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NATIONAL

INDIAN RAILWAYS LAUNCHES NEW REFORMS

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has launched **5 new reforms** under the 'Reform Express' initiative, aiming to **modernise Indian Railways across cargo, construction, and passenger services**. These measures bring the **total number of reforms approved for 2026 to 9**.

Reforms in **Salt Transportation** include the introduction of **specialised stainless steel containers with top-loading and hydraulic discharge systems** to prevent wagon corrosion and reduce handling losses. In **Automobile Transportation**, **flexible wagon designs and auto-carriers** tailored to specific route constraints are now permitted to increase rail share of vehicle logistics.

Improvements in **Quality of Construction** involve **7 major changes in Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) contracts**, such as a **2% fixed bid security** and a requirement for contractors to possess **20% experience in "similar nature of work"** to ensure specific rail expertise.

Revisions to **Ticket Cancellation and Refund Rules** adjust **cancellation windows to 72, 24, and 8 hours before departure** to align with earlier chart preparation. Passengers can now **cancel counter tickets at any station nationwide and receive automatic refunds for e-tickets**. The **Change of Train Boarding Point** reform allows passengers to **digitally alter their boarding station up to 30 minutes before departure from the train origin**.

NYAYA SETU AI CHATBOT LAUNCHED

The 'Nyaya Setu' AI Chatbot, accompanied by its **official mascot "Dishika"**, was unveiled at the **DISHA programme**, organised by the **Department of Justice** at Vigyan Bhawan. **Vice-President CP Radhakrishnan** and **Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Arjun Ram Meghwal** conducted the unveiling.

Nyaya Setu is a **voice-first, multimodal, and multilingual Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered legal assistant**. It aims to **democratise access to justice** by **helping citizens understand legal processes, rights, and subsequent steps through straightforward voice and text interactions across multiple Indian languages**.

The **Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD)** built and owns **Nyaya Setu as a turnkey AI implementation**. During the DISHA programme, **BHASHINI's Shrutlekh system** also facilitated **real-time transcription and multilingual translation** of the Vice-President's address and other sessions, enhancing accessibility and wider audience participation.

NASHA MukT BHARAT IN SCHOOLS

The **Secretary of the Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSL), Ministry of Education (MoE)**, and the **Home Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, have issued a **joint advisory to Chief Secretaries of all States and Union Territories (UTs)** for the **mission-mode implementation of the 'Nasha MukT Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) Action Plan' in schools**.

The **Nasha MukT Bharat Abhiyan** is a **national initiative** aimed at **creating a drug-free India**. **Key provisions of the NMBA** include **mandating the declaration of a 500m radius around schools as drug-free zones** and **requiring school heads or nodal teachers to report any violations to local authorities, including the police**.

PORT OF REFUGE

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) has operationalized **India's first Port of Refuge (PoR)** by designating two sites: **Dighi Port** on the **west coast** and **Gopalpur Port** on the **east coast**.

This initiative aims to **provide structured support for vessels in distress and strengthen maritime emergency infrastructure** along **India's 11,000 km coastline**. It is to be noted that the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** defines a **PoR as a designated location where ships seek shelter to stabilize conditions, protect life, and minimize environmental damage**.

SAMPANN AS PAAS FOR GOA, COCHIN PORT

The **Government of India (GoI)** has signed an agreement to provide its **System for Accounting and Management of Pension (SAMPANN)** as a **Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS)** to the **Goa government** and the **Cochin Port Authority (CPA)**.

This initiative marks an **expansion** of the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** flagship digital pension platform beyond its original use for **telecom pensioners**. **SAMPANN**, was **launched in 2018** and **developed by the DoT**, aims to **eliminate the need for pensioners to physically visit government offices by delivering services directly to their doorstep**.

PM E-DRIVE SCHEME EXTENDED

The **Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI)** has **extended the demand subsidy for electric two-wheelers (e-2Ws)** under the '**Prime Minister's Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme**' until **July 2026**. The **overall PM E-DRIVE scheme for e-2Ws and electric three-wheelers (e-3Ws)** will continue **until March 2028**, with a total allocation of **₹10,900 crore**.

Incentives are processed via the VAHAN (National Vehicle Registration) portal, offering ₹2,500 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) and capped at ₹5,000 per vehicle for models priced up to ₹1.5 lakh to reduce upfront costs. The scheme targets **24.79 lakh e-2Ws**. **As of January 2026, 22.12 lakh electric vehicles (EVs) have been sold.**

HYDROGEN TRAIN COMPLETES TRIALS

India's first hydrogen-powered trainset has successfully completed its **oscillation trials**. The **Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO)** conducted these trials to **assess the train's stability, safety, and performance at various speeds**. During the tests, the train covered a **20 km stretch between Jind and Lalit Khera in Haryana**, achieving a **maximum speed of 70 kmph**.

It is to be noted that the train, **developed at the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai**, is currently the **world's longest (10 coaches) and most powerful (2400 kW) hydrogen trainset** operating on a **broad-gauge platform**. Its **only emission from fuel cells is water vapour**, which supports **India's goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2070**.

A **dedicated green hydrogen production plant** has been set up at **Jind** to supply fuel through **water electrolysis**. Upon receiving final clearances, the train is expected to begin passenger operations on the **Jind-Sonipat route** by **late 2026**. This achievement places **India among an exclusive group of nations, including Germany, Sweden, Japan, and China**, that are **actively operating or testing hydrogen rail technology**.

FUNDS APPROVED FOR KANDLA PORT ROB

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has approved **₹132.51 crore** for a **Road Over Bridge (ROB)** at **Deendayal Port Authority** in **Kandla**. The ROB is being **constructed by Western Railway** at LC-235.

It is to be noted that the project is part of the **Sagarmala Programme** and the **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan**.

MEITY APPROVES ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING

The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** has **approved 29 proposals** under the **4th tranche of the Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)**. These **29 proposals** entail a **projected investment of ₹7,104 crore**, with an **anticipated production value of ₹84,515 crore**.

Cumulatively, a **total of 75 applications** have now been sanctioned under the **ECMS**, including the earlier approval of 46 applications worth **₹54,567 crore**. These **75 approved applications** represent **expected investments of ₹61,671 crore** and are projected to create **direct employment for 65,040 people**. The approvals encompass **16 products** with diverse cross-sectoral applications.

INDIA LEADS IN IRCC ISSUANCE

The **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** has announced that **India is the global leader** in issuing **Internationally Recognised Certificates of Compliance (IRCCs)** under the **Nagoya Protocol**.

As per data from the **Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) Clearing-House**, **India has issued 3,561 IRCCs**, accounting for **over 56%** of the **global total of 6,311 certificates issued worldwide**. It is to be noted that **only 34 countries**, out of **142 registered** on the **ABS Clearing-House**, have issued IRCCs to date.

CARGO HANDLING RECORD

According to the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)**, the **Major Ports**, operating under the MoPSW, have collectively handled **915.17 million tonnes (MT) of cargo** during the **FY26**. This performance **surpassed the annual target of 904 MT**, marking a **year-on-year growth of 7.06%**.

Deendayal Port Authority emerged as the **top performer**, handling **160.11 MT of cargo**. **Mormugao Port Authority** recorded the **highest growth rate at 15.91%**.

INNOVATION IN TELANGANA

The **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, under **NITI Aayog**, has launched the **ATL Sarthi and Mentor India Academy** in **Telangana**. The initiative aims to **foster innovation from the school level**. It will **provide structured mentorship and institutional support to 379 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs)**.

COMMUNICATION INFRA PROJECT

Indian Railways has sanctioned a **project to strengthen its communication infrastructure** in the **Ahmedabad and Ratlam Divisions of the Western Railway**. The project involves providing a **4x48 Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) Backbone** at a **cost of ₹398.36 crore**.

This initiative falls under the broader **“Provision of Kavach with communication backbone of Long Term Evolution (LTE) on balance routes of Indian Railways (Umbrella Work 2024–25)”**. The **overall sanctioned cost for this umbrella work is ₹27,693 crore** under **Works Programme 2024–25 (PH-33)**.

KAVACH AND SIGNALLING UPGRADES

Indian Railways has approved **₹1,364.45 crore** for the deployment of **Kavach** and the **modernization of signalling systems** across various zones.

The allocation includes **₹208.81 crore** for installing **Kavach Version 4.0** on **232 locomotives** in the **Southern Railway**, aiming to **strengthen train collision avoidance**. An upgrade of the **Optical Fibre Communication (OFC) backbone** is planned for over **3,200 route kilometres** in the **Northern Railway**, with an expenditure of **₹400.86 crore**, to **support reliable signalling**.

A **2x48 Fibre OFC network** will be established over **2,196 route kilometres** in the **North Central Railway**, costing **₹176.76 crore**, to **facilitate the rollout of Kavach**. **Electronic Interlocking** will be implemented at **49 stations** on **high-density routes** in the **South Central Railway**, with an outlay of **₹578.02 crore**, to **reduce manual intervention and enhance operational safety**.

GEM CROSSES RECORD GMV

The **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** has achieved a **cumulative Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) of ₹18.4 lakh crore** as of **April 6, 2026**. The platform recorded an **annual procurement exceeding ₹5 lakh crore in FY26**.

Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) executed **68% of the total orders**, contributing **47.1% (₹2.36 lakh crore)** to the annual GMV in **FY25–26**. **Women-led MSEs** received orders exceeding **₹28,000 crore**, registering a **28% growth**. **Procurement by States and Union Territories (UTs)** grew by **38.3%**. **Startups** contributed with orders exceeding **₹19,000 crore**, demonstrating a **36% growth**.

NOIDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

PM Narendra Modi has inaugurated Phase I of the **Noida International Airport (NIA)** at **Jewar, Uttar Pradesh**. The project was **developed at a cost of ₹11,200 crore** under the **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model**, in collaboration with **Zurich Airport International AG, Switzerland**.

Phase I of the NIA features a **single runway** with an annual passenger capacity of **12 million**.

NSO LAUNCHES ANNUAL SERVICES SURVEY

The **National Statistics Office (NSO)** under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** is set to launch the **inaugural Annual Survey of Incorporated Services Sector Enterprises (ASISSE)**. The survey will **commence from April 2026**, using the **FY25 as its reference period**, and will **cover all states and union territories across India**.

The **primary objective of ASISSE is to establish a comprehensive database for the nation's incorporated services sector**, with **over 1.21 lakh enterprises slated to be surveyed**. The survey will employ the **Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) database as its sampling framework**.

PM KUSUM SCHEME DEADLINE EXTENDED

The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** has **extended the timeline** for commissioning specific projects under the **PM Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM KUSUM) scheme**.

The **revised commissioning deadline is March 2027**, for projects where **Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) or Letters of Intent (LoIs) were signed or issued on or before December 31, 2025**. The **scheme's original target for completion was March 2026**.

The **PM KUSUM scheme, launched in 2019, aims to add 34,800 MW of solar capacity** with **central financial assistance of ₹34,422 crore**. Under its **funding pattern**, both the **Central and State Governments each provide a 30% subsidy**, with **farmers contributing the remaining 40%**, which can be **financed through bank loans**.

DIGITAL INITIATIVES UNDER MISSION KARMAYOGI

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh has **launched several digital and strategic initiatives** under the **Mission Karmayogi initiative**. The launches were made during a **special session of the 'Sadhana Saptah' at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi**.

One key initiative is the **Unified New-Age National Training Institutions (UNNATI) Portal**. The **UNNATI Portal** serves as the **digital backbone for India civil service training ecosystem**. It includes **AI-assisted self-assessment and automated document analysis** to reduce administrative burdens during accreditation.

He also **unveiled a comprehensive Roadmap** for the **National Rollout of the Karmayogi Kartavya Karyakram**. This aims to **scale training frameworks across all levels of government**.

Additionally, the **Capacity Building Commission (CBC)** signed an **MoU with the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)** to **foster international collaboration through policy dialogues and practitioner exchanges**. In a **first-of-its-kind initiative**, the Minister also **launched a dedicated program to equip scientists and academicians with administrative skills**.

INDIA SDG DASHBOARD

The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**, in partnership with the **United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO)**, has developed the **India Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Dashboard**.

This dashboard serves as a **centralized data platform to monitor the progress of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators**. Its development is in line with **India's SDGs-National Indicator Framework (NIF)**.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP FOR PTC SAHARANPUR

Union Minister Jyotiraditya M Scindia has released a **commemorative postage stamp worth ₹5** at **Akashwani Bhawan, New Delhi**. The stamp marks the **Platinum Jubilee (75 years)** of the **Postal Training Centre (PTC), Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh**.

The **PTC, established in 1951, contributed to capacity building by introducing a structured training framework, replacing informal systems, and strengthening India's postal network**.

NATIONAL PNG DRIVE 2.0 EXTENDED

The **central government** has **extended the National Piped Natural Gas (PNG) Drive 2.0 by three months**, pushing the deadline to **June 2026**. The drive was **initially set to conclude in March 2026**.

It is a **critical component of India's long-term strategy to increase the share of natural gas in its primary energy mix from 6% to 15%**. The drive also aims to **connect an additional 37 geographical areas and 44 districts** that previously lacked access to the national gas pipeline network.

TASK FORCE FOR AGRI SECURITY

The **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** has established a **high-level Special Task Force (STF)** to **proactively address emerging global challenges and formulate mitigating strategies for the agricultural sector**. The STF aims to ensure **national food and input security**.

The **framework outlined by the STF includes the intensification of 'Mera Gaon Mera Gaurav' (MGMG), optimizing soil health and fertilizer use, diversification and domain mapping, technological and mechanical interventions, and governance and monitoring**.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR):**Director – Dr. Mangi Lal Jat****Headquarters – New Delhi****Established in – 1929****EARTH HOUR AWARENESS**

The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**, in collaboration with the **World Wide Fund for Nature-India (WWF-India)**, has organised awareness and outreach activities in **Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh**.

These initiatives commemorate **20 years of Earth Hour** and were conducted under the **nationwide call to “Give an Hour for Earth”**. The activities were part of the **Environmental Information, Awareness, Capacity Building & Livelihood Programme (EIACP)** and saw participation from MoEFCC officials.

HYDRO PROJECTS IN ARUNACHAL

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** has approved **two Hydro Electric Projects (HEPs)** in **Arunachal Pradesh**.

The **Kamala HEP**, located in **Kamle, Kra Daadi, and Kurung Kumey Districts**, has been approved with an investment of **₹26,069.5 crore**. It will have an installed capacity of **1720 MW (comprising 8 units of 210 MW and 1 unit of 40 MW)** and is expected to generate **6870 MU annually**. The project is **estimated to be completed in 96 months (8 years)**.

The **Kalai-II HEP**, situated on the **Lohit river in Anjaw District**, has been approved with an investment of **₹14,105.8 crore**. This project will have an installed capacity of **1200 MW (consisting of 6 units of 190 MW and 1 unit of 60 MW)** and is **projected to generate 4852.95 MU of energy annually**. The **estimated completion period** for the Kalai-II HEP is **78 months (6.5 years)**.

PM MODI IN GUJARAT

PM Narendra Modi has visited **Gujarat** and inaugurated and laid foundation stones for development projects worth over **₹20,000 crore**. He inaugurated the **Kaynes Semicon OSAT (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test) facility** in **Sanand GIDC**, built at a cost of **₹3,300 crore**. It is **India’s second semiconductor plant to commence commercial production, following Micron**.

On the occasion of **Mahavir Jayanti**, PM Modi inaugurated the **Samrat Samprati Museum** at **Koba Tirth**. The museum features **7 galleries** showcasing **over 2,000 rare Jain artifacts**. Among the infrastructure initiatives, the **Ahmedabad-Dholera Expressway**, costing over **₹5,100 crore**, was inaugurated.

DOT EXTENDS SIM-BINDING DEADLINE

The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** has **extended the deadline** for implementing the **SIM-binding mandate to December 31, 2026**. This extension comes after **significant industry pushback regarding technical challenges**, especially deep system-level integration within iOS and Android ecosystems.

The DoT has also **revised several strict requirements** from its **original November 2025 directive**, including **removing the mandate for web and desktop versions to automatically log out every 6 hours**.

FERTILIZER SUBSIDY FOR KHARIF 2026

The **Union Cabinet** has approved the **Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS)** rates for **Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers** for the **Kharif Season 2026**, which runs from **April to September 2026**.

The **tentative budgetary requirement for Kharif Season 2026** is **₹41,533.81 crore**. This marks an **increase of ₹4,317 crore** compared to the **₹37,216.15 crore allocated for Kharif Season 2025**. It is to be noted that the government makes **28 grades of P&K fertilizers, including Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP)**, available to farmers at **subsidized prices** through manufacturers and importers.

NEW TV RATING POLICY NOTIFIED

The **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB)** has notified the **‘Television (TV) Rating Policy (TRP 2026)’**, replacing the existing **2014 guidelines for audience measurement in India**.

Under TRP 2026, **viewership originating from landing pages will be excluded from measurement**. The policy mandates that **at least 50% of a TV rating agency board must consist of independent directors**, with **no affiliations to broadcasters or advertisers**, and **prohibits consultancy roles** to prevent conflicts of interest.

The MIB has also **reduced the minimum net worth requirement** for companies seeking to register as TV rating agencies **from ₹20 crore to ₹5 crore**. TV rating agencies are now required to **scale up their operations to 80,000 metered homes within 18 months (6 months for existing agencies)**, with a **long-term goal of 1.2 lakh homes**.

NCERT GETS DEEMED UNIVERSITY STATUS

The **Ministry of Education (MoE)** has granted the **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** the status of a **'Deemed-to-be-University'** under the **'Distinct Category'**. **Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan** made this announcement during the **63rd Foundation Day celebrations** of the NCERT in **New Delhi**.

KARMAYOGI SADHANA SAPTAH LAUNCHED

PM Narendra Modi has virtually launched the **'Karmayogi Sadhana Saptah 2026'**, a **national learning week initiative** under **Mission Karmayogi**. The launch event, which marked **Mission Karmayogi's five-year milestone**, was held at the **Dr. Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC)** in **New Delhi**.

The **'Karmayogi Sadhana Saptah'**, organised by the **Capacity Building Commission (CBC)**, is recognised as **one of India's largest collaborative civil services capacity-building efforts**. The programme is structured around **three core pillars: Technology, Tradition, and Tangible Outcomes**.

BHOPAL RPO LAUNCHES ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

The **Regional Passport Office (RPO) in Bhopal** has become the **first in India** to implement **Braille and sign language services** to enhance accessibility for differently-abled applicants. The initiative aims to bridge communication gaps through tactile and digital resources, including **Braille booklets and signage** for visually impaired individuals.

For speech and hearing-impaired applicants, the RPO provides **sign language videos and Quick Response (QR) code integration**. A dedicated **Grievance Redressal Cell** has also been established to resolve complaints of applicants within a **24-hour timeframe**.

COMMEMORATION OF BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

The **Government of India** has launched a **nationwide two-year commemoration** to mark the **200th birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule**, spanning from **11 April 2026 to 11 April 2028**.

The initiative, approved by the **National Implementation Committee (NIC)**, was inaugurated at the **Dr Ambedkar International Centre** in New Delhi. The commemoration is guided by a **126-member High-Level Committee (HLC)** chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**.

ISO ACCREDITATION FOR CARI BENGALURU

The **Clinical Laboratory** at the **Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI), Bengaluru**, has been awarded the **ISO 15189:2022 accreditation** for its **Biochemistry and Haematology departments**. It is the **first institute** under the **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)** to achieve this distinction.

The laboratory has **transitioned from an entry-level National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL)-certified facility to a fully accredited centre of excellence**.

ANRF PROGRESS REVIEWED

Union Minister Jitendra Singh has reviewed the progress and roadmap of the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)**. The ANRF is developing an **AI-based platform** named **'SARAL AI'** to **convert complex research publications into simplified content across various Indian languages**.

The ANRF will launch **'MAHA' Leapfrog Demonstrators**, a **mission-mode program** designed to **deliver the impact of science for societal innovation**. It has also deployed **Nodal Officers** in **250 institutions** to facilitate research and promote mission-driven innovation.

WEATHER AND SEISMIC FACILITIES

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Dr Jitendra Singh has announced the establishment of a **Seismological Observatory** in **Kishtwar** and a **Doppler Weather Radar (DWR)** in **Doda, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)**.

The **DWR** will facilitate **precise, real-time weather monitoring** to enhance **early warning and disaster management** under the '**Mission Mausam**' initiative. The **Seismological Observatory** will strengthen the **national seismic monitoring network of India** for better **earthquake detection and disaster risk mitigation** in the region.

CAMPAIGN FOR SKILLS OUTCOMES FUND

Union Minister Jayant Chaudhary has launched a campaign to establish the **Skills Outcomes Fund (SOF)** with an outlay of **₹530 crore**. The SOF is designed as a scalable model for **outcomes-based financing (OBF)** to link vocational training with sustainable job placement.

It utilizes a **blended finance model**, combining resources from the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** with capital from private and philanthropic partners. The **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** is the **nodal implementing agency** for the project.

The campaign builds on the success of the **Skill Impact Bond** launched in **2021**, which trained over **34,000 youth (74% of whom were women)** and achieved a **76% job placement rate** with a 62% retention rate.

NEW NATIONAL REPOSITORIES

The **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)** has designated **two more institutions** as **national repositories** under **Section 39 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (BD Act)**. The initiative aims to enhance the conservation and systematic documentation of biological resources.

The new repositories include the **Referral Centre Bhavasagara** at the **Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE)** in **Kochi (Kerala)** and the **MACS Collection of Microorganisms and National Fungal Culture Collection** at the **Agharkar Research Institute (ARI)** in **Pune (Maharashtra)**. With the additions, the **total count** of the national network of repositories has increased to **20**.

ECONOMIC CORRIDOR INAUGURATED

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the **213-km-long Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor**, built at a cost of **over ₹12,000 crore**. The six-lane access-controlled highway connects **Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand**, reducing travel time between Delhi and Dehradun from over 6 hours to **2.5 hours**.

The project features the **longest elevated wildlife corridor in Asia**, spanning **12 km** through the **Rajaji National Park**. The corridor ensures the unhindered movement of wildlife, including elephants and leopards.

APPROVALS FOR RAJASTHAN PROJECTS

The **Union Cabinet** has approved **Phase-2** of the **Jaipur Metro Project**, which involves the development of a **41 km** long corridor connecting **Prahladpura to Todi Mod** at an estimated cost of **₹13,037.66 crore**.

The Cabinet has also authorized the **revised cost** for the **HPCL Rajasthan Refinery Ltd (HRRL)** project. The total outlay of the project has been increased from **₹43,129 crore** to **₹79,459 crore**.

PROPOSAL TO INCREASE LOK SABHA STRENGTH

The central government has introduced '**The Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill, 2026**' to **increase the maximum strength of the Lok Sabha** from 543 to **850 seats**. The move aims to facilitate the immediate implementation of the '**Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam**' (**Women's Reservation Act**) by reserving **one-third of the house**, totaling **283 seats**, for women in the **2029 general elections**.

The expansion is designed to accommodate the reservation for women **without reducing the existing number of general category seats**. Under the proposed revision, the 850 seats will be distributed with **815 seats for States** and **35 seats for Union Territories (UTs)**.

AROGYA VAN INITIATIVE

The **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** has launched the '**Arogya Van**' (**health forest**) initiative to establish thematic corridors of **medicinal tree plantations** along the **National Highways**. The project aims to **enhance biodiversity** and promote **traditional medicine systems like Ayurveda** while **conserving indigenous medicinal flora**.

In the first phase, the project covers **17 land parcels** spanning **62.8 hectares**. It involves the planting of **67.46 thousand medicinal trees** belonging to **36 distinct species**.

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI):

Chairman – Santosh Kumar Yadav

Headquarters – New Delhi

Established in – 1988

TWO NEW AIRPORTS FOR TELANGANA

The **Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)** has approved the development of **two new airports** in **Telangana** at **Warangal (Mamnoon)** and **Adilabad**.

Following a high-level meeting in New Delhi, **Union Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu** announced that the **Warangal (Mamnoon) airport project** is estimated to cost **₹850 crore**. The foundation stone for the facility is expected to be laid in **June 2026**.

FIRST WATER NEUTRAL DEPOT

The **Kankaria Coaching Depot** in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**, has achieved the distinction of being the **first water-neutral coaching depot of India**. The facility conserves **1.60 lakh litres** of water daily through the **systematic treatment and reuse of wastewater**, effectively minimizing its dependence on freshwater supplies.

Water purification at the depot is facilitated by the **phytoremediation** technique integrated with an **advanced multi-stage purification system**. This initiative promotes environmental protection and the **“Greener Railways” objective** by implementing sustainable and eco-friendly water management practices.

INDIA-NORWAY TRADE DIALOGUE

The **3rd session** of the **India-Norway Dialogue on Trade and Investment (DTI)** was held in **New Delhi**. The meeting was co-chaired by **Mohit Yadav**, Joint Secretary of the **Department of Commerce** under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI)**, and **Nina Christine Ror**, the counterpart from Norway.

AI GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC GROUP FORMED

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has been appointed to lead the newly established **AI Governance and Economic Group (AIGEG)**. The high-level **inter-ministerial body** will **steer the national AI governance strategy** and coordinate policy across various ministries, departments, and sectoral regulators.

It is to be noted that the **AIGEG** is tasked with **overseeing cross-sectoral governance issues** and **classifying AI use cases** into categories such as **“deploy”, “pilot”, and “defer”**. The classification will be determined by **readiness factors** including data availability, technical skills, legal frameworks, and the capacity for labour adjustment.

INDIAAI MISSION PICKS 10 AI STARTUPS

The **IndiaAI Mission**, under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, has selected **10 Indian AI startups** for the **second cohort** of the **“IndiaAI Startups Global Acceleration Programme”**.

The programme is an international initiative launched in partnership with France-based **Station F** and **HEC Paris** to **support the global expansion of Indian enterprises**. It aims to provide the selected startups with resources, expertise, and strategic connections to **scale internationally**. The startups selected for this cohort include **AI Health Highway India Pvt Ltd, Awiros, Cognecto, and Flaunt**.

CABINET APPROVES RAILWAY PROJECTS

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** has approved **two multi-tracking projects** of the **Ministry of Railways (MoR)** with a total estimated cost of **₹24,815 crore**. The projects aim to expand the network of Indian Railways by **601 km**, covering a total track length of **1,317 km**.

The expansion will span across **15 districts in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh**. The infrastructure development is scheduled for completion by the **FY31**.

DA AND DR HIKE

The **Union Cabinet** has approved an additional installment of **Dearness Allowance (DA)** for **central government employees** and **Dearness Relief (DR)** for **pensioners**, effective from **January 2026**. The increment represents a **2% increase** over the **existing rate of 58%** of the basic pay or pension.

The move aims to provide **compensation against price escalation**. The total financial impact on the exchequer due to the increase in DA and DR is estimated at **₹6,791.24 crore** per annum.

EXTENSION OF PMGSY-III SCHEME

The **Union Cabinet** has approved the continuation of the **PM Gram Sadak Yojana-III (PMGSY-III)** from **March 2025 until March 2028**. The scheme focuses on the **consolidation of Through Routes and Major Rural Links** to connect habitations with **Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools, and Hospitals**.

The financial outlay for the PMGSY-III has been revised to **₹83,977 crore** from the original allocation of ₹80,250 crore. The timeline for completing roads and bridges in plain areas, as well as roads in hilly regions, is extended to **March 2028**, while the deadline for bridges in hilly areas is extended to **March 2029**.

The government has also authorized the sanctioning of **161 Long Span Bridges (LSBs)**, worth **₹961 crore**, located on the alignments of previously sanctioned roads.

CONSTITUTION IN SINDHI LANGUAGE

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan has released the updated edition of the **Constitution of India** in the **Sindhi language** on **April 10, 2026**, to mark the **Sindhi Language Day (Sindhi Bhasha Diwas)**. The publication was released at **Uparashtrapati Bhawan** in New Delhi in two versions: **Devanagari Script** and **Persian Script**.

The initiative was executed by the **Legislative Department** under the **Ministry of Law and Justice (MoL&J)** in accordance with **Articles 343, 345, and 350B** of the Constitution. It is to be noted that **Sindhi** was included in the **Eighth Schedule** of the Constitution of India via the **21st Constitutional Amendment Act, 1967**.

CHIP FABRICATION PLANT

The **Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I)** has notified the establishment of the **first semiconductor fabrication plant** in India as a **Special Economic Zone (SEZ)** in **Dholera, Gujarat**.

The project is developed by **Tata Semiconductor Manufacturing Pvt Ltd (TSMPL)**, a subsidiary of the Tata Group, with a total investment of **₹91,000 crore**. The SEZ, spanning **66.166 hectares (ha)**, aims to **strengthen the domestic semiconductor ecosystem** and the national import substitution strategy.

BRICS HEALTH WORKING GROUP MEETING

The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)** has hosted the **inaugural BRICS Health Working Group (HWG) meeting** virtually in **New Delhi**. The session was held under the theme **"Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability"**.

The meeting was chaired by **Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava** and saw participation from delegates representing **9 nations: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, UAE, and Indonesia**. During the event, India proposed the **"BRICS Mission for Healthy Lifestyles"** as a key priority to improve public health outcomes among the member states.

INDIA-BHUTAN JGC MEETING

The **7th Joint Group of Customs (JGC)** meeting between **India and Bhutan** was held in **Munnar, Keralam**. The session was co-chaired by **Yogendra Garg**, Special Secretary and Member (Customs) of the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**, and his Bhutanese counterpart **Sonam Jamtsho**.

India is the **largest trading partner of Bhutan**, accounting for **80%** of the total trade volume of Bhutan. Bilateral trade between the two nations reached over **\$1.9 billion** in **FY25**, showing a **growth of more than 46%** compared to FY24.

AI EXPERT COMMITTEE

The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** has constituted the **Technology and Policy Expert Committee (TPEC)** to serve as an advisory arm to the newly established AI Governance and Economic Group (AIGEG) in New Delhi.

S Krishnan, the Secretary of MeitY, has been appointed as the **chairperson of the committee**. The TPEC aims to translate complex technological concepts into practical policy insights and strengthen the participation of India in various global forums for AI governance.

PM MODI IN KARNATAKA

PM Narendra Modi has inaugurated the **Sri Guru Bhairavaikya Mandira** at **Sri Kshetra Adichunchanagiri** in **Mandya, Karnataka**. During the visit, he was honoured with a **Mysuru Peta**, a traditional headgear crafted from Mysuru and Benaras silk and decorated with pearls and pendants, which was historically worn by the former King of Mysuru, **Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar**.

PM Modi and **former PM HD Deve Gowda** have released the publication titled '**Saundarya Lahari and Shiva Mahimna Stotram**' in Mandya, popularly known as the "**Sugar City**". He also highlighted a "**nine-point, citizen-driven development agenda**" to facilitate the goals of "**Viksit Karnataka**" and "**Viksit Bharat**".

MHA RECEIVES PRAJNA IMAGING SYSTEM

The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has received '**Prajna**', an **indigenously developed satellite imaging system** designed to provide **real-time decision support** for security agencies.

The system, an **AI-enabled platform**, was developed by the **Centre for AI and Robotics (CAIR)**, a laboratory under the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**. It utilizes advanced imaging to enhance the technical and operational capabilities of security forces.

GUIDELINES FOR URBAN CHALLENGE FUND

Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has launched the operational guidelines for the **Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)** and the **Credit Repayment Guarantee Sub-Scheme (CRGSS)** in New Delhi. The UCF will be implemented from **FY26 to FY31**, with a possible extension until FY34.

The central government has allocated **₹1 lakh crore** as **Central Assistance** for the UCF to attract a total urban investment of **₹4 lakh crore**. Central Assistance is capped at **25%** of the total project cost, while at least **50%** must be sourced from **market-based sources** like municipal bonds, bank loans, and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs).

Of the total outlay, **₹90,000 crore** is for **project funding** and **₹5,000 crore** is for **capacity building**. The **CRGSS**, which has an allocation of **₹5,000 crore**, provides **credit guarantees to assist smaller cities** in accessing finance from market-based sources.

INDIA-EGYPT JOINT DEFENCE MEETING

The **11th meeting of the India-Egypt Joint Defence Committee (JDC)** was held in **Cairo, Egypt**, to **strengthen bilateral defence cooperation**. The Indian delegation was led by **Amitabh Prasad**, the **Joint Secretary (International Cooperation)**.

Both nations reviewed the progress since the previous JDC and formulated a **roadmap for future engagement**. They also finalized and agreed upon a **bilateral defence cooperation plan for the period 2026-27**.

VISHWA SUTRA LAUNCHED

The **Ministry of Textiles (MoT)** has launched a designer collection titled '**Vishwa Sutra - Weaves of India for the World**' during the **61st Femina Miss India 2026** held in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.

The initiative features **30 traditional weaves** from various states of India, adapted with inspirations from **30 different countries** to showcase international aesthetics.

The collection included pairings such as **Odisha Ikat with Greek forms, Kanchipuram silk with Norwegian styles, Muga silk with Egyptian aesthetics**, and **Patola with Spanish influences**. It also showcased **Banarasi weaves with UAE designs**. The winner of Miss India, **Sadhvi Satish Sail**, wore the **Kunbi weave** during the event.

PROJECT FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** and the **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)** have launched a **5-year initiative** titled "**Strengthening Institutional Capacities for Securing Biodiversity Conservation Commitments**".

The project is a joint collaboration between the Government of India (GoI), **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, and **UN Development Programme (UNDP)**. The initiative is supported by a **\$4.88 million grant** for the **2025-2030 period** and targets two landscapes: the **Sathyamangalam landscape** in **Tamil Nadu** and the **Garo Hills** in **Meghalaya**.

The **Sathyamangalam landscape**, situated at the confluence of the Western and Eastern Ghats, includes the **Mudumalai Tiger Reserve** and **Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve**. In Meghalaya, the project covers the **Nokrek Biosphere Reserve, Balpakram National Park**, and **Siju Wildlife Sanctuary** within the Garo Hills.

AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR VISITS INDIA

Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker has visited India at the invitation of PM Narendra Modi to strengthen bilateral relations. He held discussions with PM Modi in **New Delhi** on regional, global, and multilateral issues. He also met President Droupadi Murmu and Union Minister S Jaishankar.

The **17th session** of the **India-Austria Joint Economic Commission (IAJEC)** was held in New Delhi to discuss **economic cooperation**. During the **India-Austria Business Forum** held in New Delhi, a bilateral **Fast-Track Mechanism (FTM)** was signed and operationalized to **facilitate investments** between the two nations. The visit concluded with the signing of **multiple agreements** to strengthen ties across various sectors.

NEW RAMSAR SITE

Union Minister Bhupender Yadav has announced that the **Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary** in **Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh (UP)**, is designated as a **Ramsar site**. This takes the **total number of Ramsar sites in India to 99**.

With this addition, **UP** now has **12 Ramsar sites**, the **second-highest** in the country. It is to be noted that **Tamil Nadu** holds the **highest number** of Ramsar sites in India with **20 designated wetlands** (as of **February 2026**).

THIRD EDITION OF VAANI

The **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)**, under the **Ministry of Education (MoE)**, has launched the **third edition** of the '**Vibrant Advocacy for Advancement and Nurturing of Indian Languages**' (**VAANI**) scheme in New Delhi.

Inaugurated by **AICTE Chairman Yogesh Singh**, the scheme aims to **foster technical education in indigenous languages**. The scheme, which spans the **2026-27 period**, has an annual outlay of **₹4 crore** to support events in **22 Indian languages** listed under the **Eighth Schedule of the Constitution**.

100 GW NUCLEAR POWER BY 2047

The **Central Electricity Authority (CEA)** has announced a target to increase the **nuclear power capacity** of India from the current **8.8 Gigawatt (GW)** to **100 GW by 2047**.

The announcement was made during the inaugural session of "**India's 100 GW Nuclear Power Roadmap**" held in **New Delhi**. Achieving this target will require an estimated investment of at least **₹20 lakh crore**, based on a baseline cost of **₹22 crore per Megawatt (MW)**.

NHA CONCLUDES CHINTAN SHIVIR

The **National Health Authority (NHA)** has concluded the "**Chintan Shivir 2026**" to review the **Ayushman Bharat PM Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)** and the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** to enhance digital healthcare.

During the event, the NHA presented **18 awards under AB PM-JAY** and **5 awards under ABDM** to recognize the performance of States and Union Territories (UTs). Key winners for digital adoption under the mission included **Ladakh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, AIIMS Bhopal, and Tripura**.

The event highlighted the **National Health Claims Exchange (NHCX)** as a **unified and standardized health claims ecosystem**. A framework designed by the **World Bank**, named the "**ABDM Adoption Index**", was also introduced to track the progress of states. Furthermore, a new regulatory requirement for mandatory integration of the **Hospital Management Information System (HMIS)** was established to connect hospital systems with the ABDM.

NEW GUIDELINES FOR TDIP SCHEME

Union Minister Jyotiraditya M Scindia has released the revised guidelines for the **Technology Development and Investment Promotion (TDIP) Scheme** of the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** in **New Delhi**.

The scheme, with a total financial outlay of **₹203 crore** for the period of **2026-31**, aims to **bolster the participation of India in global telecommunications standards**. The initiative also focuses on **accelerating innovation in Fifth Generation (5G) Advanced and Sixth Generation (6G) technologies**.

REVISED CLIMATE TARGETS TO UN

India has submitted its **third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** for the **2031-2035 period** to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**. It is to be noted that the **previous NDCs were submitted in 2015 (pertaining to 2025) and 2022 (pertaining to 2030)**.

The revised climate targets commit to a **minimum 47% reduction** in the **emission intensity of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** from the **2005 baseline** by **2035**. India also aims to achieve **60% cumulative electric power installed capacity** from **non-fossil fuel-based energy resources** by **2035**.

Additionally, the government has pledged to create an **additional carbon sink of 3.5 to 4 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent** through **expanded forest and tree cover** by **2035**, compared to the **2005 baseline levels**.

EXPANSION OF PM INTERNSHIP SCHEME

The **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)**, in consultation with the **Department of Higher Education (DoHE)** under the **Ministry of Education (MoE)**, has expanded the eligibility criteria for the pilot phase of the '**Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS)**' to include **final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students**.

The **age limit** for PMIS is revised to **18-25 years** (from the previous 21-24 years), while maintaining all other conditions. The Government of India (GoI) has increased the **monthly stipend to ₹9,000** for the **one-year internship**, with **90% of the funding provided by the government**. Additionally, interns will receive **financial assistance of ₹6,000**, disbursed in two installments.

BHARAT TAXI APP LAUNCHED

Union Minister Piyush Goyal has launched "**Bharat Taxi**", the **first cooperative-led ride-hailing platform of India**, in **Mumbai**. The initiative aims to **increase the earnings and welfare** of auto-rickshaw and cab drivers by offering **zero commission** and **no subscription charges**.

The platform provides a **free insurance cover** of **₹5 lakh** and access to loans from the **Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA)**. It was established by **8 national-level cooperative institutions** in 2025 and was officially launched in 2026. It currently facilitates more than **25,000 rides per day**.

LOGO AND THEME FOR IAFS-IV LAUNCHED

Union Minister S Jaishankar has launched the logo, theme, and website for the **4th India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-IV)**. The summit, which is scheduled to be held in **New Delhi**, is being organised in collaboration with the **African Union Commission (AUC)**.

The theme of the summit is "**IA SPIRIT: India-Africa Strategic Partnership for Innovation, Resilience, and Inclusive Transformation**."

INDIA-KENYA JTC MEETING

The **10th session** of the **India-Kenya Joint Trade Committee (JTC)** was held in **Nairobi, Kenya**, to **review and strengthen bilateral trade**. The meeting was co-chaired by **Rajesh Agrawal**, Commerce Secretary, and the Kenyan counterpart **Regina Akotah Ombam**.

Bilateral trade between the countries reached **\$4.31 billion** in **2025-26**, which is a **24.91% increase** from **\$3.45 billion** in **2024-25**. The JTC also reviewed the MoU between the **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** and the **Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS)** to facilitate smoother trade.

NATIONWIDE CONTESTS

Akashvani (All India Radio, AIR), operating under **Prasar Bharati (PB)**, has partnered with the **National Portal of India (MyGov)** to launch two nationwide contests to celebrate the **90-year legacy** of AIR.

The contests include the '**Signature Tune-Making Contest**' and the '**Jingle-Making Contest**', held under the themes "**Akashvani @90 - The New Rhythm of Bharat**" and "**Akashvani @90 - The Vibrant Voice of India**" respectively.

MINISTRY OF CULTURE LAUNCHES VM FRAMES

The **Ministry of Culture (MoC)** has launched '**VM Frames**', a **national filmmaking competition** to encourage the youth to celebrate the heritage of India. The initiative is organised to mark the **150th anniversary** of the national song "**Vande Mataram**", which was written by **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay** in **1875**.

The competition features three categories: **Reels, AI-based films, and Short Films**. The MoC has announced awards worth up to **₹50 lakh** across the various categories of the competition.

ESZ PROPOSED

The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** has proposed to notify an **Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)** of **408.7 sq km** around the **Barasingha Wildlife Sanctuary** (formerly **Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary**) in **Uttar Pradesh**.

The ESZ will act as a “**shock absorber**” to reduce the impact of external activities on the ecosystem. A **Monitoring Committee** will be set up to oversee the management of the area, and a **Zonal Master Plan** is mandated to be formulated within **2 years**.

BATTERY UNIT IN J&K

Eveready Industries India Ltd. has commissioned a **greenfield facility** in the **SIDCO Industrial Complex** at Bari Brahmana in the **Samba district of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K)**. The unit was inaugurated by the **Lieutenant Governor of J&K Manoj Sinha**.

It is the **first and only operational facility in India** dedicated to the **production of alkaline batteries**. The project was developed with an investment of **₹200 crore** (\$21.64 million) and has an **annual installed capacity** of **456 million batteries**.

ECONOMY

OECD LOWERS GDP FORECAST

According to the ‘**Interim Economic Outlook**’ report titled “**Testing Resilience**” released by the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, **India’s GDP growth forecast for FY27** is **lowered to 6.1%** from its **previous estimate of 6.2%**.

The OECD projects **India’s GDP growth** at **7.6% for FY26** and expects it to stabilise at **6.4% in FY28**. The report also projects **India’s retail inflation** to **increase from 2% in FY26 to 5.1% in FY27**.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

Secretary-General – Mathias Cormann

Headquarters – Paris, France

Established in – 1961

RETAIL INFLATION TARGET MAINTAINED

The **Government of India (GoI)** has decided to **maintain the retail inflation target at 4%**, with a **+/- 2% tolerance band (2%-6%)**, for the **five-year period from April 2026, to March 2031**.

This decision confirms the **continuation of the Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT) framework**, which uses the **headline Consumer Price Index (CPI)** with a **2024 base year**. The **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** is mandated to report to the government if average inflation remains outside the 2%-6% range for **three consecutive quarters**.

INTEREST RATES UNCHANGED

The **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA-Budget Division)** under the **Ministry of Finance (MoF)** has **maintained unchanged interest rates** across **all Small Savings Schemes (SSS)** for the **first quarter of Financial Year 2026-27 (Q1 FY27)**, spanning from **April to June 2026**.

The **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY)** and **Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS)** offer an interest rate of **8.2%**. The **National Savings Certificate (NSC)** offers **7.7%**, while the **Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP)** provides **7.5%**. The **Public Provident Fund (PPF)** yields an interest rate of **7.1%**.

NATURAL GAS DERIVATIVE CONTRACTS

The **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** and the **Indian Gas Exchange (IGX)** have partnered to launch **India’s first domestically benchmarked natural gas derivative contracts**.

This initiative aims to allow **Indian market participants to hedge against price volatility** using a ‘**Made in India**’ price signal, **reducing reliance on international benchmarks such as Henry Hub (US) or TTF (Europe)**. The **SEBI** has **approved the launch** of these **Indian Natural Gas Futures**.

National Stock Exchange (NSE):

Chairman – Srinivas Injeti

MD & CEO – Ashishkumar Chauhan

Headquarters – Mumbai

Established in – 1992

GDP FORECAST BY MOODY’S

According to the latest “**Credit Opinion Report on India**” released by **Moody’s Ratings**, an American rating agency, the **GDP growth forecast for India for FY27** is **lowered by 80 basis points to 6%**, from its **earlier estimate of 6.8%**.

ADB UPGRADES INDIA GDP OUTLOOK

According to the “**Asian Development Outlook**” report released by the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** in **April 2026**, **India’s economic growth** is projected at **6.9%** for **FY27**, with an expected increase to **7.3%** in **FY28**.

FORECAST BY MORGAN STANLEY

According to a report by **Morgan Stanley**, **India's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast** for **FY27** has been revised to **6.2%** from the earlier **6.5%**.

The firm has also increased its **Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation forecast** to **5.1%**, from the previous estimate of **4%**.

STARTUP INDIA FOF 2.0

The Government of India has notified the "**Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0**" (Startup India FoF 2.0) with a total corpus of **₹10,000 crore** to mobilise venture and growth capital for the domestic startup ecosystem.

This initiative is the successor to the "**Fund of Funds for Startups**" (FFS 1.0) launched in **2016** under the "**Startup India Action Plan**" to address funding gaps and catalyse domestic capital. The Startup India FoF 2.0 will facilitate commitments to eligible **Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs)** across the **16th and 17th Finance Commission cycles**.

GDP FORECAST BY IMF

According to a report by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, the **Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of India** for **FY27** is **revised to 6.5%** from the **6.4% growth rate** estimated in the **January outlook**.

International Monetary Fund (IMF):

MD – Kristalina Georgieva

Headquarters – Washington DC, USA

Established in – 1944

Members – 190

WPI INFLATION RISES IN MARCH

According to data released by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, the **Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation** increased to **3.88%** in **March 2026** from **2.13%** in **February 2026**.

GDP FORECAST

According to the report "**South Asia Economic (SAE) Economic Update April, 2026: Working with Industrial Policy**" released by the **World Bank (WB)**, the **GDP growth of India** for **FY27** is revised upwards to **6.6%** from the earlier projection of **6.3%**.

TOP TRADING PARTNER

According to the **government data**, **China** has emerged as the **largest trading partner of India** for **FY26**, with total bilateral trade reaching **\$151.1 billion**. The country has replaced the **USA**, which served as the **primary trading partner of India for four consecutive years** until FY25.

The **trade deficit** between India and China widened to **\$112.16 billion**. During this period, the **exports of India to China** increased by **36.66%** to **\$19.47 billion**, while **imports from China** grew by **16%** to **\$131.63 billion**.

BHARAT MARITIME INSURANCE POOL

The **Union Cabinet** has approved the establishment of the **Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMI pool)** to provide **continuous maritime insurance coverage** for **Indian vessels**. The initiative is backed by a **sovereign guarantee of ₹12,980 crore** to provide financial security and ensure insurance availability for the pool.

The BMI pool is intended to **reduce dependency on external insurance** and **mitigate risks from global volatility and geopolitical instability** in the maritime sector of India.

REPORT BY IMF

According to the April 2026 "**World Economic Outlook**" (**WEO**) report titled "Global Economy in the Shadow of War" released by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, **India is ranked 6th** in the **global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rankings**.

The **GDP of India** is projected to grow from **\$3.5 trillion in 2024** to **\$3.92 trillion in 2025**, and it is estimated to reach **\$6.17 trillion by 2030**. In the global rankings, the **USA** is expected to lead with a GDP of **\$39 trillion**, followed by **China at \$27.5 trillion** and **Germany at \$5 trillion**.

International Monetary Fund (IMF):

MD – Kristalina Georgieva

Headquarters – Washington DC, USA

Established in – 1944

Members – 190

GDP FORECAST BY SBI RESEARCH

According to a report by the **State Bank of India (SBI)**, the **GDP growth of India** for **FY26** is estimated at **7.6%** and for **FY27** it is projected to range between **6.8–7.1%**.

The report also estimated India's **average inflation** at **4.5%** and the **fiscal deficit** between **4.5-4.6%**.

GUIDELINES FOR STARTUP INDIA FUND OF FUNDS 2.0

The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** has issued operational guidelines for the **"Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0" (FoF 2.0)** to streamline capital flow into the national startup ecosystem. The scheme operates with a **corpus of ₹10,000 crore**.

Under the scheme, capital will be allocated through commitments to **Category I and II Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs)** registered with the **SEBI**. These AIFs are required to invest in **startups recognized by the DPIIT**. The **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** will serve as the **initial Implementation Agency** to oversee the selection and monitoring of the participating AIFs.

EGYPT AND JORDAN IN RELIEF SCHEME

The **Government of India (GoI)** has **expanded the scope** of the **"Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation" (RELIEF) scheme** under the **Export Promotion Mission (EPM)** by including **Egypt and Jordan** as eligible destinations.

The initiative aims to **assist exporters of India in mitigating logistics disruptions and escalating costs** resulting from the prevailing **geopolitical situation in West Asia**.

BANKING

NHB LAUNCHES GRUH SUGAM PORTAL

The **National Housing Bank (NHB)** has launched the **Gruh Sugam Portal**, a **dedicated digital platform**. The portal aims to **streamline home loan access for government and security personnel**, including **Defence personnel, Paramilitary forces, and both State and Central Government employees**.

This initiative is designed to **accelerate digital lending adoption** and strengthen the **'Housing for All' mission** through **affordable and sustainable finance**.

RBI PENALIZES BANKS FOR LAPSES

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has imposed **monetary penalties totaling over ₹2.2 crore** on **various entities** for **regulatory lapses**. **Union Bank of India** was penalized **₹95.4 lakh**, **Central Bank of India** received a fine of **₹63.6 lakh**, **Bank of India** was penalized **₹58.5 lakh**, and **Pine Labs** was fined **₹3.1 lakh**.

RBI EXTENDS CME FRAMEWORK

The **RBI** has **extended the implementation deadline** for its revised **Capital Market Exposure (CME) framework** by **three months**, moving it to **July 01, 2026**, from the **originally scheduled April 01, 2026**.

Under the **new regulations**, **limits on loans against eligible securities** will be **applied across the banking system**. These limits **restrict loans against eligible securities to ₹1 crore per individual**. A **separate limit of ₹25 lakh** applies to **Initial Public Offering (IPO)-related loans, Follow-on-Public Offer (FPOs), and Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) subscriptions**.

PAYMENT VISION 2028

The **RBI** has unveiled its **'Payment Vision 2028'** document, titled **'Shaping India's Payment Frontier'**. This **document outlines a roadmap to strengthen and expand India's rapidly growing digital payments ecosystem**.

The 2028 vision document focuses on **user empowerment, safeguards against fraud, efficiency of cross-border payment frameworks, and promoting ease of doing business**. It comprises **15 specific initiatives** and **charts a roadmap for the next three years**, extending its scope up to **December 2028**. It is to be noted that the RBI has been **periodically preparing Payments Vision documents since 2001**.

IRDAI MANDATES IND AS FOR INSURERS

The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has approved the **IRDAI (Actuarial, Finance and Investment Functions of Insurers) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026**, during its **135th Authority Meeting**.

These amendments **mandate insurers to prepare and present their financial statements in accordance with Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS), effective from April 2026 for all categories of insurers.** It also **permits parallel reporting for 2 years** (under both Ind AS and the existing accounting framework).

IRDAI has also constituted a joint expert group on Ind AS, **chaired by its Whole Time Member (WTM) (Finance and Investment) Rajay Kumar Sinha.** The expert group will be in force **for 2 years** from its constitution date.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI):

Chairman – Ajay Seth

Headquarters – Hyderabad, Telangana

Established in – 1999

BOB LAUNCHES BOB SAMVAD

Bank of Baroda (BoB) has unveiled “**bob SAMVAD**”, an **industry-first AI-powered multilingual conversational platform**, in Mumbai.

The platform aims to **transform customer interactions at its branches by eliminating language barriers and enabling seamless communication between customers and branch staff in their preferred language.**

IRDAI RETAINS D-SII STATUS

The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has designated **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), The New India Assurance Company Limited (NIACL), and General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re)** as **Domestic-Systemically Important Insurers (D-SIIs)** for FY26. IRDAI confirmed that the list of D-SIIs remains unchanged from the previous financial year.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI):

Chairman – Ajay Seth

Headquarters – Hyderabad, Telangana

Established in – 1999

RBI APPROVES STAKE IN RBL BANK

RBI has approved **Emirates NBD Bank PJSC** to **acquire up to a 74% stake** in **RBL Bank**. The acquisition, **valued at ₹26,853 crore**, was **initially announced in October 2025** and will be **effective from April 2026**.

RBI ANNOUNCES STATE BORROWING CALENDAR

The **RBI** has released the **indicative calendar for state market borrowings** for the **first quarter of FY27 (April-June)**, projecting a **total fundraise of ₹2.54 lakh crore**. This planned borrowing, conducted through **State Development Loans (SDLs)**, is **lower than market expectations (₹2.75-3 trillion)** and the **₹2.73 trillion target** for the same period last year.

Nine states (**Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh**) will participate as a **pilot group**, collectively raising **₹1.53 lakh crore** under the **new Bank for International Settlements (BIS) framework**. The **remaining states and Union Territories** will raise **₹1.01 lakh crore** through **traditional methods**.

DATA ON CASA DEPOSITS

According to a report by the **RBI**, the **share of Current Account and Savings Account (CASA) deposits in total bank deposits declined to a 2-year low of 37.9%** in the **December 2025 quarter**, compared to **40.1% in December 2023**.

It is to be noted that the **CASA ratio represents the proportion of low-cost deposits (current and savings accounts) within a bank's total deposits**. This decline was primarily driven by **savings accounts, whose share decreased by 210 basis points to 28.9%**.

Overall bank deposits registered a 10% Year-on-Year (YoY) growth, reaching ₹239.8 lakh crore, with **savings deposits increasing by 8% to ₹69.4 lakh crore** and **current account deposits growing by 10% to ₹21.4 lakh crore**. **Certificates of Deposit (CD) issuances by banks reached a record of ₹15.5 lakh crore in FY26**, marking a **17% Year-on-Year (YoY) increase**.

RBI CANCELS BANK LICENSE

RBI has **cancelled the licence** of **Maharashtra-based Shirpur Merchants' Co-operative Bank Ltd**, citing **inadequate capital and poor earning prospects**.

The cancellation was executed under **Section 22 read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation (BR) Act, 1949**. As per the **RBI**, the **co-operative bank will cease all banking activities** from the close of business on **April 06, 2026**.

NEW ULIP BY CANARA HSBC

Canara HSBC Life Insurance Company Ltd (Canara HSBC Life Insurance) has launched a **next-generation Unit Linked Insurance Plan (ULIP)** named “**Promise4Wealth**” to facilitate **long-term wealth creation** and provide life insurance protection.

The plan provides access to various fund options, including a passive fund linked to the **Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) 500 Enhanced Value 50 Index**.

RBI MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE

The **60th and 1st bi-monthly Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting** of the **RBI** for **FY27** was held recently. The committee decided to maintain the **repo rate** at **5.25%** under the **Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF)** and retained a ‘**Neutral**’ policy stance.

The **Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate** is kept at **5%**, while the **Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate** and the **Bank Rate** remain unchanged at **5.5%**.

The **MPC** has revised **India’s real GDP growth forecast** for **FY27** downwards by **50 basis points (bps)** to **6.9%**, from the previous estimate of 7.4%. The **Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation** is projected at **4.6%** for **FY27**, which is within the target band, and **core inflation** is estimated at **4.4%** for the current fiscal year.

DBS BANK LAUNCHES DBS ASPIRE

DBS Bank India has launched “**DBS Aspire**”, a **relationship-led banking proposition** for the **emerging affluent segment** in the country.

This segment consists of **upwardly mobile, well-travelled, and digitally savvy individuals** who have moved beyond mass-market banking but have not yet reached high-net-worth status.

BAJAJ ALTS GETS SEBI APPROVAL

Bajaj Alternate Investment Management (Bajaj Alts), the **alternative investment arm of Bajaj Finserv**, has received approval from the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** to launch **Portfolio Management Services (PMS)**.

This licence allows the firm to expand its operations beyond its existing **Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)** business into the **actively managed listed equities space**.

PNB SIGNS MOU WITH GEM

Punjab National Bank (PNB) has signed an **MoU** with the **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** to **enhance credit availability** for **sellers registered on the platform**.

GeM (Government e-Marketplace):

Under – Ministry of Commerce and Industry

CEO – Mihir Kumar

Established in – 2016

SMART SAVE ACCOUNT

CSB Bank Ltd, one of the oldest private sector banks in India, has launched its **first dedicated retail savings product** named “**SMART SAVE ACCOUNT**”.

The move aims to **strengthen the liquidity** of the bank and **expand the retail banking portfolio** of CSB through automated and customer-centric solutions.

PPFAS APPROVED AS NPS SPONSOR

The **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** has approved **PPFAS Asset Management Company (AMC)** to act as a **sponsor for a pension fund** under the **National Pension System (NPS)**.

PPFAS AMC, a subsidiary of Parag Parikh Financial Advisory Services Limited, will set up a separate pension fund company to invest in **Equities (EQ)**, **Government Securities (G-Secs)**, and **Corporate Bonds (CBs)**. Currently, there are **10 AMCs** authorized to function as fund managers under the **NPS** framework.

It is to be noted that the NPS was **launched in 2004** for government employees and was **extended to all citizens in 2009**, allowing individuals to choose and switch between various fund managers.

IRDAI TO REVIEW HEALTH INSURANCE

The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has formed a **sub-committee of the Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC)** to **examine the current state of private health insurance** in India.

The initiative aims to **improve consumer experience** and **increase the reach** of health insurance by building trust among policyholders. The sub-committee is tasked with reviewing critical parameters, providing advice, and overseeing **digital transformation**.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI):

Chairman – Ajay Seth

Headquarters – Hyderabad, Telangana

Established in – 1999

AXIS BANK JOINS BANKING CONNECT

NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd (NBBL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, has onboarded **Axis Bank** onto the “**Banking Connect**” platform.

With this, the platform is now available across **8 major banks**, including State Bank of India, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank. The platform also integrates **11 Payment Aggregators (PAs)** to facilitate streamlined digital payment services.

NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd (NBBL):

CEO – Noopur Chaturvedi

Headquarters – Mumbai

Established in – 2013

RELIEF FOR IPO AND MPS NORMS

The **SEBI** has introduced a **two-pronged, one-time relief measure** for companies to ease **IPO validity timelines** and **Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) compliance requirements**.

The measure extends the validity of “**SEBI Observation Letters**” (IPO approvals) that expire between **April and September 2026** until **September 2026**. SEBI also granted a **one-time relaxation** for listed companies to meet the **25% MPS threshold** if their deadlines fall within the same period of **April to September 2026**.

SEBI LAUNCHES NEW IT PLATFORMS

SEBI has launched three new **Information Technology (IT) platforms**: “**Single Universal Platform for Communications**” (**SUPCOMS**) **2.1**, the “**e-adjudication portal**”, and “**Cyber-Sec Audit Compliance**” (**C-SAC**).

The **SUPCOMS 2.1** platform serves as a **centralized digital interface** that replaces traditional email-based communication for all interactions with external entities. The “**e-Adjudication Portal**” provides a transparent and paperless platform for **quasi-judicial proceedings** to increase efficiency and speed. It is to be noted that **C-SAC** is an **AI based platform** that enables **automated analysis of cyber audit reports** to identify compliance gaps and provide risk insights.

CREDIT CARD BY HDFC BANK

Visa has partnered with **HDFC Bank Ltd** to launch a **limited edition digital credit card** named “**FIFA World Cup 2026 Pixel Credit Card**”, themed after the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup 2026.

A nationwide spending-linked rewards campaign titled “**Spend & Win**” was also inaugurated at a launch event in **Mumbai**.

HDFC Bank Ltd:

MD & CEO – Sashidhar Jagdishan

Headquarters – Mumbai

Established in – 1994

Tagline – We Understand Your World

NEW WITHDRAWALS BY PAYTM

Paytm has introduced **biometric authentication for UPI** and **cardless Automated Teller Machine (ATM) withdrawals** to enhance security. These features align with the **RBI guidelines for two-factor authentication (2FA)**.

Biometric payments are capped at **₹5,000 per transaction** as per the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** guidelines. The **cardless withdrawal feature** allows users to withdraw cash from ATMs without a physical card, with a maximum limit of **₹10,000 per transaction**.

Paytm:

Parent – One97 Communications Ltd

CEO – Vijay Shekhar Sharma

Headquarters – Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Established in – 2010

AMENDED RBI GUIDELINES FOR NBFCs

The **RBI** has issued the “**RBI (Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFC) - Branch Authorisation) Amendment Directions, 2026**” to enhance operational flexibility for NBFCs while ensuring regulatory oversight. The rules have come into force with **immediate effect**.

All applications must be submitted through the **Platform for Regulatory Application, Validation And Authorisation (PRAVAAH) portal**. Under the revised norms, **deposit-taking NBFCs** with **Net Owned Funds (NOF) up to ₹50 crore** or lower credit ratings are permitted to **open branches only within the state of their registered office**.

UTKARSH 2029

The **RBI** has unveiled its **medium-term strategy framework** named “**Utkarsh 2029**”, which will be implemented from **April 2026 to March 2029**. The strategy aims to consolidate the position of the RBI as a world-class, full-service central bank by outlining **49 deliverables across six strategic pillars**.

The six pillars of the framework include robust regulations, customer centricity and inclusive finance, competitive markets, effective technology, a future-ready organisation, and global integration. The framework introduces “**Project Sa-Mudra**” to **modernise currency management** and envisions the expansion of **Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)** for efficient **cross-border payments**.

The RBI also intends to scale up the **Unified Lending Interface (ULI)** to enhance credit access for underserved segments of the economy. Additionally, the strategy includes the development of an **indigenous AI tool** based on a purpose-built **Large Language Model (LLM)** for internal operations.

SHRIRAM FINANCE GETS RBI NOD

Shriram Overseas Investments Ltd, a **wholly owned subsidiary** of **Shriram Finance Ltd**, has received **in-principle approval** from the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to start **Primary Dealer (PD) business**. The authorization is subject to the fulfillment of specific conditions set by the RBI.

Shriram Finance Ltd:

CEO – YS Chakravarti

Headquarters – Chennai

Established in – 1979

SEBI RELAXES NORMS FOR SOCIAL STOCK EXCHANGE

The **SEBI** has eased regulations for the **Social Stock Exchange (SSE)** to assist **Not-for-Profit Organizations (NPOs)** in their fundraising and operations.

The **registration validity for NPOs** on the SSE has been increased from **2 years to 3 years**, enabling them to maintain their status for a longer duration without the requirement of raising funds. Furthermore, SEBI has lowered the **minimum subscription limit** for **Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP)** instruments from **75% to 50%** to offer NPOs more flexibility in securing capital.

BANKS AUTHORIZED FOR IMPORTS

The **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)**, under the **Department of Commerce (DoC)** of the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoC&I)**, has updated the list of **banks authorized to import precious metals**. The new authorization is effective from **April 2026, to March 2029**.

A total of **15 banks** are permitted to import **both gold and silver**, including **Indian Overseas Bank, Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, RBL Bank, SBI, Axis Bank, Federal Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd, Karur Vysya Bank Ltd, Yes Bank, Deutsche Bank, and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd**. Furthermore, **Union Bank of India** and **SBER Bank** (a Russian state-publicly listed company) are **authorized to import gold only**.

DIGITAL INITIATIVES BY LIC

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has launched **two digital initiatives** named ‘**LIC’s Customer Application (MyLIC)**’ for **policyholders** and ‘**Super Sales Saathi**’ for **sales intermediaries**.

The platforms were introduced at an **event in Mumbai** to **enhance the digital experience** for customers and **streamline operations** for sales personnel.

RAZORPAY PARTNERS WITH GOOGLE PAY

Razorpay has integrated with **Google Pay** to **facilitate international payments** for Indian businesses. It is the **first domestic Payment Aggregator (PA)** to offer a **card-based wallet experience for cross-border transactions** through the platform.

RBI ON CURRENCY EXCHANGE

The **RBI** has issued a consolidated **Master Direction on the Facility for Exchange of Notes and Coins**, effective from **April 2026**. **All bank branches** are mandated to provide **free exchange services** for **soiled, mutilated, or imperfect notes and coins**.

Small quantities of up to **20 pieces or a total value of ₹5,000** daily are to be exchanged instantly, while larger volumes are accepted against a receipt. For bulk transactions, credit is provided within **7 days for soiled notes** and up to **30 days for mutilated notes**. **Non-compliance or refusal** to provide services will result in **penalties between ₹1,000 and ₹10,000**.

KARNATAKA BANK PARTNERS WITH PINE LABS

Karnataka Bank Ltd (KBL) has partnered with **Pine Labs Limited**, a provider of **Point-of-Sale (PoS) solutions**, to strengthen the **digital payment ecosystem** of the bank across India. The collaboration aims to offer **advanced PoS payment services** for seamless and secure transactions.

SBI GROWTH TARGETS FOR 2030

State Bank of India (SBI) has set a target to **expand its balance-sheet to 25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** of India by **2030**, up from the **current 20%**. As of December 2025, the total balance-sheet of SBI was recorded at **₹71.62 lakh crore**.

The bank also aims to **increase its market share by 1%** across each of the **800 districts** in the country during the **FY27**.

PAY POINT INDIA GETS RBI MEMBERSHIP

Pay Point India Network has become the **first private-sector fintech company** to join the **Centralised Payment System (CPS)** operated by the **RBI**.

CHEQ AU CREDIT CARD LAUNCHED

CheQ, a **credit management platform**, has partnered with **AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB)** to launch the **"CheQ AU Credit Card"**, which is the **first co-branded Light-Emitting Diode (LED)-powered credit card in India**.

The card is designed to simplify payments and maximize rewards through a **unified rewards ecosystem** and **advanced tap-to-pay features**.

AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB):

Executive Director – Uttam Tibrewal

Headquarters – Jaipur

Established in – 1996

PLI ONBOARDED ON BHARAT CONNECT

NPCI Bharat Bill Pay Ltd (NBBL), a **wholly-owned subsidiary** of the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, has onboarded **Postal Life Insurance (PLI)** as a biller under the insurance category on the **Bharat Connect** platform.

PLI is managed by **India Post**, and **SBI** served as the **Biller Operating Unit (BOU)** to facilitate the onboarding. With the addition of PLI, the **total number of insurance billers** on the Bharat Connect platform has reached **65**.

PNB PARTNERS WITH KIWI

Punjab National Bank (PNB) has partnered with the **fintech firm Kiwi** to launch a **co-branded RuPay credit card** named **"PNB Kiwi Credit Card"** **integrated with the UPI**.

The initiative aims to **expand digital credit access** and strengthen the digital payments ecosystem in India.

AGREEMENTS

NCB SIGNS MOU WITH DTU

The **National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCB)** has signed an **MoU** with **Delhi Technological University (DTU)** to **promote joint research and innovation in cement and concrete technologies**.

The collaboration will also provide **training opportunities for students, professionals, and stakeholders**, and **facilitate knowledge exchange between academia and industry**.

JICA SIGNS ODA LOAN AGREEMENTS WITH INDIA

The **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** has signed **four Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan agreements** with the **Government of India**, totaling **₹16,420 crore (JPY 275.858 billion)**.

These loans aim to **boost urban mobility, healthcare, and sustainable agriculture** in **Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Punjab**.

COCHIN CHAMBER SIGNS MOU FOR TRADE

The **Cochin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI)** has signed an MoU with the **Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI)** to **enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation between Latvia and India**. The CCCI is the **second Chamber of Commerce in India, and the first in South India, to partner with the LCCI**.

It is to be noted that the CCCI, **established in 1857**, is the **oldest Chamber of Commerce in Kerala and one of the oldest in India**. The CCCI is also **one of the five promoter chambers of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)**.

INDIA EU AVIATION AGREEMENT

India has signed a **working arrangement** with the **European Union (EU)** for **cooperation in industrial aviation production**. The arrangement aims to **strengthen bilateral cooperation in the manufacturing sector and ensure alignment with global safety standards**.

The signing took place in **New Delhi**, ahead of a regional aviation workshop held under the **EU-South Asia Aviation Partnership Project**.

DOP PARTNERS WITH TRIFED

The **Department of Posts (DoP)** has signed an MoU with the **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)** to **establish a robust and cost-effective nationwide logistics backbone to enhance the e-commerce of indigenous products**.

The MoU is **initially valid for two years**, with provisions for periodic review and potential extension.

PACT FOR SHIPBUILDING SKILL

The **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)** has signed a **Plan of Implementation** with the **Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)** for a project on **skill development in the Indian shipbuilding sector**.

The project, titled **'Support the Establishment of Development Strategies and to Build a Foundation for Skilled and Professional Talents for the Indian Shipbuilding and Marine Sector'**, aligns with the ambitious goals of the **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047**.

UIDAI PARTNERS WITH MAPMYINDIA

The **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** has signed an agreement with **MapmyIndia** to enable the display of **authorised Aadhaar centres** on the latter's **Mappis App**.

The initiative aims to **enhance convenience for residents** by helping them **identify and access authorised Aadhaar centres**. Residents can also identify centres based on the nature of services offered, such as **adult enrolment, child enrolment, or only address and mobile updates**.

SCAP SIGNS MOU WITH CSIR-NISCP

The **Science City of Andhra Pradesh (SCAP)** under the **Department of Infrastructure and Investment (DII)** of the **Andhra Pradesh Government** has signed an **MoU** with the **New Delhi-based Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR)**.

The MoU aims to **bolster science communication, promote research collaboration, and support evidence-based policymaking in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)**.

AI SKILL CENTER

Microsoft has signed an **MoU** with **Chandigarh University** in **Punjab** to establish an **AI Skill Center** at its **Mohali campus** to **enhance digital skills and employability**.

Microsoft:

Founders – Bill Gates and Paul Allen

Chairman & CEO – Satya Nadella

Headquarters – Washington, USA

Established in – 1975

COAL-TO-AMMONIUM NITRATE PROJECT

Bharat Coal Gasification and Chemicals Ltd (BCGCL) has signed a **land lease agreement** with **Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL)** for **India's first indigenous coal-to-ammonium nitrate project**. The facility will be set up at **Lakhanpur in the Jharsuguda district of Odisha**, using **homegrown technology to reduce reliance on foreign systems**.

The project, which will span **350 acres** of coal-bearing land under MCL's possession, is designed to produce **2,000 tonnes per day (TPD) of ammonium nitrate**. The **estimated investment** for the project is **₹25,000 crore**. It is to be noted that the **BCGCL** is a **joint venture** between **Coal India Ltd (CIL) (51%)** and **Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) (49%)**.

NSIL PARTNERS WITH DHRUVA SPACE

NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL), the commercial arm of the **ISRO**, has signed an **MoU** with **Dhruva Space Pvt Ltd** to **collaborate in the design, manufacture, testing, and supply of solar panels** for global satellite manufacturers.

NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL):

CMD – M Mohan

Headquarters – Bengaluru

Established in – 2019

FIU-INDIA SIGNS MOU WITH I4C

The **Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND)** has signed an **MoU** with the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** to establish a **collaborative framework** for **combating cyber fraud and financial crimes**.

The partnership also focuses on implementing measures for **asset recovery** to reduce the economic impact of cyber-enabled financial crimes.

DOORDARSHAN AND ICCR SIGN MOU

Doordarshan (Prasar Bharati) has signed an **MoU** with the **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)** to enhance the **global reach of Indian cultural content** and strengthen the **cultural diplomacy** of India.

The partnership focuses on the multi-platform dissemination of cultural programming, with a strategic emphasis on **digital expansion and international outreach**.

NCVET SIGNS AGREEMENTS

The **National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET)** has signed agreements with **four institutions**, recognizing them as "**Dual Category Awarding Bodies**".

These institutions are **Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University (BAOU)** in Gujarat, the **Council of Architecture (CoA)**, **Max Healthcare**, and the **Haryana Knowledge Corporation Ltd (HKCL)**. As **Dual Category Awarding Bodies**, these entities are authorized to **impart training, conduct assessments, and award certifications** aligned with the **National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF)**.

DCIL SIGNS MOU WITH COLOMBO DOCKYARD

The **Dredging Corporation of India Ltd (DCIL)** has signed an **MoU** with **Colombo Dockyard PLC (CDPLC)** in **Colombo** to **enhance maritime capabilities in South Asia**.

Under the agreement, the latter will serve as a **maintenance hub** for the fleet of the former. This leverages the proximity to the southern and eastern ports of India to **reduce turnaround times and operational costs**.

AGREEMENT FOR BE-JTO PROJECT

The **Technology Development Board (TDB)** has signed an agreement with the **Gurugram-based Casey Aviation Pvt Ltd** for the "**Boost Electric Jump Take-Off (BE-JTO)**" project. The TDB has sanctioned a **conditional grant** for this project under the "**India-UK Collaborative Research & Development (R&D) Programme for Industrial Sustainability**", in partnership with the **UK-based ARC Aerosystems Ltd**.

The project aims to develop an **advanced hybrid propulsion-based Jump Take-Off (JTO) system** to enhance the operational capabilities of **unmanned and light aircraft platforms**. Additionally, the initiative aims to establish **one of the first propulsion testing facilities in North India**.

MOUS FOR EMPLOYMENT

The **Ministry of Labour & Employment** has signed MoUs with **Porter** and **Gigin Technologies** to **strengthen employment linkages** through the **National Career Service (NCS) portal**.

Under the partnership, the former aims to generate over **30 lakh logistics and driving opportunities by 2030**. The latter will facilitate **2-3 lakh verified job opportunities annually** and over **1.5 lakh employer engagements** via the NCS platform.

NTPC SIGNS MOU WITH EDF

National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) has signed a **non-binding MoU** with the **France-based Electricite de France (EDF)** to **collaborate on developing new nuclear power projects in India**.

This partnership marks a strategic shift for NTPC, the **largest thermal power producer in India**, to diversify its energy portfolio. The company aims to achieve a **nuclear capacity of 30 GW by 2047**.

National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC):

CMD – Gurdeep Singh

Headquarters – New Delhi

Established in – 1975

MOU TO TACKLE FRAUD

The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** has signed an **MoU** with the **SEBI** to enhance cooperation in addressing the **misuse of telecom resources** in **securities market frauds** and **investment-related scams**.

GE AEROSPACE AND HAL ENGINE AGREEMENT

USA-based GE Aerospace and the **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)** have finalized a **technical agreement** for the **co-production of F414 engines**. The deal has been under development for **3 years**.

The engines will power the **next-generation fighter aircraft** of India, as the country intends to procure **120-130 such jets**. These aircraft are planned to **replace the existing fleet of Russian-made aircraft** currently in service.

AGREEMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT PIONEER GRANT

The **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER)** in **Mohali** has signed a grant agreement with **Novartis Healthcare Pvt Ltd (NHPL)** to implement the **“Development Pioneer Grant”**.

The initiative aims to strengthen **industry-academia synergy** by providing financial backing for research-oriented projects. It will also support faculty research and enhance innovation and **Research and Development (R&D)** capabilities at the institute.

HUDCO AND NBCC SIGN MOUS

The **Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO)** and **NBCC (India) Limited**, both under the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**, have signed two MoUs for **urban redevelopment and asset monetisation** in **Delhi**. The agreements are valid for a period of **2 years**.

FIU-IND SIGNS MOU WITH PFRDA

The **Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND)** has signed an **MoU** with the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** to enhance **information sharing and inter-agency coordination**.

The partnership aims to conduct **joint outreach and training programmes** for regulated entities to upgrade their **Anti-Money Laundering (AML)** and **Combating Financing of Terrorism (CFT)** capabilities within the jurisdiction of the PFRDA.

FIU-IND AND SEBI SIGN MOU

The **Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND)** has signed a comprehensive **MoU** with the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** to **bolster information exchange and mutual coordination**. The agreement facilitates the **sharing of intelligence** from their respective databases to enhance regulatory oversight.

Additionally, the MoU establishes **standardized procedures for reporting** by regulated and reporting entities to the FIU-IND, in accordance with the provisions of the **Prevention of Money Laundering (PML) Rules**.

AIKAM SIGNS MOU WITH DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

Aikam, the AI innovation hub of **Telangana**, has signed an MoU with the **Australia-based Deakin University** to advance **applied AI, research, and technical skilling** in the state. The collaboration aims to develop **ethical and scalable AI solutions** by combining the research expertise of the university with the infrastructure of Telangana.

Under the partnership, the **first AI-focused skill-development center in India**, titled “Aikam-Deakin Hub for Research in Intelligent Technology & Innovation” (Aikam-DHRITI), will be established at the **Bharat Future City** near **Hyderabad**.

MOU TO DIGITIZE LOGISTICS

NICDC Logistics Data Services Ltd (NLDSL) has signed an MoU with the **Government of Maharashtra** to **digitize the logistics landscape** of the state.

The collaboration leverages the **Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP)** to **enhance visibility and streamline logistics operations**. The initiative aims to foster coordination among various state departments and support decision-making through **real-time data insights**.

INDIA AND MYANMAR SIGN MOU FOR SCHOOL

India has signed an MoU with **Myanmar** to implement a **Small Development Project (SDP)** for the **construction of a school** in **Nay Pyi Taw**.

The initiative is categorized as a **social sector SDP**, designed to bolster the **socio-economic development** of Myanmar and fulfill local educational needs.

BECIL SIGNS MOU WITH C-DAC

The **Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Ltd (BECIL)** has signed an **MoU** with the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)** to collaborate in the fields of **advanced technologies, digital transformation, and capacity building**.

The partnership focuses on **joint project implementation, consultancy, and technical support**, including the development of solutions in **emerging technologies**.

DOP AND PMML SIGN MOU

The **Department of Posts (DoP)** has signed an MoU with the **Prime Ministers' Museum and Library (PMML)** to **promote the democratic history of India through philately and cultural outreach**.

The agreement was signed at the **PM Sangrahalaya** on its **4th Foundation Day**. Under the partnership, both organizations will organize joint exhibitions and establish a **permanent co-branded postal outlet** within the museum premises.

AP GOVERNMENT SIGNS MOU WITH NRSC

The **Government of Andhra Pradesh** has signed an **MoU** with the **National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC)**, a constituent unit of the **ISRO**, to strengthen **lightning forecasting and early warning systems**.

The partnership also aims to enhance the overall **disaster preparedness and management framework** of the state.

MOU FOR INDO-TAIWAN INDUSTRIAL PARK

The **Gujarat government** has signed an MoU with **Allegiance International Company Ltd** to establish an **Indo-Taiwan Industrial Park** in the **Sanand-Dholera region**.

The proposed industrial park will focus on high-technology sectors like **semiconductors, electronics manufacturing, Electric Vehicles (EVs), robotics**, and related supply chain infrastructure.

MOU UNDER PM VIKAS SCHEME

The **Ministry of Minority Affairs** has signed an **MoU** with the **IIT Patna** under the **PM Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS) scheme**. The initiative aims to **enhance the employability and placement opportunities of minority youth** through modern, technology-driven skilling interventions.

VINGROUP SIGNS MOU WITH MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT

The **Maharashtra** government has signed an MoU with the **Vietnam-based Vingroup** to explore **strategic investments across multiple sectors** in the state.

The proposed investment is worth **\$6.5 billion (₹54,000 crore)** and will be executed over a period of **2 years**.

C-DOT PARTNERS WITH JUMPS AUTOMATION

The **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)** has signed an MoU with **Jumps Automation LLP** under the **C-DOT Collaborative Research Programme (CCRP)** to develop a **gamification platform for cybersecurity awareness**.

The initiative aims to **enhance the cybersecurity preparedness of individuals and enterprises** through an interactive digital environment.

MOU FOR LAND MANAGEMENT

The **Space Applications Centre (SAC)** of the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has signed an MoU with the **Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)** to enhance **sustainable land management practices** in India.

The project involves **mapping 3.2 lakh sq. km** of land, which constitutes nearly **10% of the total geographical area** of India. It is to be noted that the initiative is a significant step towards the goal of India to achieve **Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)** by **2030**.

MOU WITH CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Herbalife India, a subsidiary of **Herbalife Ltd (HLF)**, has signed an MoU with the **IIT Madras** to establish the **first Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Plant Cell Fermentation Technology** in India. The CoE will be located at the **IIT Madras Research Park** in **Chennai**.

PCI AND IFI LAUNCH PARA ELAN

The **Paralympic Committee of India (PCI)** has partnered with the **French Institute in India (IFI)** to launch a **3-year initiative** named "**Para Elan**" to **promote inclusive education and empower youth through para-sports**.

The program aims to reach **10,000 students** through activities such as **awareness campaigns, specialized workshops, interactions with athletes, and adaptive sports engagements**.

MINISTRY OF MSME SIGNS MOU WITH NLDSL

The **Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME)** has signed an MoU with **NICDC Logistics Data Services Ltd (NLDSL)** to **enhance logistics efficiency** and facilitate **data-driven policymaking** for the **MSME sector**.

NLDSL is the **digital and data division** of the **National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC)**.

IPC SIGNS MOUS TO PROMOTE DRUG QUALITY

The **Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC)** has signed MoUs with the **Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI)** and the **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Hajipur** to **enhance drug quality and patient safety**.

DATAKAVERI PARTNERS WITH ONESTRUCTION INC.

DataKaveri Systems, the commercial arm of the **Centre of Data for Public Good (CDPG)** of the **IISc Bengaluru**, has signed an MoU with the **Japan-based ONESTRUCTION Inc** to integrate **construction data into AI-ready urban data exchange systems** across Indian and Japanese cities.

The collaboration involves connecting the **openIBM platform** of the latter with the **Intelligent Universal Data Exchange (IUDX)** of the former. It is to be noted that the IUDX platform is currently operational in **55 smart cities** in India.

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS SIGNS MOU WITH DTDC

The **Department of Posts (DoP)** has signed an MoU with **DTDC Express Ltd (DTDC)** to enhance the **logistics and e-commerce landscape** in India.

The partnership aims to **improve nationwide parcel delivery** by leveraging the physical infrastructure of the DoP and the logistics expertise of the DTDC.

MOU FOR SOVEREIGN AI COMPUTE PLATFORM

BharatGen Technology Foundation has signed a **5-year MoU** with **L&T Semiconductor Technologies (LTST)** and **L&T-Vyoma**, subsidiaries of **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)**, to develop the first **end-to-end sovereign AI compute platform** in India.

The partnership aims to establish a **completely indigenous AI ecosystem** to reduce dependency on international supply chains and imported hardware, thereby fostering **domestic technological self-reliance**.

CMEC SIGNS MOU WITH UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

The **Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity (CMEC)**, functioning under the **Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)**, has signed an MoU with the **University of Delhi** to **strengthen maritime education and research** through **joint initiatives**.

REPORTS

GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT

The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** has released the **Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report**, titled **“Access and Equity: Countdown to 2030”**.

The report states that **one in six school-age children globally are out of education**, and **only two in three complete secondary schooling**. In **2024**, the report identified **273 million children, adolescents, and youth as out of school worldwide**, with an **additional estimated 13 million in ten conflict-affected countries** not included in this figure.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

Director General – Khaled El

Headquarters – Paris, France

Established in – 1945

Members – 194

PLFS REPORT BY NSO

According to the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Report 2025** released by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)**, the **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) and Worker Population Ratio (WPR) in urban areas remained largely consistent** in 2025 compared to 2024 levels.

The LFPR was estimated at **59.3%** and the WPR at **57.4%** in 2025. The **youth unemployment rate for individuals aged 15 to 29 years decreased** from **10.3% in 2024** to **9.9% in 2025**.

WIND ENERGY CAPACITY

According to a report by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**, **India has achieved its highest-ever annual wind energy capacity addition of 6.05 GW** in FY26. This **surpasses the previous record of 5.5 GW set in FY17** and is a **46% increase compared to FY25**.

India’s total installed wind power capacity has exceeded the 56 GW mark. The growth is mainly due to **significant contributions from Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra**.

ENERGY STATISTICS INDIA 2026

According to the **33rd edition** of the **“Energy Statistics India 2026”** released by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)**, **India’s Renewable Energy (RE) potential** has increased to **47.04 lakh Megawatts (MW)** as of **March 2025**.

Solar Energy holds the **largest share within the RE sector**, with a **growth of 33.43 lakh MW during FY25**. The report also states that **credit flow to the energy sector** has **risen over six-fold**, from **₹1,688 crore in 2021 to ₹10,325 crore in 2025**. **More than 70% of India’s total RE generation potential is concentrated across six states**, with **Rajasthan leading at 23.70%**.

REPORT ON WOMEN AND CREDIT

The **NITI Aayog** has released the **second edition** of the report titled **“From Borrowers to Builders: Women and India’s Evolving Credit Market”** in New Delhi. The report was prepared under the **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)**, in collaboration with **TransUnion CIBIL** and **MicroSave Consulting (MSC)**.

The report states that **women in India hold a credit portfolio of ₹76 lakh crore**, accounting for **26% of the total system credit**. This marks a **4.8-fold increase since 2017**. **Credit penetration among women** has risen from **19% in 2017 to 36% in 2025**, with **16 crore credit-active borrowers** growing at a **Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9%**.

NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India):

Chairman – Prime Minister Narendra Modi

CEO – Nidhi Chhibber

Headquarters – New Delhi

Established in – 2015

REPORT ON DOMESTIC TEXTILE DEMAND

Union Minister **Giriraj Singh** released the study report titled **“Market for Textiles and Clothing: National Household Survey 2024”** in New Delhi. The report states that the **domestic demand for textiles in India** recorded a **Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.3%**, increasing from **₹4.89 lakh crore** in 2010 to **₹14.95 lakh crore** in 2024.

Household demand for textiles rose from **₹4.18 lakh crore** in 2010 to **₹8.77 lakh crore** in 2024. The **per capita demand for textiles** increased at a **CAGR of 7.8%**, growing from **₹2,119** in 2010 to **₹6,066** in 2024.

TECH STARTUP FUNDING REPORT

According to the “**India Tech Annual Funding Report 2026**” released by **Tracxn**, **Indian technology start-ups raised \$11.7 billion** in **FY26**, which is an **18% decline** compared to the \$14.3 billion in FY25.

India is the 4th highest funded country globally, after the **USA (\$426 billion)**, the **United Kingdom (UK) (\$17.8 billion)**, and **China (\$15 billion)**. The report recorded **13 funding rounds of over \$100 million**, including a **\$710 million investment in Nextra**.

It is to be noted that there were **47 Initial Public Offerings (IPOs)**, marking a **52% increase from FY25**, while acquisitions dropped by 15% to 129. **Bengaluru** remained the **primary hub for technology investments**, accounting for **33% of the total funding volume**.

DATA ON PM MUDRA YOJANA

According to government data, the **PM MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)** has disbursed over **₹40.07 lakh crore** through **57.79 crore loans since its launch in 2015**, making it one of the largest financial inclusion initiatives globally.

The scheme provides **collateral-free micro-credit** of **up to ₹10 lakh** to non-farm small and micro-entrepreneurs for income-generating activities. It is to be noted that PMMY is implemented by the **Department of Financial Services (DFS)** under the **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**.

MUDRA loans are classified into **4 categories** based on the loan size: **‘Shishu’, ‘Kishore’, ‘Tarun’, and ‘Tarun Plus’**. The data further indicates that **66.66% (two-thirds)** of the total sanctioned loans were allocated to **women entrepreneurs**. Women borrowers account for **nearly 60%** of the total loan accounts and represent **37.45%** of the total disbursed loan amount.

BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX

According to the **Bloomberg Billionaires Index (BBI)**, **Gautam Adani** has **surpassed Mukesh Ambani** to become the **wealthiest individual in Asia**.

Elon Musk remains the **wealthiest person in the world** with a fortune of **\$656 billion**. He is followed by the co-founder of Alphabet **Larry Page** (\$286 billion) and the founder of Amazon **Jeff Bezos** (\$269 billion, 3rd globally).

The net worth of **Gautam Adani** is valued at **\$92.6 billion (19th globally)**, while the wealth of **Mukesh Ambani** stands at **\$90.8 billion (20th globally)**. It is to be noted that the **market capitalization of the Adani Group** has exceeded **\$200 billion**, making **Gautam Adani** the **first first-generation Indian entrepreneur** to reach this financial milestone.

REPORTS BY NITI AAYOG

According to the reports titled “**Ease of Doing Research & Development in India**” and “**Survey Report on Ease of Doing R&D in India**” released by the **NITI Aayog** in New Delhi, the publications aim to create a more **efficient, facilitative, and innovation-driven research ecosystem** in the country.

The reports provide actionable recommendations across **4 key pillars: Funding, Governance, Regulatory Frameworks, and Research Translation**.

INDIA DIGITAL PAYMENTS REPORT

According to the “**India Digital Payments Report-Year 2025 in Review**” released by **Worldline SA**, the **UPI processed 228.5 billion transactions** in 2025. This is a **33% Year-on-Year (Y-o-Y) increase** from 172.2 billion transactions in 2024. The **total value of transactions** reached **₹299.74 trillion**.

Person-to-Merchant (P2M) transactions grew by **34% to 143.82 billion**. The merchant acceptance infrastructure expanded as the **number of Quick Response (QR) codes** increased by 15% Y-o-Y to reach **731.38 million**. The report also states that the **total number of payment cards** in circulation exceeded **1.62 billion** by the end of 2025.

GLOBAL GROWTH REPORT BY WEF

According to the “**Growth in the New Economy: Towards a Blueprint**” report released by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**, the **global economy** is projected to expand by **\$56 trillion** over the **next 5 years**. **Asia** is set to remain the **primary engine of global expansion**, contributing **more than 50%** of the total growth.

Middle-income economies are projected to contribute **65%** of the **cumulative Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth** between **2025 and 2030**. The report further states that **low-income economies** will account for only about **1% of global growth**.

DATA ON PATENT FILINGS

Union Minister **Piyush Goyal** highlighted that **patent application filings in India increased by 30.2% to 1.44 lakh** in **FY26**, compared to 1.1 lakh in FY25. India currently holds the **6th position globally** in patent filings according to the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**.

Domestic patent filings rose to **99,721** in FY26 from 68,201 in FY25, resulting in an increase in their **share of overall filings from 61.8% to 69.4%**. Among foreign applicants, the **USA recorded the highest number of filings**. The highest volume of patent filings in FY26 was recorded in **computer-related sectors**. **Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra** were the top contributing states.

GDP FORECAST BY UN ESCAP

According to a report titled "**Economic and Social Survey of Asia and Pacific 2026: Socioeconomic Prosperity Amid the Transition to an Environmentally Sustainable Economy**" released by the **UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**, the **economy of India** is projected to grow at **6.4% in Calendar Year 2026 (CY26)** and **6.6% in CY27**.

The **inflation of India** is expected to reach **4.4% in CY26** and **4.3% in CY27**. The **growth rate of the South and South-West Asia region** is estimated at **5.4% in CY25**, which is an increase from 5.2% in CY24.

During the first three quarters of CY26, **India attracted the largest share of greenfield Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** worth **\$50 billion**. It is followed by **Australia, Republic of Korea**, and Kazakhstan.

SINGAPORE LEADS FDI INFLOWS

According to a report by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** under the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoCI)**, the **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) equity inflows** in India reached **\$47.87 billion** during the **April-December period of FY26**.

Singapore is the leading source of FDI with **\$17.6 billion (37% share)**, followed by the **USA, Mauritius, Japan, and the UAE**. **Maharashtra** received the highest state-wise FDI of **\$15.38 billion**, followed by **Karnataka** with **\$11.15 billion** during the first three quarters of FY26.

REPORT ON METHANE EMISSIONS FROM LANDFILLS

According to a study titled "**Spotlight on the Top 25 Methane Plumes in 2025: Landfills**" released by the **University of California**, the **Jawahar Nagar Landfill (Hyderabad)** is **ranked 4th globally** with an estimated **methane emission rate of 5.9 tonnes per hour**.

The **Kanjurmarg Landfill (Mumbai)** is **ranked 12th globally** among the top methane-emitting sites identified in the report.

INTERNATIONAL

BRICS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT SUMMIT

The **6th edition** of the **BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women Empowerment (BRICS CCI WE) Summit** was held in **New Delhi**. The summit was organised by the **BRICS CCI WE vertical**, with support from the **BRICS Women Business Alliance (BRICS WBA)**, under the theme "**Women in Innovation, Science Leadership, Innovation & Entrepreneurship (WISE) - Inspiring Change, Shaping Tomorrow**."

Meenakshi Lekhi, the Global Chair of the initiative, unveiled **Mission ShakthiSAT** during the summit. **Shabana Azmi**, Veteran Indian Actress, received the **BRICS CCI WE Trailblazer: Living Legend award**, recognising her "**50 Years of Excellence in Indian Cinema**."

UN FORMS TASK FORCE

Antonio Guterres, the **UN Secretary-General**, has announced the formation of a **dedicated task force** to address challenges arising from disruptions in the **Strait of Hormuz** due to the **West Asia conflict**.

The task force will be led by **Jorge Moreira da Silva**, the **Executive Director (ED) of the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS)**. It will comprise representatives from the **UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**, the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**, and the **International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)**.

WORLD BUDDHIST PEACE CONFERENCE

The **inaugural edition** of the **World Buddhist Peace Conference 2026** was held in **Hyderabad, and Buddhavanam at Nagarjunasagar, Telangana**. It was jointly organised by **Buddhavanam (a unit of the Telangana Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC))** and the **Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS)**.

The conference witnessed the unveiling and adoption of the **Telangana Peace Declaration**. During the event, the **Telangana government announced its plan to develop Buddhavanam into a global World Peace Centre**. **Jupally Krishna Rao, Telangana's Tourism and Culture Minister**, was awarded the **'Grand Prize for Contribution to World Peace'** at the conference.

WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE IN CAMEROON

The **14th Ministerial Conference (MC14)** of the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** was held in **Yaounde, Cameroon**, and was **presided over by Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, the Minister of Trade of Cameroon**. **Union Minister Piyush Goyal** led the **Indian delegation**.

Two decisions were adopted to enhance the **integration of small economies** and to strengthen **Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT)** under the **Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)** and **Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)** agreements.

A draft document, referred to as the **"Yaoundé Package,"** was also prepared for **subsequent negotiations** to be held in Geneva. It is to be noted that the Ministerial Conference, as the **highest decision-making body of the WTO**, is held **once every two years (biennial)**.

World Trade Organization (WTO):

Director General – Ngozi Okonjo Iweala

Headquarters – Geneva, Switzerland

Established in – 1995

Members – 166

CMS COP15 ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

The **15th edition** of the **Conference of the Parties (COP15)** to the **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)** was held in **Campo Grande, Brazil**. The meeting, under **Brazil's Presidency**, was attended by **representatives from 132 countries and the European Union**, under the theme **"Connecting Nature to Sustain Life"**.

During COP15, a total of **40 species, subspecies, and populations** were **newly included or reclassified** under **Appendices I and II of the CMS**, with **16 of these species found in Brazil**.

It is to be noted that the **'State of the World's Migratory Species Report 2026'** reveals that **nearly 49% of migratory species populations are declining**, and **24% face the risk of extinction**. **Brazil will assume the presidency for the next three years**. **Germany** is announced as the **host of COP16 in 2029**, which will mark the **50th anniversary of the CMS**.

NEW PM FOR MONGOLIA

Uchral Nyam-Osor has been appointed as the **new Prime Minister of Mongolia** by the **State Great Khural (parliament of Mongolia)**. He succeeds **Zandanshatar Gombojav**.

INDIA ELECTED TO UN BODIES

India has been **elected by acclamation** to **various subsidiary bodies** of the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**, one of the **six principal organs of the United Nations (UN)**.

The bodies include the **Commission on Science and Technology for Development (for the term 2027-2030)**, the **Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations (2027-2030)**, and the **Committee for Programme and Coordination (2027-2029)**. Additionally, **Indian Ambassador Preeti Saran** has been **re-elected** to the **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for the term 2027-2030**.

NEW PRESIDENT FOR MYANMAR

Min Aung Hlaing, formerly a **Senior General and Commander-in-Chief of the Tatmadaw (Armed Forces of Myanmar)**, has been elected as the **11th President of Myanmar** by the **Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Assembly of the Union)**, the nation's legislature.

RUSSIAN DEPUTY PM VISITS INDIA

Denis Manturov, the **First Deputy PM of Russia**, visited **India** to strengthen bilateral relations. He co-chaired the **India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC)** in **New Delhi** with **Union Minister S Jaishankar**.

The **IRIGC-TEC** is the **primary institutional mechanism** to review and advance strategic economic ties between the two nations. The leaders also reviewed the progress on the implementation of the outcomes from the **23rd India-Russia Annual Summit** held in **December 2025**.

TO LAM ELECTED AS PRESIDENT

The **National Assembly of Vietnam** has unanimously elected **To Lam** as the **state president** for the **2026-2031 tenure**. It is to be noted that he also serves as the **General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV)**.

DJIBOUTI PRESIDENT RE-ELECTED

Ismail Omar Guelleh has been **re-elected** as the **President of Djibouti** for a **6th consecutive term**. It is to be noted that Djibouti is a nation located in the **Horn of Africa**.

INDIA WITHDRAWS COP33 HOST BID

India has officially **withdrawn** its candidacy to host the **33rd Conference of the Parties (COP33)** to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** in **2028**. The decision has been formally communicated to the **Asia-Pacific group** and the UNFCCC.

This represents a reversal of the proposal made by **PM Narendra Modi** during **COP28** in **Dubai** in **2023**. Following the withdrawal of India, **South Korea** remains the **only contender** from the Asia-Pacific region currently in the race to host the **2028 climate summit**.

9TH INDIAN OCEAN CONFERENCE

The **9th edition** of the **Indian Ocean Conference (IOC 2026)** was held in **Port Louis, Mauritius**, under the theme **"Collective Stewardship for Indian Ocean Governance"**. The event was jointly organised by the **India Foundation (IF)** and the **Government of Mauritius**. **Union Minister Dr S Jaishankar** represented India at the conference.

The primary goal of the IOC 2026 is to encourage engagement among maritime states and stakeholders to improve regional cooperation under the **Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) framework**.

IRAQ ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT

Nizar Mohammed Saeed Amedi, belonging to the **Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)**, has been elected as the **9th President of Iraq**. He succeeds **Abdul Latif Rashid**.

INDIA AND GERMANY LAUNCH COMMEMORATIVE LOGO

India and Germany have officially launched a **commemorative logo** to mark **75 years** of **diplomatic relations** between the two nations. The logo was unveiled during the **India-Germany Foreign Office Consultations (FOC)** held in **Berlin, Germany**.

It is to be noted that the logo was selected through a **joint competition** hosted on the **MyGov platform**, featuring participants from both countries to symbolise the long-standing **bilateral friendship**.

WATER FORWARD INITIATIVE

The **World Bank Group (WBG)** has launched a **global platform** named **'Water Forward'** in collaboration with **multilateral development banks and development finance institutions**. The initiative aims to **enhance water security** for **1 billion people** by **2030**.

It is to be noted that the **WBG** aims to provide water security to **400 million** individuals, while the commitments from the **other partners** will cover the remaining **600 million** people to reach the collective target.

BRICS ACADEMIC FORUM

The **Observer Research Foundation (ORF)**, in partnership with the **Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)**, has hosted the inaugural **'BRICS Academic Forum'** in **New Delhi**.

The event is a key **Track II initiative** under the Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) Chairship of India for 2026. The forum serves as an advisory platform for diplomacy and summit preparation to generate policy recommendations for the **18th BRICS Summit**. The summit is themed **"Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability"**.

Discussions are based on **4 core pillars—Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability**—aligning with the priorities of the chairship. The initiative involves **13 international speakers** and a series of meetings held in India and abroad to develop recommendations for the leaders.

INDIA-CZECH REPUBLIC JCEC MEETING

Union Minister Jitin Prasada has paid a **two-day official visit** to the **Czech Republic** to bolster **bilateral trade, investment, and industrial cooperation**. He co-chaired the **13th session of the India-Czech Republic Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation (JCEC)** along with his Czech counterpart **Jan Sechter** in **Prague**, the capital of the Czech Republic.

The event witnessed the signing of the **protocol of the 13th India-Czechia JCEC** to formalize economic and industrial agreements. Additionally, the **India-Czech Business Forum** was inaugurated in **Prague** to promote mutual investment and strengthen **Business-to-Business (B2B) linkages** between the two countries.

UAE EXITS OPEC

The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has officially **withdrawn** from the **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** and the **OPEC+** alliance.

This move has caused **significant disruption to global oil production groups** and **weakened the geopolitical influence** of **Saudi Arabia**.

VP RADHAKRISHNAN VISITS SRI LANKA

Vice President **CP Radhakrishnan** has conducted the **first-ever bilateral visit** to **Sri Lanka**. He met President **Anura Kumara Dissanayake** and Prime Minister **Harini Amarasuriya** to review bilateral initiatives and the progress of development projects supported by India.

Both nations signed multiple MoUs to strengthen cooperation in **healthcare and regional development**. The visit marked the completion of **Phase III of the Indian Housing Project** (covering **4,000 houses**). Sri Lanka has formally joined the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** to enhance **regional conservation efforts**.

WHO PREQUALIFIES INFANT MALARIA DRUG

The **WHO** has granted **prequalification** to **“Coartem Baby” (artemether-lumefantrine)**, which is the **first malaria medication** specifically developed for **newborns and young infants**.

The treatment is designed for infants **weighing between 2 kg and 5 kg** to address the specific medical requirements of this age group.

DEFENCE

VAYU BAAN DRONE PROJECT

The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** has launched **‘Vayu Baan’** (‘Air Arrow’), the **country’s first indigenous, helicopter-launched drone project**. Developed under the **Air-Launched Effects (ALE) programme**, this system allows **manned rotary-wing platforms like the Apache** to deploy **compact, autonomous drones**.

These drones are launched from a helicopter in flight, then unfold and activate. They can function as either **surveillance (ISR) tools** or as **precision-guided kamikaze drones with a small warhead**.

MALWAN DELIVERED TO INDIAN NAVY

The **Indian Navy** has received **‘Malwan’**, the **second of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC)**, from **Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL)**, Kochi.

The vessel is **indigenously designed and constructed**, adhering to the Indian Navy’s specifications and Classification Rules of DNV, with **over 80% indigenous content**. It measures **80 meters in length** and displaces **1,100 tons**. **Named after the historic coastal town of Malwan in Maharashtra**, it also carries the **legacy of the erstwhile INS Malwan, an Indian Naval Minesweeper that served until 2003**.

MOD INKS DEAL FOR MOUNTAIN RADARS

The **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** has signed a **capital acquisition contract** with **Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL)** for the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** to procure **two Mountain Radars**, along with associated equipment and infrastructure, at a **cost of ₹1,950 crore**.

These radars, designed and developed indigenously by the Electronics & Radar Development Establishment (ERDE) of the DRDO, will be manufactured by BEL under the **Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured)** category.

SANSHODHAK DELIVERED TO INDIAN NAVY

Sanshodhak (Yard 3028), the **final Survey Vessel (Large) ship**, has been **delivered to the Indian Navy**. It was designed by the **Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau** and constructed by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSE)** in **Kolkata**.

The ship has a **displacement of 3,400 tonnes** and an **overall length of 110 metres**. It is equipped with **state-of-the-art hydrographic equipment** and has an **indigenous content exceeding 80% by cost**. The other commissioned ships of the same class are **INS Sandhayak, INS Nirdeshak, and INS Ikshak**.

FIRST NGOPV SHACHI LAUNCHED

The **first of eleven Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPVs)** named '**Shachi**' (Yard **1280**) has been **launched at Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL)** in **Goa**.

The **construction of these NGOPVs is being undertaken concurrently at two shipyards: GSL, Goa, and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata**. The name '**Shachi**' is derived from Indian mythology and signifies '**one who renders assistance**'.

DEFENCE EXPORTS

According to the **Ministry of Defence, India's defence exports** have reached an **all-time high of ₹38,424 crore** in **FY26**. This is a **62.66% increase** over the **₹23,622 crore recorded in FY25**.

The **number of defence exporters also increased to 145**, a **13.3% rise from 128** in the previous fiscal. It is to be noted that the **government aims to reach ₹50,000 crore in annual defence exports by FY30**.

COLLABORATION FOR DEFENCE TECH

The **Indian Army's Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME)** has **signed an MoU** with the **IITM Pravartak Technologies Foundation** to **accelerate the indigenisation of critical military technologies**.

A **Nodal Indigenisation Centre (NIC)** has been established at **Avadi, Chennai**, to **bridge real-world military requirements and advanced academic research**.

INDIA-MOZAMBIQUE DEFENCE MEETING

The **5th Joint Defence Working Group (JDWG) meeting** between **India** and **Mozambique** was held in **Maputo, Mozambique**.

Discussions were held on expanding military exchanges, increasing joint training opportunities, enhancing maritime domain awareness, conducting military exercises, and promoting collaboration in the supply of defence equipment.

INS TARAGIRI COMMISSIONED

Union Minister Rajnath Singh has commissioned **INS Taragiri**, the **fourth stealth frigate** of the **Project 17A class**, into the **Indian Navy** at **Visakhapatnam**.

The frigate, designed by the **Warship Design Bureau** and built by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd**, has a **displacement of 6,670 tonnes** and incorporates **over 75% indigenous content**.

Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd:

CMD – Captain (Retd.) Jagmohan

Headquarters – Mumbai

Established in – 1934

OPERATION URJA SURAKSHA

The **Indian Navy** has launched '**Operation Urja Suraksha**' (**Energy Security**) to **safeguard Indian-flagged energy tankers** passing through the **volatile Strait of Hormuz**.

This strategic mission ensures the **uninterrupted flow of critical energy supplies**, with **22 India-bound vessels** shortlisted for protected transit under this operation.

IONS MARITIME EXERCISE

The **Indian Navy (IN)** has conducted the **3rd edition** of the **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Maritime Exercise (IMEX) Tabletop Exercise (TTX) 2026**. The exercise was held at the **Maritime Warfare Centre, Southern Naval Command (SNC)** in **Kochi**.

It is to be noted that **India has assumed the IONS Chairmanship for the 2026-2028 cycle**. Participants included **delegates from IONS member navies and officers from Indian Ocean Ship-Security and Growth for All in the Region (IOS-SAGAR)**. The **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)** currently comprises **25 member nations and 9 observer nations**.

NEW VESSEL FOR INDIAN COAST GUARD

Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) has delivered the **Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Achal (Yard 1274)** to the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)**. This is the **5th vessel** in the **Adamy-class Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs)** series, **out of eight** being constructed by GSL for the ICG.

The ICGS is **52 metres long**, has a **displacement of 320 tonnes**, and is equipped with a **CPP-based propulsion system**, allowing a **maximum speed of 27 knots** and an **operational range of 1,500 nautical miles**. Its **primary armament includes a CRN 91 30mm naval gun**, and it was built with **over 65% indigenous content**.

NEW MEDICAL INFRA FOR ARMY

Union Minister Rajnath Singh has **laid the foundation stones for three specialized medical centres (Ophthalmology, Oncology, and Joint Replacement)** at **Army Hospital (Research & Referral)** and **new infrastructure** at **Base Hospital, Delhi Cantt**.

These projects were launched on **April 6, 2026**, during the **262nd Army Medical Corps (AMC) Raising Day**. The initiative aims to **strengthen tertiary care for service personnel and veterans**.

INDIAN ARMY PROCURES VIA GEM

The **Indian Army** has executed its **inaugural capital procurement contract**, valued at **₹25.90 crore**, through the **Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal**.

The contract was signed with **JCB India Ltd** for the supply of **93 Telescopic Handlers** under the **'Buy (Indian)'** category.

GeM (Government e-Marketplace):

Under – Ministry of Commerce and Industry

CEO – Mihir Kumar

Established in – 2016

NUCLEAR SUBMARINE

The **Indian Navy** has **commissioned** its **third indigenously built Ship, Submersible, Ballistic, Nuclear (SSBN)**, named **'INS Aridhaman (S4)'**, in **Visakhapatnam**. **Union Minister Rajnath Singh** presided over the commissioning ceremony and also laid the foundation stone for a **state-of-the-art Large Cavitation Tunnel (LCT)**.

The ship is equipped with **eight vertical launch tubes**, capable of carrying either **8 K-4 Intermediate-Range Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs)** with a **3,500 km range** or **24 K-15 Sagarika short-range SLBMs** with a **750 km range**. The vessel features **70% indigenous content**.

FIRST BATCH OF LMGS DELIVERED TO ARMY

PLR Systems, a **joint venture between Adani Group and Israel Weapon Industries (IWI)**, has delivered the **first batch of 2,000 NEGEV 7.62x51mm Light Machine Guns (LMGs)** to the **Indian Army**.

This delivery, **11 months ahead of schedule**, is part of a **larger contract for 41,000 units signed in August 2024** to **modernize the infantry's firepower**. These LMGs are manufactured at the **Adani Small Arms Complex** in **Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh**, which is **India's first private sector facility to produce small arms at this scale**.

ARMY RELEASES TECH ROADMAP

The **Indian Army** has released its **first comprehensive Technology Roadmap** for **Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and Loitering Munitions** at **Bharat Mandapam** in **New Delhi**.

The **50-page document** aims to **align domestic industrial capabilities with modern battlefield requirements** and provides long-term visibility into the force's needs. It details **30 distinct types** of UAS and loitering munitions, spanning **nearly 80 variants**, acting as a **strategic bridge for industry and academia**.

EXERCISE DUSTLIK

The **7th edition** of the India-Uzbekistan **joint military exercise 'DUSTLIK'** is scheduled to be conducted at the **Gurumsaray Field Training Area in Uzbekistan**.

The **Indian contingent** comprises **60 personnel**, including **45 from the Indian Army** (majorly from a battalion of the **MAHAR Regiment**) and **15 from the Indian Air Force (IAF)**. The **Uzbekistan contingent** also consists of 60 personnel drawn from the Uzbekistan Army and Air Force.

HAL INAUGURATES LCH ASSEMBLY LINE

Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) has inaugurated a **new structure assembly line** for the **Prachand Light Combat Helicopter (LCH)** at its helicopter factory in **Tumakuru, Karnataka**. The facility features a dedicated LCH Structure Assembly Line and an **Automated Storage & Retrieval System (ASRS)**.

It is to be noted that the Tumakuru facility currently has a production capacity of **30 helicopters per year**, with plans to scale it up to **100 units annually**. This expansion will help in the execution of a **₹62,700 crore** contract for **156 additional LCHs**, including **90 for the Indian Army and 66 for the Indian Air Force (IAF)**.

Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL):

CMD – Kota Ravi

Headquarters – Bengaluru

Established in – 1940

EXERCISE CYCLONE-IV

The **4th edition** of the **India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise** named **'Cyclone-IV'** has commenced at the **Rangers Forces Headquarters in Egypt**.

The **Indian Army (IA)** has deployed a contingent of **25 personnel** from its **Special Forces units** for the exercise, while the host nation is represented by personnel from the **Egyptian Special Forces Group** and the **Rangers Forces**.

INDIAN ARMY FLAGS OFF SAMUDRA SAHAS

The **Regiment of Artillery** of the **Indian Army** has launched its first blue water sailing expedition named **'Samudra Sahas'** from **Marve, Mumbai**. The event, inaugurated by **NS Sarna** (Commandant of the School of Artillery), commemorates the **bicentenary (200 years)** of the Regiment and honours the maritime legacy of **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**.

The voyage covers **520 nautical miles** along the **Konkan Coast** in four legs using 21-foot **Seabird class boats**. Led by **Kshitij Nair** and **Prakash Funde**, the team navigates 7 nautical miles off the coast with wind speeds ranging from 2-15 knots.

RADIO SIKKIM SUNDARI

The **Trishakti Corps** of the **Indian Army** has inaugurated **'Radio Sikkim Sundari'** (**88.4 Frequency Modulation, FM**) in **East Sikkim** near the **India-China border**. It is the **first community radio station for a border village** in the state.

The station is equipped with **Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) systems** and **solar energy backups** to ensure continuous operation. It also uses a **dedicated encoder** to facilitate **digital streaming** through a mobile application available on the Google Play Store.

FOURTH DIVING SUPPORT CRAFT LAUNCHED

The **fourth of five vessels** under the **Diving Support Craft (DSC) project**, named **'DSC A 23'**, has been launched at **Titagarh in Kolkata**. Built by **Titagarh Rail Systems Ltd (TRSL)**, the vessel features a 30 m long **catamaran-hull** with a displacement of approximately **380 tons**.

The ship was designed in compliance with the Naval Rules and Regulations of the **Indian Register of Shipping (IRS)** and underwent model testing at the **Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL)** in **Visakhapatnam**. Around **70%** of the equipment for the DSC project is sourced from indigenous manufacturers.

MRO FACILITY FOR TEJAS ENGINES

The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** has signed a contract with **GE Aerospace** to establish a **domestic Base Depot Facility** for the **maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO)** of **F404-IN20 engines**.

These engines power the indigenous **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk1A** fighter fleet. The facility will be **owned, operated, and maintained by the IAF** to provide in-country technical support and sustainment for the engine fleet.

CONTRACTS FOR TRAWL ASSEMBLY

The **Ministry of Defence** has signed contracts with **Bharat Earth Movers Ltd (BEML)** and **Electro Pneumatics and Hydraulics (India) Pvt Ltd** for the procurement of **TRAWL Assembly** for **T-72 and T-90 tanks** at a cost of **₹975 crore**.

The **TRAWL Assembly** is an **indigenous equipment** developed by the **DRDO** to enhance the **minefield breaching capabilities** of the Indian Army. The procurement is categorized under the **Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured) (IDDM)** framework.

SURYA DEVBHOOMI CHALLENGE 2.0

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan has flagged off the **second edition** of the **high-altitude endurance event** named **"Surya Devbhoomi Challenge 2.0"** in **Badrinath, Uttarakhand**.

The **113 km long expedition** is a five-day event traversing the **Char Dham corridor** and covering the three sacred Kedars of **Kalpeshwar, Rudranath, and Tungnath**. The **Indian Army** is organising the challenge in **strategic partnership with IconMetrix**, with support from the Tourism Department of the Uttarakhand Government.

INS SUDARSHINI VISIT TO SPAIN

The **Indian Navy (IN) Sail Training Ship (STS) INS Sudarshini** has arrived at **Las Palmas in Spain** as a part of the **'Lokayan 26'** transoceanic deployment. This port call to the **Canary Islands archipelago** marks the **first-ever visit of an IN vessel to the region**.

INDIA-SRI LANKA DIVING EXERCISE

INS Nireekshak, a **specialized Diving Support and Submarine Rescue Vessel** of the Indian Navy (IN), has arrived in **Colombo, Sri Lanka**, to participate in the **4th edition** of the **India-Sri Lanka Diving Exercise (IN-SLN DIVEX 2026)**.

The exercise aims to enhance **bilateral cooperation and interoperability in diving operations** between the two naval forces.

BUSINESS

TECH MAHINDRA PARTNERS WITH IIT BOMBAY

Tech Mahindra Ltd has signed an **MoU** with the **IIT Bombay** to develop a **Three Dimensional (3D) Digital Twin of the Gymkhana Building, Mumbai**. This project is intended to serve as a **pilot for smart campus innovation**.

Tech Mahindra Ltd:

MD & CEO – Mohit Joshi

Headquarters – Pune, Maharashtra

Established in – 1986

AIR INDIA, UZBEKISTAN AIRWAYS CODESHARE

Air India has announced a **new codeshare partnership** with **Uzbekistan Airways** to **enhance air connectivity between India and Central Asia**.

From **March 20, 2026**, **Air India** will place its **'AI' designator code** on **Uzbekistan Airways flights**, covering **key routes from major Indian cities (Delhi, Mumbai, and Goa - seasonal) to Tashkent**.

Air India:

CEO & MD – Campbell Wilson

Headquarters – New Delhi

Established in – 1932

TCS RENEWS M&S PARTNERSHIP

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has **renewed its multi-year strategic partnership** with **UK-based Marks & Spencer (M&S)**.

The former will support M&S in its **transformation to become an omnichannel, data-driven retailer, and leveraging modern technologies**. This will be backed by TCS's **extensive domain expertise** and **one of the world's largest AI talent pools**.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS):

MD & CEO – K Krithivasan

Headquarters – Mumbai

Established in – 1968

CCI APPROVES ADVENT STAKE IN ABHFL

The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has approved the acquisition of a **14.286% equity stake** in **Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd (ABHFL)** by **Advent International Corporation**.

ABHFL is a **wholly-owned subsidiary** of **Aditya Birla Capital Ltd (ABCL)**, and the acquisition will be executed through a **preferential issue of shares**.

Competition Commission of India (CCI):

Chairperson – Ravneet Kaur

Headquarters – New Delhi

Established in – 2003

KREDITBEE ENTERS UNICORN CLUB

KreditBee, an **India-based digital lending firm**, has entered the **unicorn club** after raising **\$280 million** in a **Series E funding round**, reaching a valuation of **\$1.5 billion**. The capital infusion occurred before the planned **Initial Public Offering (IPO)** of the company.

It is the **third Indian startup to achieve unicorn status in 2026**, following **Juspay** in January and **Neysa** in February.

MILESTONE BY AMUL

Amul has become the **first Indian Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) company** to cross the **turnover milestone of ₹1 lakh crore** in the **FY26**.

The dairy cooperative recorded a **year-on-year growth of 11%**, with its **turnover rising from ₹90,000 crore** in the previous fiscal year.

ALUMINIUM BHARAT LAUNCHED

The **Aluminium Extrusion Manufacturers Association of India (ALEMAI)** has launched the '**Aluminium Bharat**' initiative in **New Delhi** to boost **domestic manufacturing and sustainable industrial growth**.

The initiative, unveiled by **Union Minister of State Jitin Prasada**, aims to **position India as a global leader in aluminium production and exports**. As part of the initiative, ALEMAI will host '**Aluminium Bharat 2026**', which will be the **first comprehensive exhibition of India dedicated to the entire aluminium value chain**.

RAZORPAY PARTNERS WITH OPENAI

Razorpay has partnered with **OpenAI** to integrate the **payment infrastructure** of Razorpay into **Codex**, the **coding platform** of OpenAI. This collaboration enables developers to **build and monetize AI applications** using a **single natural language prompt**.

Razorpay:

Founders – Harshil Mathur and Shashank Kumar

CEO – Harshil Mathur

Headquarters – Bengaluru

Established in – 2014

JSW STEEL PARTNERS WITH POSCO

The Board of **JSW Steel Ltd** has approved a proposal to form a **50:50 Joint Venture (JV)** with the **South Korea-based POSCO Group** to establish an **integrated steel plant** in **Odisha**. The proposed plant will have a production capacity of **6 Million Tonnes Per Annum (MTPA)**.

Saffron Resources Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of JSW Steel, will transition into the JV entity through a share subscription and joint venture agreement.

TATA STEEL TO SET UP EASYMELT TECHNOLOGY

Tata Steel Ltd has signed a definitive agreement with **Germany-based Paul Wurth SA (SMS Group)** to implement the **world's first large-scale "EASyMelt" (Electrically Assisted Syngas Smelter)** technology.

The technology will be established at the **Jamshedpur plant** in **Jharkhand** to **significantly reduce carbon emissions** during the steel manufacturing process.

DRONE DELIVERY TESTED

Federal Express Corporation (FedEx), in partnership with the **IIT Madras**, has successfully completed the **first-ever intra-city drone delivery flight trials** in India, conducted in **Bengaluru**.

The initiative was carried out under the research framework of the **FedEx SMART Centre** at the IIT Madras and implemented with **Amber Wings**, a **deep-tech startup incubated at the institute**. The trials demonstrated that a **53 km road journey** taking 60 minutes could be replaced by a **39-42 km flight route**, reducing the transit time to **21 minutes**.

JFSL SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH ALLIANZ

Jio Financial Services Ltd (JFSL) has signed a binding agreement with the **Germany-based Allianz Group** to form a **50:50 primary insurance Joint Venture (JV)** in India.

The partnership aims to combine the digital distribution capabilities of JFSL with the global underwriting expertise of Allianz to enhance market reach. The JV will initially focus on providing **general and health insurance solutions** to both individual and commercial segments.

ADNIC GETS LICENSE FOR GIFT CITY

The **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** has granted a licence to the **Abu Dhabi National Insurance Company (ADNIC)** to establish a **reinsurance branch** at the **Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City)** in Gujarat.

ADNIC is the **first insurance provider based in the UAE** to establish a presence within this **international financial hub** of India.

International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA):

Chairman – K Rajaraman

Headquarters – GIFT City, Gujarat

Established in – 2020

SCIENCE

CELESTE MISSION LAUNCHED BY ESA

The **European Space Agency (ESA)** has launched its **first two satellites, In-Orbit Demonstrators (IOD)-1 and IOD-2**, for the **Celeste mission** from the **Rocket Lab launch site in New Zealand**.

The primary objective of the mission is to demonstrate a **Low Earth Orbit (LEO) navigation layer**. The Celeste mission aims to **complement Europe's existing Galileo (Medium Earth Orbit, MEO) and EGNOS (European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service) systems**. The specific objective is to test a **LEO-based Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT) system**.

European Space Agency:

Director General – Josef Aschbacher

Headquarters – Paris, France

Established in – 1975

NEW BIRAC BIONEST CENTRE

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh has inaugurated the **BIRAC (Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council)-BioNEST Incubation Centre** at the **Central Food Technology & Research Institute (CFTRI)** in **Mysuru**.

This **state-of-the-art facility**, equipped with **dedicated incubation suites and shared infrastructure**, is designed to **boost Food Startups and support advanced research**. As of **March 2026**, the BioNEST facility has **supported 26 Startups**.

NASA LAUNCHES ARTEMIS II TO MOON

The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has launched the **'Artemis II' mission** from the **Kennedy Space Center in Florida, the USA**. The mission used the **Space Launch System (SLS) rocket** and the **Orion crew capsule**, and is designed for a **nearly 10-day journey**, traveling **406,000 km**. This represents the **farthest distance for human spaceflight, surpassing Apollo 13**.

The mission is a **crewed test flight to the Moon's vicinity**, marking the **first human journey beyond low Earth orbit since Apollo 17 in 1972**. The **four-member crew** includes Commander **Reid Wiseman (USA)**, Pilot **Victor Glover (USA)**, Mission Specialist **Christina Koch (USA)**, and Mission Specialist **Jeremy Hansen (Canada, Canadian Space Agency)**.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA):

Administrator (acting) – Sean Duffy

Headquarters – Washington DC, USA

Established in – 1958

CBSE LAUNCHES AI CURRICULUM

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has launched the **Computational Thinking (CT) and AI curriculum** for **Classes 3-8**. This **structured framework** will be implemented across all **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)-affiliated schools**, starting from the **2026-27 academic session**.

The curriculum was developed in collaboration with an **expert committee chaired by Professor Karthik Raman of IIT Madras**. It aims to **transition students from rote memorization to acquiring 21st-century competencies like logical reasoning and ethical technology use**.

NATIONAL DEEP-SEA FAUNA REPOSITORY

The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** has designated the **Bhavasagara Referral Centre** at the Center for Marine Living Resources & Ecology (CMLRE) in **Kochi** as India's first National Repository for **Deep-Sea Fauna**.

The centre will preserve biological samples and Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) sequences for scientific use. It will also act as the official custodian for type specimens of newly discovered deep-sea species found in Indian waters. The initiative aims to promote deep-sea taxonomy expertise, aligning with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

MISSION MITRA

The **ISRO** has launched **Mission MITRA (Mapping of Interoperable Traits and Response Assessment)** in the **high-altitude terrain** of **Leh, Ladakh**. The mission was conducted at an **elevation of 3,500 metres**.

It is a **collaborative effort** involving the **ISRO**, the **Indian Air Force Institute of Aerospace Medicine (IAM)**, and **Bengaluru-based startup Protoplanet**, with the latter managing the facility and protocols.

PFBR ATTAINS CRITICALITY

The indigenously built **500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)** at Kalpakkam in Tamil Nadu has attained its **first criticality**. This marks the entry of India into the **second stage** of the **three-stage nuclear strategy** envisioned by Homi J Bhabha to ensure **long-term energy independence**.

The PFBR is a **breeder reactor** which produces more fuel than it consumes by using a **Mixed Oxide (MOX) fuel core (plutonium-uranium)** surrounded by a blanket of **uranium-238**, which converts into **new fissile plutonium**.

With this, **India joins Russia** as one of the only nations to operate a **commercial-scale fast breeder reactor**. It uses **liquid sodium** as a **coolant**, which is efficient for heat transfer but requires specialized handling due to its reactive nature with air and water.

NEW AI MODEL BY META

Meta Platforms Inc. has launched a new **Artificial Intelligence (AI) model** titled "**Muse Spark**", marking the first release from its **superintelligence team** under the "**Avocado**" series.

Initially available on **Meta AI** platforms, the AI model is scheduled to **replace Llama-based chatbots** on **WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and smart glasses**.

Meta:

Chairman & CEO – Mark Zuckerberg

Headquarters – California

Established in – 2004

ISRO CONDUCTS AIR DROP TEST

ISRO has successfully conducted the **second Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-02)** at the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC)** in **Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh**. The test validated the **parachute-based deceleration and recovery system** designed for the safe return of astronauts during re-entry and abort scenarios.

A **simulated Crew Module (CM)** weighing **5.7 tonnes** (equivalent to the **Gaganyaan G1 mission**) was carried by an **Indian Air Force (IAF) Chinook helicopter** to an **altitude of 3 km**. It is to be noted that after its release over a sea drop zone, a sequence of **10 parachutes** of **4 different types** was deployed to reduce the velocity for a safe touchdown.

OPENAI LAUNCHES GPT-ROSA LIND

OpenAI has introduced a new AI model named "**GPT-Rosalind**" (named after scientist **Rosalind Franklin**) to facilitate advanced research in the **life sciences sector**. The model integrates more than **50 specialized scientific databases** and computational tools.

It is currently available as a **research preview** through **ChatGPT, Codex, and the Application Programming Interface (API)**. The tool is being tested with industry partners such as **Amgen, Moderna, and Thermo Fisher Scientific**.

ARTEMIS II CREW RETURNS TO EARTH

The **NASA** has successfully concluded the **Artemis II mission**, where a **4-member crew** returned to Earth after a **10-day journey around the Moon**. The **Orion spacecraft**, named 'Integrity', performed a splashdown in the **Pacific Ocean**.

It is to be noted that this marks the **first human travel to the lunar vicinity in over 50 years**, since the **Apollo 17 mission** in 1972. The crew also set a record for the **farthest distance traveled from Earth by a crewed spacecraft** at **4.07 lakh km** (2.53 lakh miles), surpassing the previous milestone of the **Apollo 13 mission**.

USA TO DEPLOY NUCLEAR REACTORS IN SPACE

The **United States** has launched a strategic plan to deploy **nuclear reactors in space**, including an **in-space reactor in Earth orbit by 2028**, a **fission reactor on the lunar surface by 2030**, and a **military version by 2031**.

It is to be noted that the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** is tasked to develop a **mid-power 100 kilowatts (kWe) fission reactor** to support **lunar habitats**, providing power equivalent to 80 homes on Earth.

SILICON PHOTONICS SOLUTIONS LAUNCHED

The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** has launched **two indigenously developed Silicon Photonics technology solutions** at the **IIT Madras**.

The solutions, developed at IIT Madras, include the **"Silicon Photonics Process Design Kit"** and the **"Universal Programmable Photonic ICs (PICs) Test Engine"**. The facility will function as a **shared national facility** for the **domestic photonics Research and Development (R&D) community**.

SPACEX TO LAUNCH MARS ROVER

The **NASA** has announced that the **Falcon Heavy rocket** of **SpaceX** will launch the **Rosalind Franklin rover** of the **European Space Agency (ESA)** to **Mars in 2028**. The launch will be conducted from **Launch Complex 39A** at the **Kennedy Space Center** in Florida, USA.

The rover is a key component of the **ExoMars mission** under the **Rosalind Franklin Support and Augmentation (ROSA) project**, which has been approved for implementation by NASA. The mission aims to investigate signs of past or present microbial life by **drilling up to 2 metres** into the **Martian surface**. It is to be noted that this will be the **first rover to explore subsurface life** on the planet.

Space Exploration Technologies Corporation (SpaceX):

CEO, CTO, & Chairman – Elon Musk

Headquarters – Hawthorne, California, USA

Established in – 2002

AI SYSTEM FOR SMART FARMING

The **IIT Ropar** in Punjab has launched an advanced **Agricultural Intelligence Ecosystem**, marking the **first fully integrated AI-based system of India** for **smart farming** and agricultural decision-making.

It was developed by the **Alliance for Next-Gen Nourishment through Agriculture Modernisation (ANNAM.AI)**, which is the **Centre of Excellence (CoE)** in AI for Agriculture of the IIT Ropar.

The system includes components like **'Swan'** (advanced weather stations), **Krishi Intelligence Call Centres**, and the **Annam Chat Engine (ACE)**. It is to be noted that the AI architecture is organized into three layers: the **Infrastructure Layer** for data collection, the **Intelligence Layer** for data analysis, and the **Engagement Layer** for providing advisory services to farmers.

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE FOR IIA BENGALURU

Union Minister Jitendra Singh has laid the foundation stone for a new **₹75 crore** state-of-the-art building at the **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)** in **Bengaluru**. The 7-story structure will have a total constructed area of **1 lakh sq feet**.

It is to be noted that the **Union Budget 2026** announced the development of **4 world-class astronomical projects** by the IIA, including the **National Large Solar Telescope** and the **National Large Optical-Infrared Telescope**.

BLUE ORIGIN MISSION FAILURE

Blue Origin, founded by **Jeff Bezos**, has launched the **BlueBird 7** communications satellite of **AST SpaceMobile** onboard the **New Glenn rocket** from the **Cape Canaveral Space Force Station** in Florida. The mission failed to reach the intended orbit during its third flight.

It is to be noted that the **New Glenn rocket** is recognized as the **first commercial rocket to reach orbit on its maiden flight** in **January 2025**.

WEATHER RADAR COMMISSIONED

The **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) Pune**, under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**, has commissioned an **X-Band Dual-Polarization Doppler Weather Radar (DWR)** at its **High Altitude Cloud Physics Laboratory (HACPL)** in **Mahabaleshwar, Maharashtra**. This installation is part of "**Mission Mausam**", a multi-year initiative of the central government to make India a '**Weather-Ready Nation**'.

It is to be noted that the radar is located at an **elevation of 1,400 m** in the **Western Ghats** and operates at a frequency of **9.45 GHz**. Additionally, IITM has signed an MoU with the **Space Applications Centre (SAC)** of the **ISRO** to jointly develop satellite-based meteorological products.

STATE

DELHI TRAFFIC POLICE SIGNS MOU

Sahakar Taxi Cooperative Ltd (STCL) and **Delhi Police** have **signed an MoU** for the **management and digital integration** of **34 pre-paid taxi booths** across **21 locations in Delhi**.

DELHI TO BECOME GLOBAL MEDIA HUB

The **Delhi government** has **signed an MoU with Prasar Bharati** to **develop the national capital into a global media and entertainment hub**.

The agreement was formalized during the **International Film Festival of Delhi (IFFD)** at **Bharat Mandapam**. A **proposed "Delhi Film City"** is expected to be developed on **486 acres of land** in **north Delhi's Khampur**, with the **land provided by Prasar Bharati**.

WOMEN-CENTRIC SCHEME

The **Punjab government** has approved the '**Mukh Mantri Mawan Dheeyan Satkar Yojana (MMDSY)**' scheme, which provides **monthly financial assistance** of **₹1,000 to all eligible women** and **₹1,500 to Scheduled Caste (SC) women** in the state.

FREE POWER SCHEME

The **Andhra Pradesh government** has launched a **free electricity scheme** for **handloom and power loom weavers** across the state. The scheme, with an **annual outlay of ₹150 crore**, is set to commence from **April 2026**.

It aims to **reduce financial stress by cutting power costs**, a significant component in weaving operations. Under the scheme, **handloom weavers** will receive **free electricity up to 200 units per month**, while **power loom operators** will receive **up to 500 units per month**.

MEGHALAYA PARTNERS WITH STARLINK

Meghalaya government has signed a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** with **Starlink India** to launch **high-speed, satellite-based internet services** in the state's **remote areas**.

It is to be noted that Meghalaya is the **third Indian state to partner with Starlink India**, after **Gujarat** and **Maharashtra**.

AMARAVATI BECOMES AP CAPITAL

The **Ministry of Law & Justice (MoL&J)** has **formally notified Amaravati** as the **exclusive and permanent capital** of **Andhra Pradesh**.

This notification followed the passage of the **Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Act, 2026**, by **both houses of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha)** and its subsequent **presidential assent**.

CANCER DECLARED NOTIFIABLE IN TELANGANA

The **Telangana government** has declared **cancer** a '**notifiable disease**'. This mandate requires all **healthcare facilities** in the state to report **diagnosed cancer cases** and **cancer-related deaths** to a **centralized state portal** within **one month**. The initiative aims to create a **database to support public health planning**.

PUDUCHERRY DEPLOYS HUMANOID ROBOT

Puducherry election authorities have deployed a **saree-clad humanoid robot** named '**Nila**' at the **VOC Government School polling booth** during the **Assembly elections**.

The initiative aims to create a **high-tech and welcoming environment for voters**, specifically to **attract youth and first-time voters**.

BIHAR LEADERSHIP CHANGE

Nitish Kumar has **resigned** as the **Chief Minister of Bihar**, concluding a tenure of **two decades** in the politics of the state. He is set to move to a national role in the **Rajya Sabha**.

Samrat Choudhary, the leader of the **BJP legislature party**, is designated to serve as the **next CM of Bihar**.

PACT FOR MARINE SPATIAL PLAN

The **Odisha** government has signed an MoU with the **National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR)**, an agency under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**, to implement a specialized **Marine Spatial Plan (MSP)**.

The MSP aims to maintain a **balance between the coastal economy and the marine environment** of the state. It is to be noted that **Odisha is the first state in India** to initiate the **second phase of the national sustainable ocean planning initiative**.

QUANTUM REFERENCE FACILITY

Andhra Pradesh CM **N Chandrababu Naidu** has inaugurated the **Amaravati Quantum Reference Facility (AQR)**, marking the establishment of the **first open-access quantum reference facility of India**. The facility is designed for **research and commercial validation** and comprises two units: **Amaravati IS** at **SRM University-AP** and **Amaravati IQ** at **Medha Towers, Gannavaram**.

The AQR was developed through a **national collaboration** involving a consortium that includes the **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR)**, the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)**, and the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.

LOAN FOR RAJASTHAN HIGHWAYS

The **World Bank** has approved a **\$225 million (₹2,080 crore)** loan for the **Rajasthan Highway Modernisation Project** to **improve the efficiency, resilience, and safety of state highways**.

The loan, provided by the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**, features a **35-year maturity period** and a **5-year grace period**. It is to be noted that the financial package includes the **first Step-Up Loan (SuL) of India** to support the **modernization of the road network of the state**.

NEW OFFICIAL LANGUAGES FOR MEGHALAYA

The **Meghalaya** government has approved the **'Meghalaya Official Languages Ordinance, 2026'**, formally recognizing **Khasi and Garo** as **official languages in addition to English**.

This ordinance, which **repeals the 'Meghalaya State Language Act, 2005'**, authorizes the use of **Khasi and Garo** in **official government orders, notifications, and correspondence**.

GLASS SEMICONDUCTOR UNIT

The **Odisha** government has hosted the groundbreaking ceremony for the **first advanced glass semiconductor packaging unit of India** at **Info Valley** in **Khordha, Bhubaneswar**.

The project, titled **Heterogeneous Integration Packaging Solutions (3D Glass Solutions)**, is being implemented under the framework of the **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)**. The unit is being established by the **US-based 3D Glass Solutions Inc. (3DGS)** through its wholly-owned subsidiary, **Heterogeneous Integration Packaging Solutions Pvt Ltd (HIPSPL)**.

The project involves a total **financial outlay of ₹1,943.53 crore**, supported by a fiscal assistance of **₹799 crore from the central government** and **₹399.5 crore in state-level incentives** to strengthen the semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem.

PETROGLYPH CONSERVATION PARK

The **Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena**, has laid the foundation stone for the **first Petroglyph Conservation Park of India** on the banks of the **Indus River** at **Sindhu Ghat (Leh, Ladakh)**. The ceremony was held on **April 18**, coinciding with **World Heritage Day**.

An MoU has been signed between the **Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museums** and the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** to facilitate **scientific conservation, education, and research** at the site.

CM-INSPIRE SCHEME IN MEGHALAYA

The **Meghalaya** government has launched the 'Chief Minister's Incentive for Success in Prelims and Innovative Rewards for Excellence' (CM-INSPIRE) scheme for **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) aspirants**.

The initiative aims to **reduce the preparation costs** of candidates and **enhance the representation of the state in civil services**.

APPOINTMENTS

NEW APPOINTMENTS IN INDIAN ARMY

Lt Gen Pushendra Pal Singh, former **Vice Chief of the Army Staff (VCOAS)**, has been appointed as the **General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Western Command**. He **succeeds Lt Gen Manoj Kumar Katiyar**.

Lt Gen VMB Krishnan has assumed the role of **GOC-in-C, Eastern Command**, **succeeding Lt Gen RC Tiwari**. **Lt Gen Sandeep Jain** has been appointed as the **GOC-in-C, Southern Command**, **succeeding Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth**. Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth has assumed the appointment of the **VCOAS**.

NEW APPOINTMENT IN SAIL

KK Singh, the **Director (Personnel)** at **Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL)**, has assumed **additional charge** as **CMD** of the company for **three months**. He succeeds **Amarendu Prakash**.

NEW DG FOR DGCA

The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)** has appointed **Vir Vikram Yadav** as the **Director General (DG)** of the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)**, which is under the **Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)**. He succeeds **Faiz Ahmed Kidwai**.

NEW CEO FOR INDIGO

William Walsh, a **global aviation veteran**, has been appointed as the **CEO of IndiGo (InterGlobe Aviation Ltd)**. He will **succeed Pieter Elbers**, with his appointment **effective from August 3, 2026**.

NEW CEO FOR POLICYBAZAAR

Sajja Praveen Chowdary has been appointed as the **CEO, Principal Officer, and Whole-Time Director** of **Policybazaar Insurance Brokers**.

He succeeds **Tarun Mathur**. It is to be noted that Policybazaar Insurance Brokers is a **wholly owned subsidiary** of **PB Fintech Limited**.

NEW CMD FOR BPCL

The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)** has approved the appointment of **Sanjay Khanna** as the **CMD** of **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)**. He is currently the **Director (Refineries) and interim CMD**. He will hold this position until his **superannuation in May 2029**.

FIRST WOMAN BMC COMMISSIONER

Ashwini Bhide has been appointed as the **Municipal Commissioner** of the **Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)**. It is to be noted that she is the **first woman** to hold this position.

JINDAL STAINLESS APPOINTS RANVEER SINGH

Jindal Stainless has appointed **Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh** as its **first brand ambassador**.

NEW LEADERSHIP AT GODREJ INDUSTRIES

Nadir Godrej will retire as the **Chairman of Godrej Industries Ltd** and assume the role of **Chairman Emeritus**.

Pirojsha Godrej, the current **Chairperson Designate** of the **Godrej Industries Group**, will succeed him as the **Chairperson** of the **Godrej Industries Group** and **Godrej Industries Ltd.**, effective **August 14**.

NEW CHAIRPERSON

UB Pravin Rao has been appointed as the **Chairperson** of the **Nasscom Foundation**. He succeeds **Rostow Ramanan**.

INFOSYS APPOINTS CARLOS ALCARAZ

Carlos Alcaraz, the **world number one ranked tennis player** from **Spain**, has been appointed as the **Global Brand Ambassador** of **Infosys**, a **global technology services firm**.

NEW CM FOR BIHAR

Samrat Choudhary, belonging to the **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) party**, has sworn in as the **24th Chief Minister (CM) of Bihar**. He is the **first leader from the BJP to hold the post**. He succeeds **Nitish Kumar** as the CM.

Vijay Kumar Choudhary and **Bijendra Prasad Yadav** sworn in as **Deputy Chief Ministers (Dy CMs)**.

NEW ACTING DG FOR CCI

Rakesh Bhanot has been appointed as the **Acting Director General (DG)** of the **investigative arm** of the **Competition Commission of India (CCI)**. He succeeds **Ansuman Pattanaik**.

Prior to the appointment, he served as an advisor to the commission. It is to be noted that the CCI operates under the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)**.

NEW CEO FOR APPLE

John Ternus, the **Senior Vice President (SVP) of Hardware Engineering**, has been appointed as the next **CEO** of **Apple Inc.** He will **succeed Tim Cook** in **September 2026**.

NEW APPOINTMENT IN VISA

Suresh Sethi has been appointed as the **Group Country Manager for India and South Asia** of **Visa**, a **global payment technology corporation**.

NEW APPOINTMENTS IN NITI AAYOG

The Government of India (GoI) has appointed **Dr Ashok Lahiri**, a veteran economist and **former Chief Economic Advisor (CEA)**, as the **Vice-Chairman of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog)**. He succeeds **Suman Bery**.

Dr Gobardhan Das, an eminent scientist and the **Director of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER)** in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, has also been appointed as a **full-time member of the NITI Aayog**.

RE-APPOINTMENT FOR VIBHA PADALKAR

Vibha Padalkar has been **re-appointed** as the **MD & CEO** of **HDFC Life Insurance** for a **5-year term**. Her tenure is scheduled to conclude in **September 2031**.

B RAMESH BABU AS KVB CEO

The **RBI** has approved the **re-appointment** of **B Ramesh Babu** as the **MD & CEO** of **Karur Vysya Bank (KVB)** for a **third consecutive term** of 2 years till July 2028.

NEW APPOINTMENTS IN NASSCOM

Srikanth Velamakanni, the **Co-Founder and Group Chief Executive of Fractal**, has been appointed as the **Chairman** of the **National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM)** for the **2026-2027 term**. He succeeds **Sindhu Gangadharan**.

Kishor Patil, the **MD & CEO of KPIT Technologies**, has been elected as the **Vice Chairperson** of **NASSCOM**.

FESTIVALS

BHARAT TRIBES FEST 2026

The **Bharat Tribes Fest (BTF 2026)**, a national celebration of tribal culture, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurship, was held at **Sunder Nursery** in **New Delhi**.

The event was organized by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)** in association with the **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)**. It was inaugurated by **Union Minister Jual Oram** in the presence of dignitaries from **Vietnam**.

During the event, the minister launched '**RISA: Timeless Tribal**', an exclusive brand for tribal weaves and crafts, featuring **10 clusters** covering 5 tribal weaves, 2 embroideries, and 3 crafts. The festival witnessed over **1.5 lakh visitors** and generated **₹4.5 crore in sales**, concluding with the honoring of top-performing tribal artisans and sellers across 10 categories.

AWARDS

PARA ARCHER OF THE YEAR

Sheetal Devi, **India first female armless para-archer**, has been designated the "**Para Archer of the Year 2025**" by the **World Archery Federation (WA)**.

The **19-year-old** from **J&K** also holds the distinction of being the **first and sole female armless archer to win a gold medal** at the **World Para Archery Championships 2025** in **Gwangju, South Korea**. Other top individual accolades include **Emircan Haney** of **Türkiye** as "**Archer of the Year**" and **Baptiste Addis** of **France** as "**Young Archer of the Year**".

HOCKEY INDIA ANNUAL AWARDS

Hardik Singh, a **midfielder for the Indian Men's Hockey Team**, and **Navneet Kaur**, a **forward for the Indian Women's Hockey Team**, have been honoured with the **Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of the Year**. Each received **₹20 lakh**.

Zafar Iqbal, a **former captain**, was conferred the **Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award**, which carried a prize of **₹25 lakh**. **Prince Deep Singh** received the **HI Jugraj Singh Award for Upcoming Player (Men (U21))**, while **Sakshi Rana** was awarded the **HI Asunta Lakra Award for Upcoming Player (Women (U21))**, with both receiving **₹10 lakh each**.

The **Hockey Unit of Jharkhand** was recognised as the **Best Member Unit of the Year**, receiving **₹2.5 lakh** for its contributions to hockey development. **Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and Union Minister of State Raksha Khadse** attended the event. These awards were presented at the **8th Annual Awards ceremony of Hockey India (HI)** in **New Delhi**.

RAMNATH GOENKA JOURNALISM AWARDS

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan was the Chief Guest at the **20th edition of the Ramnath Goenka (RNG) Excellence in Journalism Awards** in **New Delhi**. He presented awards to **25 journalists across 18 categories**.

Notably, **Sandeep Dighe** (**The Times of India**) and **Sreya Chatterjee & Arvind Ojha** (**India Today**) were honoured with the '**Prakash Kardaley Memorial Awards for Civic Journalism**'. The awards were **instituted in 2005** by the **Ramnath Goenka Foundation** to commemorate the birth centenary of **Ramnath Goenka**, the founder of the **Indian Express (IE) Group**. Each recipient receives a citation, a trophy, and a **cash prize of ₹1 lakh**.

PRESIDENT'S POLICE COLOUR

President Droupadi Murmu has approved the conferment of the prestigious **President's Police Colour (Nishaan)** on the **Uttarakhand Police** and **Odisha Police**.

The honour is recognised as the **highest national honour for a state police force**, acknowledging their **exceptional service, professionalism, and commitment to internal security and public safety**.

SKYTRAX AWARDS

Changi Airport in Singapore has been named the **world's best airport** for the **14th time since 2000** at the **Skytrax World Airport Awards 2026**, held during the **Passenger Terminal Expo & Conference (PTE) World in London**. It also won awards for **World's Best Airport Dining, Best Airport in the 60-70 Million Passenger Category, Best Airport Immigration Service, and Best Airport in Asia**.

Seoul Incheon Airport in South Korea secured the **second position globally** and received the award for **World's Most Family Friendly Airport**. **Tokyo Haneda Airport in Japan** ranked **third**, earning awards for **World's Cleanest Airport (Major Airport), World's Best Domestic Airport, and World's Best Airport for Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRM) & Accessible Facilities**.

Five Indian airports were listed among the world's top 100. **Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in Delhi**, ranking **28th**, was awarded as the **Best Airport in India & South Asia**.

TRIPURA PANCHAYATS WIN TOP AWARDS

Three Panchayats from Tripura have secured **top honours** at the **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (DDUPSVP) 2025** and the **Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (NDPSVP) 2025**, presented by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)**.

Sepahijala District Panchayat has secured the **first rank** in the **Best DP category** under the **NDPSVP**. **Kanchanbari Gram Panchayat** from **Unakoti district** achieved the **first rank** under the **Healthy Panchayat category** of the **DDUPSVP**. **Baikunthapur Gram Panchayat** from **West Tripura district** secured the **third rank** under the **Women-Friendly Panchayat category** of the **DDUPSVP**.

SAGAR SAMMAN VARUNA AWARD

Capt. Binesh Kumar Tyagi, the **CMD of the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI)**, has been conferred the **Sagar Samman Varuna Award**. The award was presented during the **63rd National Maritime Day** celebrations held in **Mumbai**.

CHETAK SCREEN AWARDS 2026

The **Indian Express Group** has organized the **Chetak Screen Awards 2026** in **Mumbai**, marking the resumption of the event after a **gap of 7 years**. The ceremony honoured excellence in **Indian cinema** and **Over-the-Top (OTT) content** released during the 2025 calendar year.

The spy thriller **“Dhurandhar”** was the most successful production, winning **14 awards** from **24 nominations**. **Aditya Dhar** was named the **Best Director** for the film, while **Ranveer Singh** won the **Best Actor (Male)** award and **Akshaye Khanna** won the **Best Supporting Actor (Male)** award.

It is to be noted that **“Homebound”**, directed by **Neeraj Ghaywan**, won the **Best Film award**. **Shalini Vatsa** won the **Best Supporting Actor (Female)** award for the performance in the film, and **Yami Gautam Dhar** won the **Best Actor (Female)** award for the role in the film **“Haq”**.

TIME 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

The global media brand **TIME** has released the **23rd edition** of the **“TIME 100 Most Influential People 2026”** list. Three Indian nationals featured in the publication include **Sundar Pichai** (the **CEO of Google and Alphabet**), Chef **Vikas Khanna**, and actor **Ranbir Kapoor**.

It is to be noted that the list also recognized **Zohran Mamdani** (the **Indian-origin Mayor of New York City**) and **Balendra Shah** (the **35-year-old PM of Nepal**) as prominent young leaders.

SOUTH ASIAN PERSON OF THE YEAR

Sayani Gupta, a **Bollywood actress**, has been designated as the **South Asian ‘Person of the Year’** by the **Harvard University South Asian Association (SAA)**. The honour recognises her contributions to the **fields of film, storytelling, and representation**.

WWF NATIONAL AWARD

N Alim Yusuf, a **botanist from Kerala**, has been honoured with the **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) National Award**. The award was presented during the **National ECHO Youth Innovation Summit 2026**, held as part of the International Youth Biodiversity Conference in **Hyderabad**.

He was recognised for developing **‘NeophyteID’**, an **AI powered mobile application** that identifies **100 invasive plant species** in Kerala. The application uses the **YOLOv11 Machine Learning model** for detection. WWF has also provided a **seed grant of ₹1.5 lakh** for the further development and scaling of the project.

MS SWAMINATHAN AWARD

Dr. Ch. Srinivasa Rao, the Director and Vice-Chancellor of the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-IARI)**, has been conferred the **9th “Prof. MS Swaminathan Award”** for the **2024-25 period** in **Hyderabad**. The award carries a **Gold Medal** and a cash prize of **₹2 lakh**.

GOLDMAN ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE

The **Goldman Environmental Foundation** has conferred the **2026 Goldman Environmental Prize**, frequently referred to as the **“Green Nobel”**, to an **all-women cohort** at a ceremony in **San Francisco, US**. This marks the first such occurrence since the **inception of the award in 1989**.

The six recipients include **Iroko Tanshi (Nigeria - Africa)**, **Borim Kim (South Korea - Asia)**, **Sarah Finch (United Kingdom (UK) - Europe)**, **Theonila Roka Matbob (Papua New Guinea - Islands and Island Nations)**, **Alannah Acaq Hurley** from the **US (North America)**, and **Yuvelis Morales Blanco (Colombia - South and Central America)**. It is to be noted that each recipient was granted a **cash prize of \$200,000**.

GLOBAL GREEN ICON

J Santosh Kumar, a **former Member of Parliament (MP)** and environmentalist, has been conferred the **“Global Green Icon”** award at the **World Climate Leaders Conclave 2026** held at the **House of Lords** in **London**.

It is to be noted that he was elected to the **Rajya Sabha** in **2018** from the **Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS)** to represent the state of **Telangana**.

WEF YOUNG GLOBAL LEADERS 2026

The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** has announced the **Young Global Leaders (YGL) Class of 2026**, featuring **118 individuals** from **55 countries**.

The list includes several prominent Indians such as **Jay Shah**, **Isha Ambani**, **Sumit Gupta**, **Abhishek Bansal**, **Ameve Sharma**, **Suhani Jalota**, **Aniket Doegar**, **Supriya Paul**, **Dr. Edmond Clint Fernandes**, and **Natsuki Sugai**. The YGL initiative was established by the WEF in 2004 to identify influential leaders **under 40 years of age** for a **five-year leadership programme** based in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

GREENPRO CERTIFICATION FOR RATHI STEEL

Rathi Steel and Power Ltd (RSPL), a **special steel manufacturer**, has been awarded the **GreenPro Ecolabel Certification** by the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**.

The certification is for the **Rathi Powertech Thermo-Mechanically Treated (TMT) rebars** produced at the manufacturing facility of the company in **Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh**. It is to be noted that the certification covers **Fe 550 grade TMT rebars** and serves as a **Type-1 Eco label**, validating environmental performance in line with international standards.

US ARMY HALL OF FAME

General Upendra Dwivedi, the **Chief of the Army Staff (COAS)** of the Indian Army (IA), has been inducted into the **International Hall of Fame (HoF)** of the **United States Army War College (USAWC)** in **Pennsylvania, USA**.

He is the **third IA Chief to receive this distinction**, following the inductions of **General VK Singh** and **General Bikram Singh**.

LAUREUS WORLD SPORTS AWARDS

The **2026 Laureus World Sports Awards**, known as the **"Oscars of Sport"**, was held in **Madrid, Spain**. The event was co-hosted by **Novak Djokovic** (five-time winner) and **Eileen Gu** (Olympic skiing champion).

Carlos Alcaraz (22 years old) was named the **World Sportsman of the Year**, becoming the **youngest-ever recipient**. **Aryna Sabalenka** won the **World Sportswoman of the Year**, and **Paris Saint-Germain** was named the **World Team of the Year**.

It is to be noted that the **women cricket team of India** was **nominated for the World Team of the Year** following their **first One Day International (ODI) World Cup victory in 2025**.

Other winners include **Lando Norris** (**World Breakthrough of the Year**), **Rory McIlroy** (**World Comeback of the Year**), **Lamine Yamal** (**Young Sportsman of the Year**), **Chloe Kim** (**World Action Sportsman**), and **Gabriel Araújo** (**Sportsman with a Disability**).

Nadia Comaneci, a gymnastics legend, was given the **Lifetime Achievement Award**, while former footballer **Toni Kroos** received the **Sporting Inspiration Award**. The organization **Futbol Mas** was presented with the **Sport for Good Award** for supporting vulnerable communities through football.

GEM AWARD

The **Guntur Municipal Corporation (GMC)** in **Andhra Pradesh** has been conferred the **4th edition** of the **"Gender Equality Mobilisation" (GEM) Award**.

The award is presented by the **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)** recognising the initiatives and mobilisation efforts of the GMC towards **gender equality**.

SPORTS

GURJANT SINGH ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Gurjant Singh, an **Indian men's hockey forward**, has **announced his retirement from international hockey**. The announcement was made during the **8th Hockey India Annual Awards** held in **New Delhi**. He was a recipient of the **Arjuna Award in 2021**.

CAROLINA MARÍN RETIRES FROM BADMINTON

Carolina Marín, a **32-year-old Spaniard**, who is an **Olympic gold medallist** and **three-time world champion**, has **announced her retirement from professional badminton**.

YOUNGEST F1 LEADER

Andrea Kimi Antonelli, a **19-year-old Italian national** racing for **Mercedes**, has **won the Formula One (F1) Japanese Grand Prix (GP) 2026**. With this win, he becomes the **youngest driver in history to lead the F1 World Championship**.

YOUNGEST T20I CENTURION

Fanny Utagushimaninde of **Rwanda** has become the **youngest player to score a century in Women's T20I cricket**. She achieved this feat at the age of **15 years and 223 days** during the **Nigeria Invitational Women's T20I Tournament** in **Lagos**.

She scored an **unbeaten 111 runs off 65 balls**, which included **17 boundaries**, in a match against the **Ghana women's national cricket team**. It is to be noted that she also became the **youngest T20I centurion across all genders**, surpassing the previous record held by **Prosscovia Alako of Uganda**.

IOC POLICY ON FEMALE ATHLETES

The **International Olympic Committee (IOC) Executive Board** has approved a **new policy** titled '**Protection of the Female (Women's) Category in Olympic Sport**'. This policy is set to take effect from the **Los Angeles 2028 (LA28) Olympic Games (July 2028, in the USA)**.

It is to be noted that this policy **replaces the 2021 framework** and will **not be applied retroactively**. The **eligibility criteria for female categories mandate Sex-determining Region Y Gene Screening (SRY), requiring athletes to be SRY-negative, citing biological advantages in strength, power, and endurance**.

International Olympic Committee (IOC):

President – Kirsty Coventry

Headquarters – Lausanne, Switzerland

Established in – 1894

ICC PLAYERS OF THE MONTH

Sahibzada Farhan of **Pakistan** has been named the **International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's Player of the Month for February 2026**.

Arundhati Reddy of **India** has won the **ICC Women's Player of the Month for February 2026**.

MIAMI OPEN 2026

Jannik Sinner of **Italy** has won the **men's singles title** and **Aryna Sabalenka** of **Belarus** has won the **women's singles title** at the **41st edition** of the **Miami Open 2026**.

The tournament was held at the **Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida**. It featured both an **Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Masters 1000** and a **Women's Tennis Association (WTA) 1000 draw**.

INDIAN SQUASH PLAYERS HONOURED

Indian squash player Abhay Singh received the **Dato Alex Lee Award for Men's Player of the Year 2025**, and **Anahat Singh** was honoured with the **Hassan Musa Award for Junior Girls' Player of the Year 2025** at the **Asian Squash Federation (ASF) Awards 2025**.

The **Indian Boys Team** also won the **Men's Team Award** after securing a **bronze medal** at the **2025 World Junior Team Championships** in **Egypt**.

RASSIE VAN DER DUSSEN RETIRES

Rassie van der Dussen, a **South African cricketer**, has **announced retirement from international cricket**. He was a **leading run-scorer in the 2019 and 2023 One Day International (ODI) World Cups and the 2025 Champions Trophy**. He was **named in the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's ODI Team of the Year 2021**.

FIRST INDIAN WOMAN

Divya Singh, a **28-year-old schoolteacher** from **Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh**, becomes the **first Indian woman to reach Mount Everest Base Camp (EBC) by bicycle**. She achieved this feat by reaching an **altitude of 17,560 feet**.

KHELO INDIA TRIBAL GAMES 2026

Karnataka emerged as the overall champion, securing a total of **38 medals**, including 23 gold, 8 silver, and 7 bronze at the inaugural **Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 (KITG 2026)** held in Chhattisgarh. **Odisha** secured the second position, while **Jharkhand** finished third in the games.

EVENT AMBASSADOR

Blanka Vlasic, a **Croatian high jumper and double Olympic medallist**, has been appointed as the **International Event Ambassador** for the **18th edition of the Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) World 10K Bengaluru**.

IPL MILESTONE

Bhuvneshwar Kumar, representing **Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB)**, has become the **first fast bowler** in the history of the **Indian Premier League (IPL)** to reach the **200-wicket milestone**.

He is the **second bowler overall** to achieve this feat, following the record set by leg-spinner **Yuzvendra Chahal**.

ASIAN BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS

India finished **second** in the overall standings at the **Asian Boxing Championships 2026 (ABC)** held in **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**. India won a total of **16 medals**, including **5 gold, 3 silver, and 8 bronze**. **Kazakhstan topped the rankings** with 15 medals (6 gold), while Uzbekistan stood third.

The **gold medalists** from India at the ABC include **Minakshi Hooda (48kg)**, **Preeti Pawar (54kg)**, **Priya Ghanghas (60kg)**, and **Arundhati Choudhary (70kg)** in the women categories. **Vishvanath Suresh** won gold in the **men 50kg category**.

LAURA CARDOSO SETS CRICKET RECORD

Laura Cardoso, a **Brazilian all-rounder**, becomes the **first cricketer in history** (across both men's and women's formats) to **claim 9 wickets in a single T20I innings**. She achieved this record against **Lesotho** during the **BCA Kalahari Women's T20I Tournament** held in **Botswana**.

BADMINTON ASIA CHAMPIONSHIPS 2026

The **43rd edition of the Badminton Asia Championships 2026**, officially named the '**Bank of Ningbo Badminton Asia Championships 2026**', was held at the **Ningbo Olympic Sports Center Gymnasium** in **Ningbo, China**. The tournament was organized by Badminton Asia and hosted by the **Chinese Badminton Association (CBA)**.

India finished 4th in the tournament, with **Ayush Shetty** winning **silver** in the **men's singles category**. It is to be noted that he is the **first Indian in 61 years to reach the final** of the men's singles event at the championships. **South Korea topped the medal tally** with **5 medals (3 gold, 1 silver, and 1 bronze)**, followed by China and Thailand.

SENIOR ASIAN WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

India finished **5th in the medal tally** at the **22nd edition** of the **Senior Asian Wrestling Championships** held in **Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**. The 30-member Indian contingent won a total of **17 medals**, including **2 gold**, 6 silver, and 9 bronze. **Iran topped the standings** with 18 medals (6 gold), followed by Japan and China.

Sujeet Kalkal (65 kg freestyle) and **Abhimanyou Mandwal (70 kg freestyle)** have won the **gold medals** for India. The event was organized by the **Asian Associated Wrestling Committee (AAWC)** under the **United World Wrestling (UWW)** and saw participation from around 324 wrestlers representing 21 countries.

United World Wrestling (UWW):

President – Nenad Lalovic

Headquarters – Lausanne, Switzerland

Established in – 1912

FIDE CANDIDATES TOURNAMENT

R Vaishali, an **Indian Grandmaster (GM)**, becomes the **first Indian woman to win** the **International Chess Federation (FIDE) Women's Candidates Tournament 2026**.

She defeated **Kateryna Lagno** (Russia) in the final round of the tournament held in **Pegeia, Cyprus**. It is to be noted that **Javokhir Sindarov** of **Uzbekistan** has won the **Open Section** of the Candidates Tournament.

Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE):

President – Arkady Dvorkovich

Deputy President – Viswanathan Anand

95TH GRANDMASTER FOR INDIA

Aronyak Ghosh from **Kolkata** becomes the **95th Grandmaster (GM) of India**. He secured his **third and final GM norm** at the **23rd Bangkok Chess Club (BCC) Open 2026**, which was held in **Bangkok, Thailand**.

ISSF WORLD CUP

India has won a **gold medal** at the **International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup (Rifle/Pistol) 2026** held in **Granada, Spain**. **Mukesh Nelavalli** and **Palak Gulia** secured the gold in the **mixed team 10m air pistol event**.

China topped the medal standings with **13 medals** (8 gold, 3 silver, and 2 bronze), followed by **Germany** with 2 medals (1 gold and 1 silver). India concluded the tournament with a total of **1 gold medal**.

International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF):

President – Luciano Rossi

Headquarters – Munich, Germany

Established in – 1907

INDIA IN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The **Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)** has selected **India** as one of the **12 nations** for the '**Women's Development Programme (Commercial Strategy 2026)**'.

The programme aims to strengthen the **commercial viability, sustainability, and professional framework** of women's football on a global scale. Other participating countries include **Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Scotland, Canada, Mexico, Finland, Ghana, Jordan, Lithuania, and Paraguay**.

FIFA (International Association Football Federation):

President – Gianni Infantino

Headquarters – Zurich, Switzerland

Established in – 1904

WORLD RECORD AT LONDON MARATHON

Sbastian Kimaru Sawe, a **Kenyan athlete**, has won the **men's elite title** at the **London Marathon 2026**.

He became the first individual to complete a competitive marathon (42.2 km) in under 2 hours, clocking a record time of **1 hour 59 minutes 30 seconds**. It is to be noted that he surpassed the previous world record held by **Kelvin Kiptum** (Kenya).

BOOKS

TIDES OF TIME BOOK RELEASE

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan has released a book titled '**Tides of Time: Bharat's History through Murals in Parliament**' at **Samvidhan Sadan, New Delhi**.

The book is a **Lok Sabha Secretariat** publication, authored by **Sudha Murty** (Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha).

UPDATED EDITION OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

RT Chari has released the **updated edition** of the **autobiography** titled '**A Road Well Travelled**', authored by **RK Raghavan**, a **former Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**.

Nandini Azad, **President of the Indian Cooperative Network for Women (ICNW)**, received the **inaugural copy**. The autobiography was **initially published by Westland Publications in 2020** and later **reissued by Creative Workshop**.

NEW ANTHOLOGY DIVYA BHARAT LAUNCHED

Suman Bery, the **Vice Chairman of the NITI Aayog**, has launched an anthology titled "**Divya Bharat: A Window to the Soul of India**" in **New Delhi**. The publication aims to showcase the rich cultural heritage and tourism potential of the nation.

The anthology features **3,000 curated entries**, comprising **2,100 tourism destinations** and **1,200 cultural listings**. This initiative supports national efforts and the strategic plan to develop **50 global tourist destinations**.

NEW BOOK BY MANOJ MUKUND NARAVANE

General Manoj Mukund Naravane (Retd), the **28th Chief of the Army Staff (COAS)**, has released a book titled "**The Curious and the Classified: Unearthing Military Myths and Mysteries**".

The book, published by **Rupa Publications**, investigates various military myths and historical mysteries.

OBITUARY

CHANDRIKAPERSAD SANTOKHI PASSED AWAY

Chandrikapersad "Chan" Santokhi, a **former President of Suriname** and a **prominent leader of the Indian diaspora**, passed away at 67. He served as the **President of Suriname from 2020 to 2025**.

He was honored with the **Pravasi Bharatiya Samman**, which is the **highest Indian award for Overseas Indians or institutions, instituted by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)**. It is to be noted that he was the **first Surinamese President to take the oath of office in Sanskrit**.

FORMER MINISTER PASSED AWAY

Abu Hasem Khan Choudhury, a former Union Minister and veteran Congress leader, passed away at 89. He was popularly known as '**Dalu Babu**'.

He was a **4-time Member of Parliament (MP)** from the **Maldaha Dakshin (Malda South) constituency** since 2009. Prior to this, he served as a **Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)** from the **Kaliachak constituency** from 1996 to 2006.

MOHSINA KIDWAI PASSED AWAY

Mohsina Kidwai, a veteran Congress leader and former Union Minister, passed away at 94. She was a **member of both Houses of Parliament**, representing Meerut in the **6th, 7th, and 8th Lok Sabha**, and later serving as a **Rajya Sabha member from Chhattisgarh from 2004 to 2016**.

ASHA BHOSLE PASSED AWAY

Asha Bhosle, legendary **playback singer**, passed away at the age of 92. She was a recipient of the **Dadasaheb Phalke Award** in 2000 and the **Padma Vibhushan** in 2008.

Her accolades include two **National Film Awards** and seven **Filmfare Awards** for Best Female Playback Singer, along with the **Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award** in 2001.

In 2011, she was recognized by the **Guinness World Records** as the **most recorded artist in history** with over 11,000 songs in more than 20 languages. She also holds the distinction of being the **first Indian singer to be nominated for a Grammy Award** for the albums '**Legacy**' (1997) and '**You've Stolen My Heart**' (2006).

JIM WHITTAKER PASSED AWAY

James Warren Whittaker, known as **Jim Whittaker**, the **first American to summit Mount Everest**, passed away at the age of **97**. He reached the summit in **1963** along with **Nawang Gombu**, becoming the **10th person globally** to achieve this feat.

CD GOPINATH PASSED AWAY

CD Gopinath, the **oldest living Indian Test cricketer**, passed away at 96. He was the **world's second-oldest living Test cricketer** after **Neil Harvey** (97).

Following his demise, former Indian wicketkeeper-batter **Chandu Patankar** (95) has become the **oldest living Indian Test cricketer**.

SONAM WANGCHUK PASSED AWAY

Sonam Wangchuk, a **1999 Kargil War hero** fondly known as the "**Lion of Ladakh**", passed away at the age of 61. He was a recipient of the **Maha Vir Chakra (MVC)**, the **second-highest wartime gallantry award** of India, in 1999.

NARAYANA RAMACHANDRAN PASSES AWAY

Narayana Ramachandran, the former president of the **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** and the **World Squash Federation (WSF)**, passed away at the age of 77.

He served as the 12th president of IOA from 2014 to 2017. During his tenure as the WSF president (2008-16), he became the **first Indian to lead an International Olympic Committee (IOC) recognized international federation**.

BALBIR PUNJ PASSED AWAY

Balbir Punj, a **veteran journalist** and former **Member of Parliament (MP)** from the **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)**, passed away at the age of 76.

He served two terms in the **Rajya Sabha** representing **Uttar Pradesh** from 2000-06 and **Odisha** from 2008-14. He was also a recipient of the "**Lifelong Devrishi Narad Samman Award**" in 2022.

BHAGWANDAS RAIKWAR PASSED AWAY

Bhagwandas Raikwar, a pioneer of **Bundeli martial arts** fondly known as '**Dau**', passed away in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh (MP). He was a recipient of **Padma Shri** in **2026**.

FORMER ANDHRA CM PASSES AWAY

Nadendla Bhaskara Rao, the former **CM of Andhra Pradesh**, passed away at the age of 90.

He served as the CM for a **31-day duration**, which is one of the **shortest tenures** in the history of the state, after assuming office during the absence of **NT Rama Rao**.

RAGHU RAI PASSED AWAY

Raghu Rai, a renowned **Indian** photographer known as the “**Father of Indian Photojournalism**”, passed away at the age of 83. He was a recipient of **Padma Shri** in 1972.

In 1977, he became the **first Indian** photographer to join the international cooperative **Magnum Photos**, nominated by Henri Cartier-Bresson. He also received the **Lifetime Achievement Award** from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) in 2017 and the **Académie des Beaux-Arts Photography Award** in 2019.

GURBAX SINGH GREWAL PASSED AWAY

Gurbax Singh Grewal, a former **Indian** hockey player and **Olympian**, passed away at 84. He was a member of the Indian team that won the **bronze medal** in the **1968 Mexico City Olympics**.

DR GOPALRAO PATIL PASSED AWAY

Gopalrao Patil, a former **Member of Parliament (MP) in the Rajya Sabha** and a **distinguished paediatrician**, passed away at the age of 94. He was widely known by the epithet ‘**Devmanus**’ (Godly man).

DAYS

WORLD POETRY DAY

Day – **March 21**

Theme 2026 – “**Poetry as a Bridge for Peace and Inclusion**”

Observed since – **2000**

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FORESTS

Day – **March 21**

Theme 2026 – “**Forests and Economies**”

Observed since – **2013**

WORLD WATER DAY

Day – **March 22**

Theme 2026 – “**Water and Gender**”

Observed by – **UN**

Observed since – **1993**

MARTYRS’ DAY

Day – **March 23**

Commemorating – **The martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar**

Also known as – **Sarvodaya Day or Shaheed Diwas**

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL DAY

Day – **March 23**

Theme 2026 – “**Observing Today, Protecting Tomorrow**”

Observed since – **1961**

Commemorating – **The establishment of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1950**

WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY

Day – **March 24**

Theme 2026 – “**Yes! We Can End TB! Led by Countries, Powered by People**”

Observed since – **1983**

WORLD THEATRE DAY

Day – **March 27**

Observed by – **International Theatre Institute (ITI)**

Observed since – **1962**

EARTH HOUR

Day – **Last Saturday of March (March 28 in 2025)**

Theme 2026 – “**Give An Hour For Earth**”

Observed by – **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)**

Observed since – **2007**

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CONSCIENCE

Day – **April 5**

Theme 2026 – “**Acting with Ethics, Empathy, and Integrity**”

Observed by – **UN**

Observed since – **2020**

Proposed by – **Bahrain**

NATIONAL MARITIME DAY**Day – April 5****Theme 2026 – “Maritime India – Empowering Progress”****Observed since – 1964****Commemorating –** Madien voyage of India’s first swadeshi ship ‘SS Loyalty’ from Mumbai to London in 1919. The ship is owned by Scindia Steam Navigation Company.**262ND RAISING DAY OF THE ARMY MEDICAL CORPS****Day – April 3****Commemorating –** To honor the establishment of the Army Medical Corps in 1764.**CRPF VALOUR DAY (SHAURYA DIWAS)****Day – April 9****Commemorating –** Valour displayed by the CRPF soldiers during the Battle of Sardar Post in Rann of Kutch, Gujarat, in 1965**WORLD HOMEOPATHY DAY****Day – April 10****Commemorating –** Birth anniversary of Samuel Hahnemann, the Founder of Homeopathy**WORLD PARKINSON’S DAY****Day – April 11****Theme 2026 – “Bridge the Care Gap”****Observed since – 1997****Commemorating –** Birth anniversary of Dr James Parkinson**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT****Day – April 12****Theme 2026 –** “A Tribute to Exploration, Unity, and Progress”**Observed since – 2011****Commemorating –** Russian scientist Yuri Gagarin carrying first human space flight in 1961**107TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE****Day – April 13****Also known as –** Amritsar massacre**Massacre happened in –** April 13, 1919**42ND SIACHEN DAY****Day – April 13****Commemorating –** “Operation Meghdoot” of Indian Army, led by Major RS Sandhu in 1984**WORLD QUANTUM DAY****Day – April 14****Observed since – 2022****Symbolising –** 4.14 (April 14), which is the value of Planck’s constant**NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE DAY****Day – April 14****Theme 2026 –** “Safe School, Safe Hospital & Fire Safety Aware Society – Together for Fire Prevention”**Commemorating –** Explosion of a Dock in the Bombay Port in 1944 which killed 66 firemen during rescue operation**INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR MONUMENTS AND SITES****Day – April 18****Theme 2026 –** “Heritage under Threat from Disasters and Conflicts: Preparedness and Learning from 60 years of ICOMOS Actions”**Observed by –** International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)**Also known as –** World Heritage Day**Scoreclever**

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Terminology Guide

1. Power Purchase Agreement

News: 18

A Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is a contract between a company that generates electricity and an electricity distributor. This agreement outlines how much electricity will be supplied, at what price, and for how long.

2. Repo rate

News: 106

The 'Repo rate' is the official interest rate at which the RBI, lends money to commercial banks. Repo is short for Repurchase Option or Repurchase Rate. When commercial banks need funds to meet their short-term requirements, they borrow from the RBI by selling government securities, promising to buy them back later. This rate is a crucial tool used by the RBI to control the money supply in the economy and manage inflation. When the Repo rate changes, it directly influences the cost of borrowing for banks, which eventually affects the interest rates offered on loans and deposits for the general public.

3. Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) Rate

News: 106

The Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) Rate is an interest rate set by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) that serves as a tool for absorbing excess cash (liquidity) from the commercial banking system. It allows commercial banks to deposit their surplus funds with the RBI overnight without the RBI needing to provide any collateral, such as government securities, in exchange. The SDF Rate is the interest the RBI pays to the commercial banks for parking this excess money.

4. Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate

News: 106

The Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate is the penal rate of interest at which commercial banks can borrow money from the RBI overnight when they face an acute shortage of funds, or a serious liquidity crunch. This facility acts as a safety valve, allowing banks to meet their urgent needs when all other borrowing options are exhausted. Because it is an emergency measure, the MSF Rate is always set higher than the general policy rates, which helps discourage banks from over-relying on this short-term borrowing channel.

5. Bank Rate

News: 106

The Bank Rate is the interest rate at which the RBI provides loans or advances to commercial banks without requiring any collateral or security. Unlike the Repo Rate, which is used for very short-term borrowing, the Bank Rate is usually applicable to long-term financial accommodations.

6. Asset Monetisation

News: 153

'Asset monetisation' refers to a process where the government or public sector entities generate revenue from their existing assets without selling them permanently. Instead, they allow private sector companies to operate, maintain, or develop these assets for a specified period, in exchange for a fee or a share of the revenue. This strategy helps unlock the economic value of underutilised assets and provides funds for new infrastructure projects or other government initiatives.

7. Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

News: 176

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is an important economic indicator that measures the proportion of the population of working age—usually 15 years and above—who are actively participating in the labour market. This rate includes two groups: people who are currently employed (working) and those who are unemployed but are actively seeking work. It excludes individuals who are neither working nor looking for a job.

8. Worker Population Ratio (WPR)

News: 176

The 'Worker Population Ratio (WPR)' is a measure used in labour statistics to indicate the proportion of the population that is employed. It is calculated by taking the total number of employed persons in a specific age group and dividing it by the total population in that same age group. Essentially, it tells us what percentage of the population is actively working.

9. Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)

News: 179

'Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)' is a term used to calculate the average annual growth rate of an investment or value over a specific period longer than one year. It smooths out any fluctuations and provides a hypothetical constant rate at which a value would have grown if it had compounded at the same rate each year. For example, if electricity demand grows from 100 units to 160 units over 5 years, the CAGR would give you the average yearly growth rate that would lead to this increase.

10. Digital twin**News: 240**

A 'digital twin' is a virtual replica or model of a physical object, system, or process. It is created using real-time data collected from sensors attached to its physical counterpart. This virtual model behaves exactly like the real one, allowing for monitoring, analysis, simulation, and optimization without directly interacting with the physical asset. In the context of a port, a digital twin would be a complete virtual model of the entire port infrastructure, operations, and logistics, helping in better management and decision-making.

11. Application Programming Interface (API)**News: 262**

An 'Application Programming Interface (API)' is a set of rules and protocols that allows different software applications to communicate with each other. Think of it as a messenger that takes your request from one application and delivers it to another, then brings the response back to you. In the context of the news, it means that businesses can connect their own systems (like an e-commerce website) directly with the Department of Posts' services, allowing for automated tasks like booking shipments or tracking parcels without manually logging into a separate portal.

Publication Guide**Volume
#1.8****Issue
#D1**

The Volume tag indicates the Year and the Month. The value before the decimal point indicates the Year. The value after the decimal indicates the Month.

The Issue tag indicates the Day or Week or Month. 'D' indicates Day, and 'M' indicates Month.

In the given example, the Volume tag is 23.8 and the Issue tag is D1. This indicates that the PDF is from the Day 1 of the Month 8 of the Year 2023 which is 01-08-2023.

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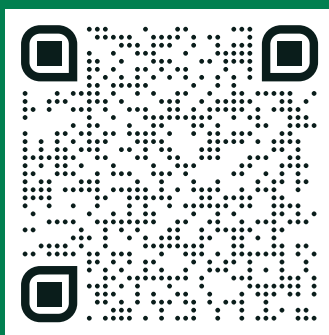
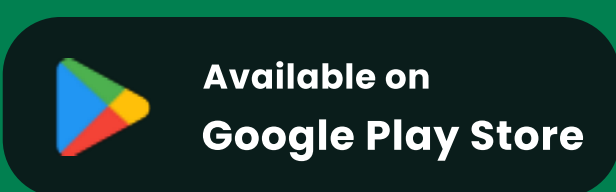
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