhan

Gandiva Air-to-Air Missile launched

- DRDO has made significant strides in advancing India's air-to-air missile technology with the Astra MK-3, now officially named "Gandiva."
- This missile is a culmination of the Astra series, building upon the success of its predecessors, the Astra MK-1 and MK-2, which had ranges of 80–110 km and 140–160 km, respectively.
- The Gandiva missile embodies the qualities of precision, power, and adaptability, much like the legendary bow of Arjuna from the Hindu epic Mahabharata, from which it derives its name.
- It is powered by a Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) propulsion system, a cutting-edge technology that utilises atmospheric oxygen as an oxidiser. This

eliminates the need for on-board oxidisers, resulting in a lighter and more efficient design.

- The SFDR system allows the missile to sustain supersonic speeds, reportedly up to Mach 4.5, over extended ranges of 300–350 kilometres, depending on launch conditions.

Navy, Coast Guard to get two new advanced warships soon

- The Indian Navy and Coast Guard are set to strengthen their presence at sea with the addition of two new warships, which recently completed their Contractor Sea Trials (CST).
- The two vessels are the Himgiri (Yard 3022) and Androth (Yard 3035), built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) in Kolkata underwent testing.
- The Himgiri is an advanced frigate, the first of three being built under the Navy's Project 17A.
- The Androth is the second in a series of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Watercrafts (ASW SWCs) under construction at the shipyard.

Key Points

Director General, Indian Coast Guard (ICG)	—	Paramesh Sivamani
Headquarters, ICG	—	New Delhi

India launches 'Tavasya', second frigate of Project 1135.6 Additional Follow-on Ships

- In a significant milestone for India's naval self-reliance, Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) launched the second frigate of Project 1135.6 Additional Follow-on Ships, named 'Tavasya'.
- The frigate 'Tavasya' is named after the legendary mace of warrior 'Bhima' from the epic 'Mahabharata', symbolising the indomitable spirit and growing strength of the Indian Navy.
- The contract for the construction of two Project 1135.6 Follow-on frigates was signed between the Ministry of Defence and Goa Shipyard Limited on January 25, 2019.
- The first ship, 'Tripur', was launched on July 23, 2024. Both frigates are designed for multi-dimensional combat operations, covering surface, sub-surface, and aerial threats.
- With a length of 124.8 metres, a width of 15.2 metres, and a draught of 4.5 metres, 'Tripur' and 'Tavasya' boast a displacement of approximately 3,600 tons and a

maximum speed of 28 knots. The frigates are equipped with advanced stealth features, weaponry, sensors, and platform management systems.

HDFC Bank launches Project HAKK (Hawai Anubhavi Kalyan Kendra)

- HDFC Bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Air Force (IAF) acting through the office of the Assistant Chief of Air Staff – Accounts & Air Veterans and CSC Academy.
- Project HAKK is designed to provide support and services to defence pensioners, veterans and their families.
- HDFC Bank under its Parivartan programme, will engage in building economic inclusiveness for defence service veterans and next of kin. The Bank in association with CSC Academy (promoted by Common Service Centre E-Governance Limited), will provide skill development and training across financial products and services, empowering them to be financially independent.

Key Points

HDFC bank's headquarters	—	Mumbai
Chairman	—	Atanu Chakraborty
CEO	—	Sashidhar Jagdishan

₹2,906 crore contract signed with BEL for Low-level Transportable Radar (Ashwini) for IAF

- As part of the Government's efforts to strengthen the indigenous defence capabilities of the country, the Ministry of Defence has inked a capital acquisition contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Ghaziabad for the procurement of Low-level Transportable Radar, LLTR (Ashwini) at a cost of ₹2,906 crore.
- The radar is indigenously designed and developed by Electronics & Radar Development Establishment, DRDO.
- LLTR (Ashwini) is an active electronically scanned phased array radar based on state-of-the-art solid state technology. The radar is capable of tracking aerial targets from high-speed fighter aircraft to slow-moving targets such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and helicopters. Its acquisition will significantly enhance the operational preparedness of the Indian Air Force.
- The programme is a major step towards achieving self-reliance in defence manufacturing by reducing

dependency on Foreign Origin Equipment Manufacturers besides acting as a catalyst for the development of defence industrial ecosystem in the country.

Key Points

Union Defence Minister — Rajnath Singh

News in Short

Name of the Exercise	Countries/ Entities	Region/Place
Exercise Khanjar-XII	India-Kyrgyzstan	Kyrgyzstan
Bongosagar 2025	India-Bangladesh Naval Exercise	Bay of Bengal
Exercise Sea Dragon	Multinational anti-submarine warfare (ASW) drill	Andersen Air Force Base, Guam
AIKEYME (Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement)	Indian Navy and the Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF)	Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
INDRA	Indian-Russia bilateral naval exercise	Off the coast of Chennai

APPOINTMENTS

Name	Designation
Ajay Bhadoo	Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Government e Marketplace (GeM)
Takashi Nakajima	President & CEO of Honda Cars India
Saina Nehwal	Strategic Investor & Brand Ambassador, Naarica
Amitabh Kant	Chancellor (Chairperson), NIIT University (NU)
Rajneet Kohli	Executive Director of the Foods and Refreshment Division at Hindustan Unilever (HUL)
Nidhi Tiwari	Private Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi
Challa Sreenivasalu Setty	Chairman of Indian Banks Association (IBA)
Diljit Dosanjh	Global Ambassador, Levi's
Dr. Mayank Sharma	Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA)
Justice Joymalya Bagchi	Judge of the Supreme Court of India
Atul Kumar Goel	Chief Executive of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA)
Ashok Singh Thakur	Chairman of INTACH
Dr. Shivkumar Kalyanaraman	CEO of Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)
Anju Rathi Rana	First Woman Law Secretary of India
Ayushmann Khurrana	Fit India Icon
Justice Harish Tandon	Chief Justice of Orissa High Court
Parminder Chopra	Additional Charge as Chairman & MD of REC Ltd
Ajay Seth	Finance Secretary, India
Rahul Bhawe	MD and CEO of Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI)
Jasprit Bumrah	Brand Ambassador, L&T Finance Ltd
Yusuf Pachmariwala	Managing Director & CEO of Hitachi Cash Management Services

S. K. Majumdar	Executive Director, Canara Bank
Mythili Balasubramanian	MD & CEO, Edelweiss Asset Reconstruction Company (EARC)
Jaspri Bumrah	Brand Ambassador of Skechers
Dr. Lakshmi Venu	Vice Chairman of Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited (TAFE)
Gopal Vittal	Chairman of the Board of the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA)
Rajiv Bajaj	Managing Director and CEO for Bajaj Auto
N Ganapathy Subramaniam	Chairman of Tata Communications
Vikas Kaushal	Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL)
Krishnamachari Srikanth	Goodwill Ambassador of VISION 2020 India
Arun Mammen	Chairman of Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA)
Lip-Bu Tan	Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Intel Corporation
Kirsty Coventry	First Female and African President of the International Olympic Committee
Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah	First Female President of Namibia
Stuart Young	Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago
Yamandú Orsi	President of Uruguay
Eyal Zamir	Chief of Staff, Israel
Mark Carney	Prime Minister of Canada and leader of Canada's Liberal Party
Jay Bhattacharya	Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), United States

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Books	Authors
Diyaslai	Autobiography of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kailash Satyarthi
March of Glory	Hockey historian K. Arumugam and journalist Errol D'Cruz

OBITUARIES (NATIONAL)

Name	Occupation
Ramakanta Rath	Renowned Odia Poet
Himmat Shah	Indian Artist
Manoj Bharathiraja	Tamil Actor-Director
Millind Rege	Cricketer
Padmakar Shivalkar	Cricketer
Mayadhar Raut	Father of Odissi dance
Bindu Ghosh	Veteran Tamil Actor-Comedian
Dr. Debendra Pradhan	Politician
Dr. Senkalong (Senka) Yaden	Naga Scientist and Academician
Ananta Das	Politician
Garimella Balakrishna	Renowned classical singer and former Asthana Vidwan (court musician) of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD)

OBITUARIES (INTERNATIONAL)

Name	Occupation
Fred Stolle	Tennis Legend
Boris Spassky	Chess grandmaster
Gene Hackman	Actor
Syed Abid Ali	Former Indian all-rounder
Prince Frederik	Prince of Luxembourg
George Foreman	American Boxer
Ron Draper	Oldest surviving Test cricketer

DAYS AND THEMES

Date	Day	Theme
March 1	World Civil Defence Day	Civil Defence, Guarantee of Security for the Population
March 1	Zero Discrimination Day	We Stand Together
March 1	World Seagrass Day	
March 3	World Wildlife Day	Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet
March 3	World Hearing Day	Changing Mindsets: Empower Yourself to Make Ear and Hearing Care a Reality for All!
March 4	National Safety Day	Safety & Well-Being Crucial for Viksit Bharat
March 5	International Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness Day	
March 8	International Women's Day	For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment
March 10	CISF Raising Day	
March 12	No Smoking Day	
March 14	International Day Of Action For Rivers	
March 14	Pi Day	Mathematics, Art and Creativity
March 15	World Consumer Rights Day	A Just Transition to Sustainable Lifestyles
March 20	World Sparrow Day	
March 20	International Day of Happiness	Caring and Sharing
March 21	World Forestry Day	Forests and Food
March 21	World Down Syndrome Day	
March 22	World Water Day	Glacier Preservation
March 22	International Day of Nowruz	
March 23	World Meteorological Day	Closing the early warning gap together
March 24	World Tuberculosis Day	Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver
March 25	International Day of the Unborn Child	

March 25	International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members	
March 26	Purple Day	Stand Up to Seizures!
March 27	World Theatre Day	Theatre and a Culture of Peace

REPORTS, RANKINGS AND INDEX

UNESCO's Report on Multilingual Education

- A recent United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report revealed that 40% of the global population does not have access to education in the language they speak or understand.
- Despite the increase in the importance of native languages in education, many countries are still struggling to implement policies to support multilingual learning.
- This figure rises to an alarming 90% in some low- and middle-income countries, affecting over a quarter of a billion learners globally.
- The report highlights both historical and contemporary factors contributing to these language barriers.

Key Points

UNESCO's headquarters — Paris, France
Director General — Audrey Azoulay

NITI Aayog launches report "From Borrowers to Builders: Women's Role in India's Financial Growth Story"

- NITI Aayog launched the report titled "From Borrowers to Builders: Women's Role in India's Financial Growth Story".
- NITI Aayog's CEO, B.V.R. Subrahmanyam launched the report.
- It reveals that more women in India are seeking credit and actively monitoring their credit scores. As of December 2024, 27 million women were monitoring their credit, marking a 42% increase from the previous year, signalling growing financial awareness.
- The report has been published by TransUnion CIBIL, Women Entrepreneurship Platform's (WEP) of NITI Aayog and MicroSave Consulting (MSC).
- It highlights that women's share of the total self-monitoring base increased to 19.43% in December 2024, up from 17.89% in 2023.

- In 2024, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana accounted for 49% of all self-monitoring women, with the southern region leading at 10.2 million.
- The Northern and central states, including Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, saw the highest Compounded Annual Growth Rates (CAGR) in active women borrowers over the past five years.

Glass-Ceiling Index 2025

- According to the Economist's latest Glass-Ceiling Index (CGI), 2024, France is the best country for working women followed by Spain and Australia.
- The index states that it was a historic year for elections, with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) observing an average increase in women's parliamentary representation to 34%.
- Japan and Britain recorded significant gains, with representation rising to 16% (up from 10%) and 41% (up from 35%), respectively. In contrast, the United States experienced a slight decline, with representation falling to 28.7%.
- On the economic front, the report highlighted a rise in the percentage of women on corporate boards, reaching 33%, as well as an increase in women's labour-force participation, which grew to 66.6%, up from 65.8% the previous year; however, it remains lower compared to men at 81%.

Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2025

- The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) released GTI 2025. Burkina Faso ranks first in the index based on the impact of terrorism followed by Pakistan.
- India was ranked 14th in GTI 2025.
- The index analyses the impact of terrorism in 163 countries. It provides information about trends and patterns of terrorism and includes the number of attacks, number of deaths, number of injuries and the overall impact on the country.

World Air Quality Report 2024

- Delhi continues to be the most polluted capital city in the world with an average PM-2.5 concentration of $91.8 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.
- India ranked fifth in air pollution in 2024, improving from third place in 2023.
- 13 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world are in India, with Byrnihat on the Assam-Meghalaya border being the most polluted. The other cities include Faridabad, Loni (Ghaziabad), Gurgaon, Greater Noida, Bhiwadi, Noida, Muzaffarnagar, New Delhi (Central Delhi) and Delhi (taking the average from the rest of the city).
- Swiss air quality technology company IQAir released the World Air Quality Report 2024 by analysing the data from over 40,000 air quality monitoring stations across 138 countries, territories and regions.

World's largest arm importers 2020–2024

- According to the latest report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Ukraine has emerged as the leading global arms importer, accounting for 8.8% of total arms imports during the period from 2020 to 2024.
- It also stated that nearly half of Ukraine's imports came from the United States, which dominates the global arms export market.
- European countries have notably increased their imports of major arms and defence weapons, experiencing a remarkable 155% rise over the past four years (2020-2024) compared to the previous four-year period (2015-2019).
- Significantly, the five largest arms importers accounted for 35% of global arms imports among the 162 nations classified by SIPRI as major arms importers between 2020 and 2024. The top five importers are- Ukraine, India, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.

World Happiness Report 2025

- India ranked 118 out of 147 countries in The World Happiness Report, 2025.
- Finland emerged as the 'happiest' country yet again, followed closely by Denmark and Iceland.
- Afghanistan ranked the lowest followed by Sierra Leone and Lebanon. Among India's neighbouring countries, Sri Lanka was ranked at 133, Bangladesh at 134, Pakistan at 109, Nepal at 92 and China at 68.

- The index ranks countries according to the availability of various social, physical and emotional support factors. The study considers six explanatory factors for happiness: social support, GDP per capita, health life expectancy, freedom, generosity and perception of corruption.
- Wellbeing Research Centre, University of Oxford, in partnership with Gallup, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and an independent editorial board released the report.

Free Speech Index 2024

- A new global survey by The Future of Free Speech, an independent US-based think tank, has ranked India 24th out of the 33 countries surveyed on the question of support for free speech.
- Its report, titled 'Who in the World Supports Free Speech?' states that "while abstract support for free speech remains strong, commitment to protecting controversial speech is eroding in many parts of the world."
- Scandinavia dominated the top rankings, with Norway and Denmark finishing at the apex of the Future of the Free Speech Index with scores of 87.9 and 87.0.
- The survey, conducted in October 2024, also revealed that "more countries have seen declines rather than improvements in free speech support since 2021, with some of the biggest drops occurring in democratic nations like the United States, Israel, and Japan."

State of Climate 2024 Report

- The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) during the United National Climate Conference (COP29) in Baku released the State of Climate 2024 Report.
- 2015-2024 will be the warmest ten years on record; the loss of ice from glaciers, sea-level rise and ocean heating are accelerating; and extreme weather is wreaking havoc on communities and economies across the world.
- The January – September 2024 global mean surface air temperature was 1.54°C (with a margin of uncertainty of $\pm 0.13^\circ\text{C}$) above the pre-industrial average, boosted by a warming El Niño event.

Key Points

WMO Headquarters	—	Geneva, Switzerland
President	—	Abdulla Al Mandous

UNESCO releases “Education and Nutrition – Learn to Eat Well” Report

- UNESCO released the report “Education and Nutrition: Learn to Eat Well” to highlight concerns regarding the nutritional quality of school meals worldwide.
- As of 2024, approximately 47% of primary school pupils worldwide received school meals. Out of 187 countries evaluated, only 93 had legislation governing school food policies.
- Studies suggest that nutritious meals can increase school enrolment and attendance rates.
- The report was prepared in partnership with the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition.

Women-led tech startups’ funding drops 25% in 2024

- According to a report ‘Women-led Startups in India Report 2025’ released by the market intelligence platform Tracxn, tech startups co-led by women secured only \$1 billion in funding in 2024, a 25% year-on-year (Y-o-Y) decline.
- The report highlights key trends in funding, sectoral growth, unicorn journeys, and global positioning.
- India is home to over 7,000 active women-led startups, accounting for 7.5% of all active startups in the country. In the tech space, women-led startups have collectively

raised \$26.4 billion to date, with 2021 being the highest funded year at \$6.3 billion.

- In 2024, India ranked third globally in terms of funding raised by startups co-led by women, after the US and the UK, accounting for 3.96% of funding raised by women-led startups across the globe.

World Social Protection Report (WSPR)

- According to the latest World Social Protection Report (WSPR) by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), India has made significant strides in expanding its social security coverage, which has doubled from 24.4% in 2021 to 48.8% in 2024. This increase is due to key government initiatives that have expanded access to health insurance, pensions, and employment support.
- The ILO’s World Social Protection Report evaluates the effectiveness and progress of social security systems worldwide.
- The 2024–26 edition focuses on universal social protection for climate action and a just transition, providing insights into global trends.

Key Points

ILO’s Headquarters	—	Geneva, Switzerland
Director General	—	Gilbert Houngbo

EVENTS

Ninth National Summit on Good & Replicable Practices and Innovation

- Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda inaugurated the ninth National Summit on Good & Replicable Practices and Innovation in the Public Healthcare System in Puri, Odisha.
- The two-day summit showcased and documented various best practices and innovations adopted by States and UTs for addressing their public health challenges.
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) organises the annual National Innovation Summit on Good and Replicable Practices and Innovations in the Public Health System. This summit aims to showcase and document best practices and innovations adopted by States and Union Territories (UTs) to address public health challenges.

International Ramayana Conclave

- The International Ramayana and Vedic Research Institute organised a Ramayana conclave at the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- Religious leaders from India and Sri Lanka spoke about the impact of the Lord Rama’s personality on the entire world, giving examples from various countries.

World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2025

- The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) organised WSDS in New Delhi.
- The Union Minister for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav inaugurated WSDS.
- The theme of WSDS 2025 was “Partnerships for Accelerating Sustainable Development and Climate Solutions.”
- It is an annual flagship event to foster global partnerships for advancing sustainable development.

Water Sustainability Conference 2025

- The Bureau of Water Use Efficiency (BWUE) under the National Water Mission (NWM), Ministry of Jal Shakti, in association with The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), organised a one-day conference titled “Water Sustainability Conference 2025”, with a focus on Industrial Water Use Efficiency.
- The conference was held at the NDMC Convention Centre, Palika Kendra, Sansad Marg, New Delhi.
- The workshop brought together various Ministries, Organisations, Policymakers, Industry Leaders, Experts, and Stakeholders to deliberate on strategies and technological advancements to enhance water use efficiency in the industrial sector.

Bharat Calling Conference 2025

- Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, inaugurated ‘Bharat Calling Conference 2025’ organised by IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Mumbai.
- The theme of the conference was ‘Path to Viksit Bharat 2047: Pioneering Prosperity for All’.
- The conference highlighted how India stands at the forefront of global economic growth, offering unparalleled opportunities for investment across diverse sectors.

GRIDCON 2025

- Union Minister of Power and Housing & Urban Affairs, Manohar Lal inaugurated GRIDCON 2025 – The International Conference cum Exhibition at IICC, Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, New Delhi.
- The event was organised by Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) under the patronage of the Ministry of Power and in association with CIGRE, India.
- GRIDCON 2025 is a premier event in the power sector, for industry, utilities, professionals, researchers, and academicians across the global to shape the future of renewable integration, grid resilience, asset management, and digital transformation.

WAVEX 2025

- The Union Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) has launched WAVEX 2025, a pioneering initiative aimed at funding and providing national exposure to startups in the media and entertainment sector.
- It will be organised in collaboration with the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) at Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai.
- WAVEX 2025 will be a part of the World Audio-Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) which is scheduled to be held in May, 2025.

Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurates the first-ever Fit India Carnival

- Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated Fit India Carnival at the JLN Stadium in New Delhi.
- Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana joined the celebrations alongside wrestling champion Sangram Singh, renowned wellness expert Mickey Mehta, former WWE wrestler Shanky Singh and Guinness World Record holder Rohtash Chaudhary.
- It was a first-of-its-kind three-day event to make sports a culture and amplify the message of fitness among all.
- The Sports Authority of India’s National Centre of Sports Sciences and Research (NCSSR) offered free health assessments, including nutrition and psychological consultations for attendees.

News in Short

- The President of India, Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the two-day Visitor’s Conference 2024-25 at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Delhi. The President of India is the Visitor of 184 Central Institutes of Higher Education.
- The 30th Session of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) officially commenced in Kingston, Jamaica.
- The 353rd Governing Body meeting of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) was held in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting brings together the tripartite constituents of ILO i.e. representatives from governments, workers, and employers, to discuss crucial matters relating to the world of work and the governance of ILO.

AWARDS**Oscars Awards 2025- 97th Academy Awards**

The Oscars 2025 took place at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles. They were presented by the

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).

Comedian Conan O’Brien hosted the show for the first time. The list of awardees are as following:

- Best Picture – Anora
- Best Actor – Adrien Brody (The Brutalist)
- Best Actress – Mikey Madison (Anora)
- Best Actor (Supporting Role) – Kieran Culkin (A Real Pain)
- Best Actress (Supporting Role) – Zoe Saldaña (Emilia Pérez)
- Best Director – Sean Baker (Anora)
- Best Cinematography – The Brutalist
- Best International Feature Film – I'm Still Here (Brazil): Winner
- Best Adapted Screenplay – Conclave
- Best Original Screenplay – Anora
- Best Live Action Short Film – I'm Not a Robot
- Best Animated Short Film – In the Shadow of the Cypress
- Best Animated Feature Film – Flow
- Best Documentary Short – The Only Girl in the Orchestra
- Best Documentary Feature Film – No Other Land
- Best Original Song – El Mal (Emilia Pérez)
- Best Original Score – The Brutalist
- Best Makeup and Hairstyling – The Substance
- Best Costume Design – Wicked
- Best Editing – Anora
- Best Sound – Dune: Part Two
- Best Production Design – Wicked
- Best Visual Effects – Dune: Part Two
- Siby Kumar Tripathi (India Today) – Environment, Science & Tech
- Satyasundar Barik (The Hindu) – Uncovering India Invisible
- Nilesh Christopher (Rest of World) – Foreign Correspondent (India)
- Twesh Mishra (Economic Times) – Business & Economic Journalism
- Maitri Porecha (The Hindu) – Politics & Government
- A.R. Venkatachalapathy (Penguin) – Books (Non-Fiction)
- Shahab Ali & Amarnath Kashyap (Hindustan) – Sports Journalism
- Nihal AP Koshie, Mahender Singh Manral & Mihir Vasavda (Indian Express) – Investigative Reporting
- Shubhajit Roy (Indian Express) – Feature Writing
- P. Ravikumar (New Indian Express) – Photo Journalism
- Siddhant Mohan (Lallantop) – Hindi (Broadcast/Digital)
- Mandar Gonjari (ABP Majha) – Regional Languages (Broadcast)
- Anurag Dwary (NDTV) – Investigative Reporting (Broadcast)
- Ashutosh Mishra (India Today TV) – Politics & Government (Broadcast)
- Vishnukant Tiwari & Athar Rather (The Quint) – Uncovering India Invisible (Broadcast/Digital)
- Tejas Vaidya & Enakshi Rajvanshi (BBC Hindi) – Sports Journalism (Broadcast/Digital)
- Joel Michael & Rohini Krishnamurthy (Down To Earth) – Environment, Science & Tech (Broadcast/Digital)

Ramnath Goenka Awards for Excellence in Journalism 2025

The Indian Express Group instituted the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards as a part of centenary year celebrations of its founder, Ramnath Goenka. The awards aim to celebrate excellence in journalism, recognise courage and commitment and showcase outstanding contributions and individuals every year. The President of India, Droupadi Murmu presented the 19th Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards at a function held in New Delhi.

- Mridulika Jha (Aaj Tak)- Hindi (Print/Digital)
- Jeet Mashru & Somita Pal (Hindustan Times)- Civic Journalism
- Jisha Elizabeth (Madhyamam)- Regional Languages (Print/Digital)

RBI won the Digital Transformation Award 2025

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) won the Digital Transformation Award 2025 by Central Banking, London, UK.
- RBI was awarded for its digital initiatives—Pravaah and Sarthi—which were developed by its in-house developer team.
- Sarthi, launched in January 2023, digitised RBI's internal workflows, enabling its employees to store and share documents securely, improving record management, and increasing the options for data analysis through reports and dashboards.
- Pravaah, launched in May 2024 is a digitised means that was created for external users to submit regulatory applications to the RBI. Documents submitted and processed through the portal are plugged into the

Sarthi database, where they can be handled digitally across RBI offices, with centralised cybersecurity systems and digital tracking.

Jayshree Vencatesan: the first Indian to receive Ramsar Award for Wetland Wise Use

- Jayshree Vencatesan, co-founder of Chennai-based Care Earth Trust, has become the first Indian to be honoured with the Ramsar award for 'Wetland Wise Use', a globally recognised accolade celebrating contributions to the sustainable management of wetlands.
- She is one of the 12 women changemakers in the world of wetlands. Jayashree was recognised under 'wise use of wetlands' category.
- Jayashree is known for her decades-long dedication to preserving India's wetlands, particularly the Pallikaralai Marsh in Chennai. Her journey in conservation began with a modest \$350 and a resolve to protect India's marshlands, often dismissed as "wastelands."

Stockholm Water Prize 2025

- Hydrologist Günter Blöschl, a pioneer of water engineering, was awarded the prestigious Stockholm Water Prize 2025.
- His comprehensive database and analysis have revolutionised and deepened the global understanding of flood risk reduction and water resource management.
- The Stockholm Water Prize is awarded by the Stockholm Water Foundation in cooperation with the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. The Prize will be presented to Blöschl by King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, the official patron of the Prize, during World Water Week in Stockholm in August 2025.

Delhi International Airport won the Prestigious ASQ Award for the best airport in Asia-Pacific

- Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), has been honoured with the prestigious Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Airport Experience Award, 2024, for Best Airport Over 40 Million Passengers in the Asia-Pacific region.
- This exceptional achievement marks the seventh consecutive year that Delhi Airport has been recognised for its commitment to excellence in customer service.
- The ASQ Awards, presented by Airports Council International (ACI), are globally regarded as the gold standard in airport experience. They recognise the world's best airports for the quality of their customer service, as rated by the passengers themselves.

Masaki Kashiwara wins the 2025 Abel Prize

- Japanese mathematician Masaki Kashiwara was awarded the Abel Prize 2025 "for his fundamental contributions to algebraic analysis and representation theory, in particular the development of the theory of D-modules and the discovery of crystal bases."
- Abel Prize is named after the Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel (1802-1829). It was created by Norway's government, partly in a bid to compensate for the lack of a Nobel Prize in mathematics.
- It comes with a 7.5-million-kroner (\$714,000) cheque.

59th Jnanpith Award

- Eminent Hindi writer Vinod Kumar Shukla was named the recipient of the 59th Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary honour.
- He will be the first writer from Chhattisgarh to receive the award. Mr. Shukla is a poet and essayist. He is considered one of the greatest contemporary writers in the language, and is the 12th Hindi writer to receive the award.
- The award carries with it a cash reward of ₹11 lakh, a bronze statue of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of learning, and a citation.

Sangita Kalanidhi Award

- The Music Academy, Chennai, has chosen violinist and composer Rudrapatna Krishnamurthy Shriramkumar for this year's prestigious Sangita Kalanidhi Award.
- Shriramkumar is an acknowledged authority on the 19th century composer and writer Subbarama Dikshitar, nephew of the poet-saint Muthuswami Dikshitar, one of the holy trinity of Carnatic music (the other two being Tyagaraja and Syama Sastri).
- Shriramkumar belongs to an illustrious Sankethi Brahmin family of musicians from Rudrapatna, a village on the bank of the Cauvery in Karnataka's Hassan district, which is known as Sangeet Grama, or Village of Music.
- Sangita Kalanidhi, which translates as 'Treasure of Music and Art', is the highest honour in Carnatic music. It is awarded annually by the Madras Music Academy, one of the oldest academies of Carnatic music in India.

News in Short

- Dr. Suborno Bose, Chairman of the International Institute of Hotel Management (IIHM), one of India's foremost hospitality educators and a visionary in integrating technology with hospitality, has been

honoured with the 'Lifetime Achievement in Hospitality and Education Through Technology' award.

- Muthoot Microfin, a leading microfinance institution committed to empowering women entrepreneurs, has achieved a remarkable double victory at the SKOCH Awards 2025, securing two prestigious Gold Awards.
- Veteran Telugu cinema superstar Chiranjeevi was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his immense contribution to Indian cinema, cultural influence, and public service by London-based think tank Bridge India at the prestigious House of Commons in the UK Parliament.
- Vijay Sankar awarded Knight's Cross of Order of Dannebrog by King of Denmark for consular services in Chennai.

- Renowned sculptor Ram Sutar, best known for designing the Statue of Unity, has been honored with the Maharashtra Bhushan award.
- Jay Shah, chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), has been honoured with the prestigious Icon of Excellence award at the 14th edition of the Forbes India Leadership Awards (FILA 2025). This award recognises his exceptional contributions to cricket administration and his role in driving innovation and inclusivity in the sport.
- Punjab and Sind Bank received the 'Top Improvers' award in the EASE 6.0 Reforms Index for its advancements in digital transformation, customer-centric services, and financial inclusion.

SPORTS NEWS

India Masters win the inaugural IML title

- India Masters won the inaugural International Masters League (IML) 2025 by defeating West Indies Masters by six wickets at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium, New Raipur.
- Sachin Tendulkar led the India Masters and Brian Lara led the West Indies Masters.

Vidarbha clinch third Ranji Trophy title

- Vidarbha won their third Ranji title by defeating Kerala in the 2024-25 edition final of the Ranji trophy.
- Akshay Wadkar led the team Vidarbha.

Champions Trophy 2025

- India defeated Australia by four wickets to win the Champions Trophy 2025.
- India toppled the record by completing its highest-successful run chase against Australia in an ICC event, bettering the previous best chase of 261 in the 2011 World Cup quarter-final.
- The Captain, Rohit Sharma was named the Player of the match.
- This is the third time India has won the title with the earlier two being in 2002 and 2013.

Virat Kohli becomes the seventh Indian player to play 300 ODIs

- Virat Kohli has become the seventh Indian batter to represent India in 300 ODI games or more. Sachin

Tendulkar (463 games) is at the top, while the former Indian skipper MS Dhoni (347 games) is in second place.

- Also, Virat has become the fastest player to reach 14,000 ODI runs.

Sharath Kamal retires

- Padma Shri Achanta Sharath Kamal bid farewell to his international career after making a final appearance at the WTT Star Contender in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- He retired from an international career after a two-decade-long career in table tennis.
- He has won 13 medals at the Commonwealth Games, and two Asian Games medals, and made five Olympic appearances.

Women's Premier League 2025

- Mumbai Indians have clinched their second Women's Premier League title as they successfully defended a 150-run target against Delhi Capitals at the Brabourne cricket Stadium, Mumbai.
- In 2023, Mumbai beat Delhi Capitals in the final of the Women's Premier League to clinch the title in the inaugural season of the women's domestic league.
- Royal Challengers Bengaluru won the 2024 WPL by defeating Delhi Capitals.

Kabaddi World Cup 2025

- India won the Men's and Women's Kabaddi World Cup 2025 at Wolverhampton in England.

- The Men's team defeated England in the final match with a score of 44-41 and the Indian women's Team also defeated England with a dominating score of 57-34 in the finals.
- This was the second edition of the Kabaddi World Cup with the inaugural one held in Malaysia in 2019.

Khelo India Winter Games 2025

- The fifth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games 2025 (KIWG 2025) was conducted in two phases. It commenced in Leh, Ladakh and concluded in Jammu & Kashmir.
- Ice hockey and ice skating were held in Leh, Ladakh.
- Alpine Skiing, Nordic Skiing, Ski Mountaineering, and Snowboarding were held in Gulmarg.
- The Indian army won the maximum number of medals (18) with seven gold, five silver, and six bronze medals.
- Nayana Sri Talluri from Telangana created history by winning a hat-trick of gold medals in speed skating.

Khelo India Para Games (KIPG) 2025

- The second edition of KIPG was held across three venues in Delhi. The mascot of KIPG was 'Ujjwala', which is inspired by the house sparrow. The mascot represents resilience and determination, reflecting the spirit of para-athletes.
- It featured Para Archery, Para Athletics, Para Badminton, Para Table Tennis, Para Powerlifting, and Para Shooting.
- Haryana emerged as the top-performing state with 34 gold medals followed by Tamil Nadu (28 golds) and Uttar Pradesh (23 golds).

15th Hockey India Senior Women National Champion

- Jharkhand beat Haryana to win 15th Hockey India Women's National Championship at the Tau Devi Lal Complex in Panchkula, Haryana.
- Mizoram occupied the third spot after defeating Maharashtra.

Special Olympics World Winter Games 2025

- India won 33 medals at the Special Olympics World Winter Games 2025 with a medal tally of 8 gold, 18 silver, and 7 bronze medals.
- India recorded 10 medals each in Snowshoeing and Alpine Skiing, six medals came in Snowboarding. Short Track Speed Skating, Cross Country Skiing and Floorball brought the country four, two and one medals respectively.

News in Short

- Brandon Holt of the United States defeated Shintaro Mochizuki of Japan to claim the singles title at the KSLTA Tennis Stadium, Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- Japan has become the first nation to secure qualification for the 2026 FIFA World Cup after defeating Bahrain 2-0.
- BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla will join the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Board as an Executive Board Member.
- India finished at the top of the medals table at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2025, held in New Delhi, India. The Indian contingent secured a total of 134 medals, including 45 gold, 40 silver, and 49 bronze.
- Oscar Piastri won the Chinese Grand Prix, with McLaren securing a 1-2 finish.
- Bangladesh's seasoned wicketkeeper-batsman, Mushfiquur Rahim, has officially announced his retirement from One Day Internationals (ODIs) after the conclusion of Bangladesh's Champions Trophy campaign.
- Ajinkya Rahane became the first Indian player to lead three different teams in the Indian Premier League (IPL). He is leading Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in IPL 2025. Earlier, he served as captain of Rising Pune Supergiants and Rajasthan Royals.