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— ACADEMY FOR CIVIL SERVICES —

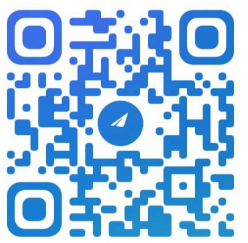
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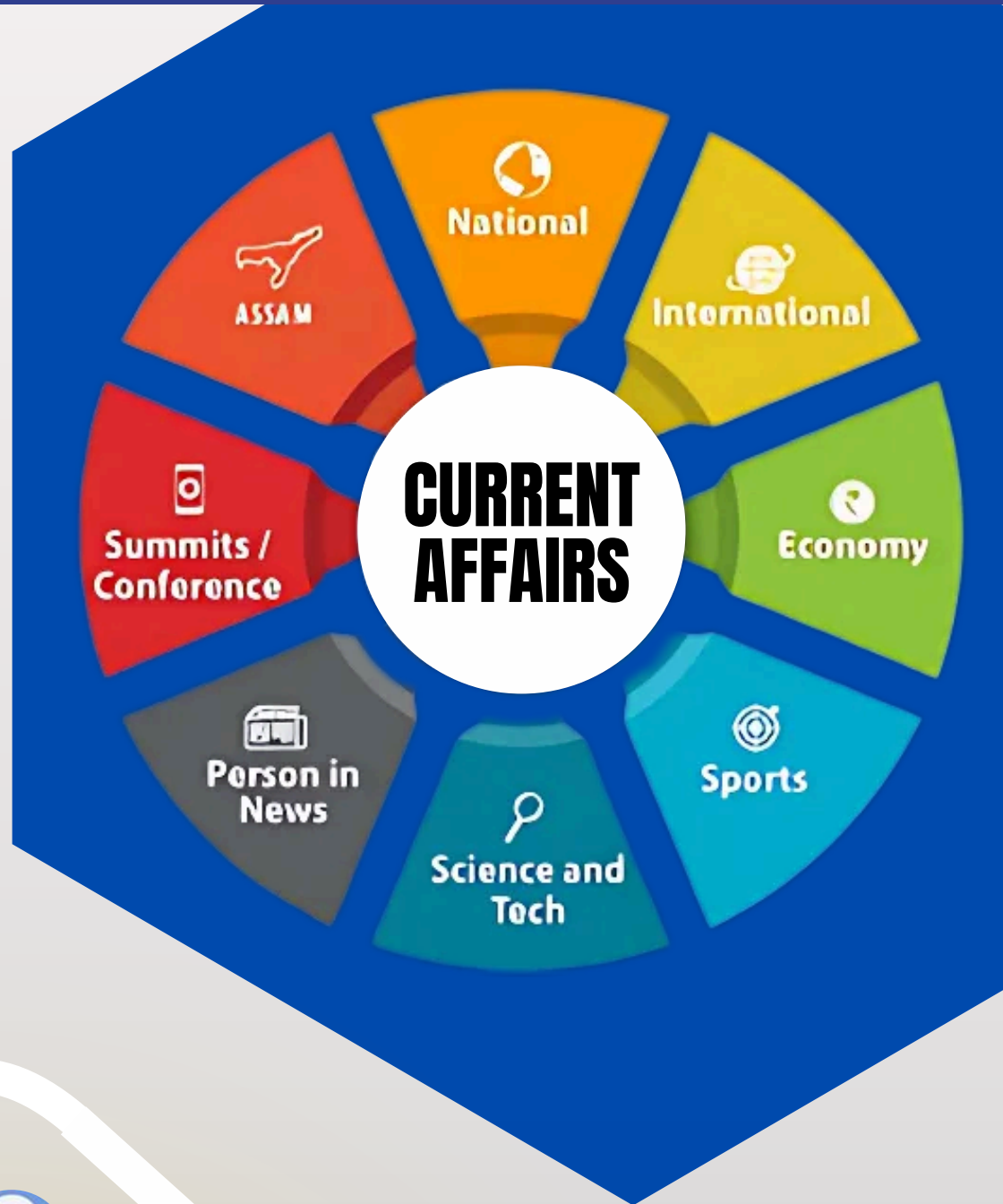
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# CONTENTS

## INDIAN POLITY..... 5

1.CASTE CENSUS TO BE DONE ALONG WITH NATIONAL CENSUS: MODI GOVERNMENT'S BIG DECISION: .....	5
2.GOV'T REVAMPS NSAB, APPOINTS 6 NEW MEMBERS: .....	5
3.RAILWAY MINISTRY LAUNCHES 'DESIGN A DIGITAL CLOCK' CHALLENGE: .....	5
4.PM COMMISSIONS VIZHINJAM SEAPORT; SAYS IT WILL BRING ECONOMIC STABILITY TO INDIA: .....	6
5.SC-APPOINTED PANEL SUBMITS REPORT TO CJI: .....	6
6.PM SEALS HISTORIC INDIA-UK FREE TRADE AGREEMENT: .....	6
7.SUPREME COURT MAKES PUBLIC JUDGES' APPOINTMENT PROCESS: .....	7
8.MOA SIGNED TO TRANSFORM RAJ BHAVAN'S FUNCTIONING: .....	7
9.CJI NOD TO JUSTICE VARMA'S IMPEACHMENT: .....	8
10.SC DIRECTS STATES/UTS TO FRAME GUIDELINES ON WALKWAYS: .....	9
11.MDONER SETS AROUND RS 4,000-CR INVESTMENT TARGET FOR REGION: .....	9
12.AVIATION WATCHDOG BCAS REVOKES SECURITY CLEARANCE FOR TURKISH FIRM CELEBI: .....	9
13.INDIA'S MP TEAMS TO EXPOSE PAKISTAN IN OTHER NATIONS: .....	10
14.3 NE MPS IN GLOBAL OUTREACH PROGRAMME: .....	10
15.PM TO INAUGURATE HAIBARGAON RAILWAY STATION ON MAY 22: .....	10
16.PM TO INAUGURATE NE INVESTORS MEET TOMORROW: .....	11
17.INDIA TO MOVE FATF TO PUT PAKISTAN BACK ON 'GREY LIST': .....	11
18.NEED SPECIAL COURTS FOR NIA CASES: SC: .....	11
19.NITI AAYOG ROLLS OUT 6-POINT ROAD MAP FOR BIG PUSH TO MEDIUM ENTERPRISES: .....	12
20.SC DIRECTS REDUCTION IN IPS POSTINGS AT CAPFS: .....	12
21.GOV'T ALLOCATES RS 18,233 CR UNDER RODTEP SCHEME: .....	13
22.RAJNATH APPROVES EXECUTION MODEL FOR 5TH-GEN STEALTH FIGHTER JET PROJECT: .....	13
23.CABINET APPROVES CONTINUATION OF INTEREST SUBVENTION SCHEME FOR FARMERS: .....	14

## INDIAN ECONOMY..... 15

24.COMM MIN'S EPM MAY HAVE 12-POINT PLAN TO PUSH EXPORTS, HELP MSME: .....	15
25.INDIA BANS DIRECT, INDIRECT IMPORTS FROM PAKISTAN: .....	15
26.GOV'T TERMINATES INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND ED ABRUPTLY: .....	16
27.JV COMPLETES INDIA'S FIRST OFFSHORE FACILITIES DECOMMISSIONING PROJECT: .....	16
28.ADANI GROUP DEPLOYS INDIA'S FIRST HYDROGEN-POWERED TRUCK FOR MINING LOGISTICS: .....	17
29.BLUE-COLLAR WAGES GROWING 5-6 PC ANNUALLY: REPORT .....	17
30.AGRI, PHARMA, ELECTRONICS, ENGINEERING ACCOUNT FOR OVER 50 PC OF EXPORTS IN FY25: .....	17
31.UN REPORT SEES INDIA AS BRIGHT SPOT AMID GLOBAL SLOWDOWN: .....	18
32.RBI TO PAY GOVT DIVIDEND OF RS 2.69 LAKH CR: .....	19
33.INDIA 4TH LARGEST ECONOMY, AHEAD OF JAPAN: NITI CEO: .....	19
34.INDIA REGISTERS 3-FOLD GROWTH IN RENEWABLE ENERGY CAPACITY IN LAST DECADE: .....	19
35.RBI'S BUMPER DIVIDEND EASES GOVT'S FISCAL POSITION, SAYS SBI REPORT: .....	20
36.INDIA TO REMAIN FASTEST-GROWING ECONOMY, RBI'S BALANCE SHEET HITS RS 76.25 LAKH CR: .....	20
37.MANUFACTURING PULLS DOWN Q4 GDP TO 7.4 PC; FY25 GROWTH TO 6.5 PC: .....	21
38.CENTRE MANAGES TO MEET FY25 FISCAL DEFICIT: .....	21

## INTERNATIONAL..... 23

39.UK FTA TO BOOST INDIAN APPAREL, LEATHER EXPORTS VS BANGLADESH, VIETNAM: EXPORTERS: .....	23
40.INDIA, CHILE INK TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR COMPREHENSIVE FTA: .....	23
41.ROYAL THAI RITUAL PREDICTS GOOD YEAR FOR FARMERS .....	24
42.1ST ROUND INDIA-NEW ZEALAND FTA TALK ENDS: .....	24
43.MALDIVES THANKS INDIA FOR OFFERING \$50-MILLION FINANCIAL SUPPORT:.....	25
44.INDIA ONLY RESERVED RIGHT TO IMPOSE RETALIATORY DUTY ON US GOODS:.....	25
45.US TAX ON OUTWARD REMITTANCES TO PINCH INDIANS SENDING MONEY HOME: .....	25
46.INDIAN ACADEMIC INSTITUTES CANCEL MOUS WITH TURKISH INSTITUTIONS:.....	26
47.INDIA, EU AGREE TO REACH DEAL IN TWO PHASES: .....	26
48.INDIA-UK APPAREL, TEXTILES TRADE TO DOUBLE IN 5-6 YEARS UNDER FTA: .....	26
49.UK, EU HAIL NEW CHAPTER AS THEY INK NEW DEALS: .....	27
50.UK TO GIVE NONDISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT TO INDIAN FIRMS IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT UNDER FTA: .....	27
51.INDIA, MALDIVES TO TAKE STOCK OF IMPLEMENTATION TODAY:.....	28
52.DELHI AIRPORT AMONG TOP 10 HUB AIRPORTS IN ASIA PACIFIC, MIDDLE EAST:.....	28
53.NEPAL'S MOUNTAINEERING COMMUNITY CELEBRATES 72ND ANNIV OF MT EVEREST CONQUEST: .....	28

## SCIENCE & TECH..... 30

54.GLOBAL MEDIA DIALOGUE AT WAVES RESOLVES TO ENSURE ETHICAL USE OF AI: .....	30
55.INDIA TEST-FIRES ADVANCED UNDERWATER NAVAL MINE: .....	30
56.DOT ISSUES LETTER OF INTENT TO MUSK'S STARLINK FOR SATCOM SERVICES: .....	30
57.COUNTDOWN FOR LAUNCH OF PSLV-C61 MISSION STARTS: .....	31
58.CHINA LAUNCHED SPACECRAFT WILL YIELD 'GROUNDBREAKING DISCOVERIES': .....	31
59.3 MORE STARTUPS SELECTED FOR DEVELOPING INDIGENOUS AI FOUNDATION MODEL:.....	32

## ART & CULTURE ..... 33

60.10-YEAR-OLD SHIKHI KAKATI HONOURED WITH 'DESH RATNA AWARD 2025': .....	33
61.WANGALA DANCE TO BE SHOWCASED AT CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA: .....	33
62.AO NAGAS CELEBRATE MOATSU FESTIVAL:.....	33
63.KUZU FESTIVAL MARKING 50 YEARS OF SIKKIM'S STATEHOOD GETS UNDER WAY: .....	34
64.BUDDHA'S SACRED RELICS FROM INDIA ARRIVE IN VIETNAM: .....	34
65.KOCH COMMUNITY CELEBRATES PABUNI FESTIVAL WITH TRADITIONAL FERVOUR:.....	35
66.15 NURSING PROFESSIONALS RECEIVE NAT'L FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE AWARDS: .....	35

## DEFENCE ..... 36

67.GRSE DELIVERS FIRST ASW SHALLOW WATER CRAFT TO NAVY: .....	36
68.AKASHTER: UNSEEN FORCE BEHIND INDIA'S NEW WAR CAPABILITY: .....	36
69.INDIGENOUSLY MADE WEAPONS PLAYED MAJOR ROLE IN OPERATION SINDOOR: .....	37
70.BORDER TALKS WITH INDIA, BHUTAN ADVANCING: CHINA'S WHITE PAPER: .....	37
71.INDIA, EU NAVIES TO CONDUCT JOINT EXERCISE IN INDIAN OCEAN ON JUNE 1-3: .....	38

## SPORTS ..... 39

72.INDIA TOPS ASIAN U-15 BOXING C'SHIPS MEDAL TALLY WITH 11 GOLDS: .....	39
73.SATWIK, CHIRAG GET THEIR KHEL RATNA: .....	39
74.INDIA BAG FIVE MEDALS IN COMPOUND SECTION:.....	39

75.NIMAS TEAM CONQUERS MOUNT KANGCHENJUNGA: .....	40
---	----

## NORTH-EAST & ASSAM..... 41

76.RS 22,864-CR SHILLONG-SILCHAR HIGH-SPEED CORRIDOR APPROVED: .....	41
77.INITIATIVE LAUNCHED TO UPSKILL 2 LAKH NE RUBBER GROWERS:.....	41
78.TAP WATER CONNECTIONS TO ALL RURAL HOUSEHOLDS IN STATE BY MARCH 2026: .....	41
79.WOMEN REFEREES FROM NE BREAK NEW GROUND: .....	42
80.TRIPURA TO INTRODUCE BIOMETRIC ATTENDANCE SYSTEM IN GOVT-RUN TRIBAL HOSTELS: .....	42
81.MIZORAM GOVT ANNULS APPOINTMENT OF LAI COUNCIL CEM, DIRECTS TRUST VOTE: .....	42
82.NAGALAND MLA LAUNCHES 'ONE RUPEE PROJECT FOR CHANGE': .....	43
83.STATE GOVT SETS UP DIRECTORATE OF PROSECUTION: .....	43
84.REGIONAL SAMARTH SUPPORT AND COORDINATION CENTRE AT GU: .....	43
85.PEACE, DEVELOPMENT MARK FOUR YEARS OF THIS GOVT: CM: .....	43
86.MEGHALAYA ADOPTS MIYAWAKI FOREST METHOD TO RESTORE GREENERY, FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE: .....	44
87.APDCL LAUNCHES 'SAFELINE' INITIATIVE TO ENHANCE LINEMEN SAFETY:.....	44
88.EXPERTS INSPECT ROCKFALL-PRONE SITES IN MIZORAM CAPITAL:.....	44
89.ASSAM GOVT, BRITISH ENVOYS DISCUSS POTENTIAL AREAS OF COLLABORATION: .....	45
90.ASSAM: 70 ORCHID SPECIES DOCUMENTED IN KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK:.....	45
91.NEW STATE POLICY AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING, WITCH-HUNTING NOTIFIED: .....	46
92.LUMMER DAI LITERARY AWARD FOR 2025 ANNOUNCED: .....	46
93.GOV'T DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR TRADE REMEDY PROBES: .....	47
94.RDSO APPROVED DBR OF NEW SARAIGHAT BRIDGE PROJECT:.....	47
95.ASSAM MP DILIP SAIKIA HONOURED WITH SANSAD RATNA AWARD 2025 FOR PARLIAMENTARY EXCELLENCE:.....	48
96.MIZORAM FIRST TO ACHIEVE STATUS AS FULLY LITERATE STATE: .....	48
97.ASSAM: KAZIRANGA ACHIEVES RECORD FOOTFALL; 3RD MOST VISITED PARK IN INDIA: .....	48
98.HAILAKANDI FULFILS TARGETS AS NITI AAYOG'S ASPIRATIONAL DIST: .....	49
99.FM ASSURES CM OF ALL HELP FOR STATE'S GROWTH: .....	49
100.NE COMPLETE PACKAGE FOR TOURISM: MODI: .....	49
101.ASSAM: RARE 'VULNERABLE' SNAKE SPECIES DISCOVERED IN DIBRUGARH BY DR. TIKENDRAJIT GOGOI:.....	50
102.INVEST IN ELECTRONICS SECTOR OF ASSAM: CM TO ENTREPRENEURS:.....	50
103.KAKAYA: THE SECOND-LARGEST TEXTILE WEAVING HUB OF ASSAM: .....	50
104.ASSAM: DEFENCE CORRIDOR UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION OF CENTRE:.....	51
105.ASSAM: PRESIDENT CONFERS PADMA AWARDS ON THREE CULTURAL ICONS OF STATE:.....	51
106.ARMS LICENCE SOON TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN 'VULNERABLE' AREAS: CM:.....	52

## PERSON IN NEWS ..... 53

107.ARVIND SHRIVASTAVA TAKES CHARGE AS REVENUE SECY:.....	53
108.MIKAELA APPOINTED CHAIR OF COORDINATION COMMISSION FOR BRISBANE 2032:.....	53
109.PARAMESWARAN IYER TO REPRESENT INDIA AT IMF BOARD: .....	53
110.NEW POPE: .....	53
111.AISENGFA GOGOI BREAKS YOUTH NATIONAL RECORD IN WEIGHTLIFTING:.....	54
112.HARVANS CHAWLA APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF BRICS CCI:.....	54
113.JUSTICE BR GAVAI SWORN IN AS CJI:.....	54
114.POET-LYRICIST GULZAR, SANSKRIT SCHOLAR RAMBHADRACHARYA RECEIVE JNANPITH AWARD FOR 2023:.....	54

115.NEERAJ CHOPRA FINALLY BREACHES 90M MARK: .....	55
116.USTM VC ELECTED AS NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE PRESIDENT: .....	55
117.ASSAM'S KINGSHUK MORAN WINS ZEE CINE AWARD 2025 FOR EXPERT SOUND DESIGN IN STREE 2: .....	55
118.ASTROPHYSICIST JAYANT NARLIKAR PASSES AWAY:.....	55
119.INTERNATIONAL BOOKER PRIZE FOR KANNADA WRITER:.....	56
120.KAUSTABH PARASHAR RECEIVES 2ND PANCHANAN MEDHI MEMORIAL AWARD: .....	56
121.DRDO CHIEF GETS 2ND 1-YEAR EXTENSION:.....	56

## NEWS IN SHORT ..... 57

122.PAK TEST-FIRES MISSILE WITH 450-KM RANGE:.....	57
123.PM MODI ANNOUNCES USD 200 MILLION FOR MODERNISATION OF ANGOLAN ARMED FORCES:.....	57
124.BITCOIN TRADE IN INDIA IS REFINED WAY OF DOING HAWALA BUSINESS: SC .....	57
125.BRAHMOS MISSILE FACTORY TO BE INAUGURATED IN LUCKNOW ON MAY 11: .....	57
126.GOV'T SETS FOODGRAINS PRODUCTION TARGET FOR 2025-26: .....	58
127.MORNINGSTAR DBRS UPGRADES INDIA'S SOVEREIGN RATING: .....	58
128.CM COMMISSIONS PIPED NATURAL GAS PROJECT FOR CITY:.....	58
129.BRAHMOS IS A MESSAGE OF INDIA'S MILITARY STRENGTH: RAJNATH: .....	58
130.NEW ULUBARI MARKET COMPLEX INAUGURATED: .....	58
131.PADMANATH GOHAIN BARUA AWARD PRESENTED: .....	59
132.CAMBODIA HOSTS CHINA FOR THEIR LARGEST JOINT MILITARY DRILL : .....	59
133.CABINET APPROVES RS 3,706 CR FOXCONN DISPLAY CHIP PLANT IN UP: .....	59
134.INDIA NOW RANKS AMONG TOP 6 NATIONS GLOBALLY IN 6G PATENT FILINGS:.....	59
135.ISRO TO LAUNCH ITS 101ST SATELLITE ON SUNDAY: NARAYANAN:.....	60
136.RATION CARDS NOW ACCEPTED FOR FREE ADMISSION IN ASSAM: DR. RANOJ PEGU: .....	60
137.AMUL TO SET UP DAIRY PROCESSING PLANT AT RANI: .....	60
138.SC BARS CENTRE FROM GRANTING RETROSPECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCES:.....	60
139.ASSAM: FINANCE DEPARTMENT CLARIFIES HRA, CCA ELIGIBILITY FOR GOVT EMPLOYEES: .....	60
140.BENGALI TRANSLATION OF TWO LITERARY WORKS OF MAMONI GOSWAMI RELEASED: .....	60
141.ISRO'S 101ST MISSION ENDS IN FAILURE:.....	61
142.INDIA U-19 BOYS CLINCH SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE: .....	61
143.RUSSIA OUTLAWS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IN LATEST CRACKDOWN ON DISSENT: .....	61
144.INDIA, MALDIVES SIGN 13 MOUS FOR PROJECTS UNDER INDIAN GRANT ASSISTANCE:.....	61
145.PRESUMPTION OF CONSTITUTIONALITY IN FAVOUR OF WAQF LAW, SAYS SC:.....	62
146.EC ALLOWS SETTING UP OF BOOTHS AT 100 MTRS FROM POLL STATIONS: .....	62

## INDIAN POLITY

### 1. CASTE CENSUS TO BE DONE ALONG WITH NATIONAL CENSUS: MODI GOVERNMENT'S BIG DECISION:

#### 2011 DATA WAS DECLARED FLAWED

➤ The last time caste data was published as part of national census was in 1931

➤ In 1970s, Mandal Commission extrapolated from 1931 data to come up with a religion/caste break-up, as follows:

Dalit & Tribal	OBC	Upper Caste	Religious Minority
SC   15.1	Hindu   43.7	Brahmin   5.5	Muslim   11.2
ST   7.5	Other religions   8.7	Rajput   3.9	Other   5
Total   <b>22.6</b>	Total   <b>52.4</b>	Other   8.2	Total   <b>16.2</b>
		Total   <b>17.6</b>	

\*All figures as %age of popn. Total exceeds 100% due to overlaps

➤ In 2011, socio-economic caste census was conducted but data wasn't released as it was found to be 'flawed'

➤ Karnataka, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana have conducted respective statewide caste surveys

- In a politically significant and surprising move, the Modi government on Wednesday decided to include caste enumeration in the upcoming decennial census, marking the first such exercise in more than 90 years.
- The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) and is expected to clear the path for the much-awaited census.
- The move comes ahead of elections in caste-sensitive Bihar and amid ongoing political tussles between the government and the opposition over leadership of the numerically dominant and politically crucial OBC community.
- During the UPA tenure, a socio-economic and caste census was conducted, and in subsequent years, some states like Bihar, Telangana, and Karnataka have carried out their own caste-based surveys.

### 2. GOVT REVAMPS NSAB, APPOINTS 6 NEW MEMBERS:

- The government has revamped the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) by appointing six new members and naming former R&AW and NTRO chief Alok Joshi as its Chairman.
- The NSAB is a 15-member advisory body that provides strategic and security-related inputs to the National Security Council Secretariat.
- The newly appointed members include:
  - Air Marshal (Retd) PM Sinha, former Western Air Commander
  - Lt Gen (Retd) AK Singh, former Southern Army Commander
  - Rear Admiral (Retd) Monty Khanna
  -

- B Venkatesh Varma, former diplomat and India's ex-ambassador to Russia
- Rajiv Ranjan Verma, retired IPS officer
- Manmohan Singh, retired IPS officer
- The reshuffle comes at a time of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack.

### 3. RAILWAY MINISTRY LAUNCHES 'DESIGN A DIGITAL CLOCK' CHALLENGE:



- The Railway Ministry has announced a nationwide competition to design new digital clocks, to be installed across all railway stations in the country, with prizes up to Rs 5 lakh.
- Railway has invited entries from creative people.
- This competition aims to standardise the digital clocks used on platforms and stations.
- It will be open to three categories of participants: professionals, college/university students, and school students, according to a press release from the ministry.
- One grand winner, whose design gets selected for use across Indian Railways, will receive the first prize of Rs 5 lakh.
- Additionally, each of the three categories will have five consolation prizes of Rs 50,000 each.
- Participants must submit their designs online between May 1 and May 31, 2025.
- According to Dilip Kumar, Executive Director (Information and Publicity), Railway Board, entries must be submitted in high resolution without any watermark or logo, along with a certificate of originality.
- Participants are allowed to submit multiple designs.
- Each entry must be accompanied by a brief concept note explaining the theme and idea behind the design.
- All submitted designs must be original and should not violate any intellectual property rights or copyrights.

## 4.PM COMMISSIONS VIZHINJAM SEAPORT; SAYS IT WILL BRING ECONOMIC STABILITY TO INDIA:



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially commissioned the Vizhinjam International Seaport on Friday.
- He stated that the seaport's capacity would triple in the coming years, enabling some of the world's largest cargo ships to dock efficiently.
- Modi highlighted that 75% of India's transshipment operations were previously handled by foreign ports, causing significant revenue losses.
- He emphasized that this trend would now reverse, with Indian resources being used domestically to create economic opportunities, especially for Kerala and Vizhinjam.
- Modi underlined the crucial role of the private sector in developing India's maritime infrastructure.
- He noted that under the public-private partnership (PPP) model, substantial investments have been made in the maritime sector over the last decade.
- The Adani Group is investing Rs 2,497 crore in the project.
- The Central government is contributing Rs 818 crore through Viability Gap Funding.

## 5.SC-APPOINTED PANEL SUBMITS REPORT TO CJI:

- The Supreme Court-appointed three-judge panel has submitted its inquiry report to Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna regarding the cash discovery allegations against Allahabad High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma.
- The panel includes Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court; Justice GS Sandhawalia, Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court; and Justice Anu Sivaraman of the Karnataka High Court.
- The report was finalized on May 3 and submitted to the Chief Justice of India on May 4 for potential further action.
- The inquiry pertains to alleged cash found after a fire broke out at Justice Varma's Lutyens Delhi residence around 11:35 pm on March 14.

- The incident led to a news report and subsequent actions including a preliminary inquiry by Delhi High Court Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya.
- Judicial work was withdrawn from Justice Varma, who was then transferred to the Allahabad High Court without judicial responsibilities.
- On March 28, the Supreme Court directed the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court not to assign any judicial work to Justice Varma for the time being.

## 6.PM SEALS HISTORIC INDIA-UK FREE TRADE AGREEMENT:



- India and the United Kingdom (UK) have concluded negotiations on a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) after nearly three and a half years.
- The FTA marks a significant milestone in strategic and economic ties between the two economies.
- Once implemented, the FTA will eliminate UK tariffs on approximately 99% of Indian goods.
- This will significantly enhance export competitiveness in sectors such as textiles, toys, leather, marine products, gems & jewellery, and footwear.
- India will reduce import duties on 90% of UK goods, with 85% becoming fully duty-free within 10 years.
- Key concessions include tariff reductions on whisky and gin from 150% to 75%, and further to 40% by year 10.
- Quota-based tariff cuts will apply to automobiles, reducing rates from over 100% to 10%.
- Tariff relief has also been extended to electrical machinery, cosmetics, medical devices, soft drinks, and chocolates.
- Sensitive sectors such as dairy, apples, and cheese have been excluded to protect Indian farmers.
- A major win for India is the conclusion of a Social Security Agreement with the UK.

- This agreement grants a three-year exemption from UK social security contributions for Indian skilled professionals.
- The exemption is expected to benefit over 60,000 Information Technology (IT) workers.
- It will result in savings of around 20% of employee salaries, amounting to over Rs. 4,000 crore (US\$ 473.09 million).
- The deal promises improved mobility for service professionals and greater market access in IT-enabled services, finance, education, and business services.
- The Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) remains unresolved due to disagreements on dispute resolution timelines and tax inclusion.
- The FTA sets a new benchmark in India's trade diplomacy.
- In FY23, bilateral trade stood at Rs. 1,80,345 crore (US\$ 21.33 billion).
- Indian exports rose 13.3% to Rs. 1,09,069 crore (US\$ 12.9 billion).
- Imports from the UK fell 6.1% to Rs. 71,022 crore (US\$ 8.4 billion).
- The pact aligns with India's broader objective of integrating deeper into global value chains while safeguarding domestic interests.
- **Key points are:**
  - 99% of Indian exports to the UK will benefit from zero duty under the Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
  - Indian import duties will be reduced on 90% of tariff lines, with 85% becoming fully tariff-free within 10 years.
  - Tariffs on whisky and gin will be reduced from 150% to 75%, and further to 40% by year 10 of the agreement.
  - Automotive tariffs will be reduced from over 100% to 10% under a quota system.
  - Import duties will be lowered on goods such as cosmetics, aerospace components, lamb, medical devices, salmon, electrical machinery, soft drinks, chocolates, and biscuits.
  - UK consumers may see lower prices on clothes, footwear, frozen prawns, and other imported Indian food products.
  - The deal is expected to increase bilateral trade by £25.5 billion, UK GDP by £4.8 billion, and UK wages by £2.2 billion annually in the long run.
  - India will lower tariffs on UK exports including whisky, medical devices, advanced machinery, and lamb, enhancing UK export competitiveness.
  - Labour-intensive Indian sectors to benefit include textiles, marine products, leather, footwear, sports goods, toys, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, auto parts, and organic chemicals.
  - The FTA offers a major boost to trade in services, including IT/ITeS, financial, professional, business, and educational services.
  - Indian professionals working in the UK will receive a three-year exemption from social security payments—a major win under the Double Contribution Convention.
  - Bilateral trade is projected to double by 2030 from the current USD 60 billion.
  - India will benefit from tariff elimination on 99% of tariff lines, covering nearly 100% of trade value.

- The UK has made FTA commitments benefiting Indian service sectors such as IT/ITeS, finance, professional, and educational services.
- The FTA facilitates professional mobility for Contractual Service Suppliers, Business Visitors, Investors, Intra-Corporate Transferees, their partners and dependents (with right to work), and Independent Professionals (e.g., yoga instructors, musicians, chefs).
- India secured commitments on digitally delivered services like architecture, engineering, IT, and telecommunications.
- The three-year social security exemption will result in significant financial gains for Indian service providers and enhance their competitiveness in the UK market.

## 7. SUPREME COURT MAKES PUBLIC JUDGES' APPOINTMENT PROCESS:

- In a historic move, the Supreme Court on Monday decided to publish on its website the complete process of appointment of High Court and Supreme Court judges.
- This includes the role of the High Court Collegium, inputs from State and Central governments, and consideration by the Supreme Court Collegium.
- The proposals approved by the Supreme Court Collegium for appointments as High Court Judges from 9th November 2022 to 5th May 2025 have been uploaded on the Supreme Court website.
- Details published include names, High Court, source (Service or Bar), date of recommendation by the Supreme Court Collegium, date of notification by the Department of Justice, and date of appointment.
- Additional information includes special category (SC/ST/OBC/Minority/Woman) and whether the candidate is related to any sitting or retired High Court/Supreme Court Judge.
- The Supreme Court has also disclosed whether recommended candidates have family members who are or were judges of the High Court or Supreme Court.
- The statement of assets of Supreme Court judges will also be placed on the website soon.
- Statements of assets already received are being uploaded.
- Statements of other judges will be uploaded as and when current declarations are received.

## 8. MOA SIGNED TO TRANSFORM RAJ BHAVAN'S FUNCTIONING:



- Raj Bhavan, Assam and IIT Guwahati signed a Memorandum of Association (MoA) in the presence of the Assam Governor.
- Secretary to the Governor of Assam, Meenakshi Sundaram, and Director of IIT Guwahati, Prof. Devendra Jalihal, signed the agreement.
- The partnership aims to transform the functioning of Raj Bhavan, both qualitatively and quantitatively.
- It is the first project of its kind in the country focused on the digital transformation of Raj Bhavan's functioning.
- Under the MoA, IIT Guwahati will act as:
  - Knowledge partner
  - Consultant
  - Resource support agency
- The project is titled **Gyan Kalyan Project**.
- The Gyan Kalyan Project supports the vision of Digital India and aims to:
  - Enable digital transformation of Raj Bhavan
  - Promote efficiency in public service delivery
- The project will use:
  - Latest digital and IT tools
  - 360-degree security guidelines
  - Data protection measures
- Objectives include improving:
  - Efficiency and effectiveness of Raj Bhavan's operations
  - Support for the Governor in discharging constitutional responsibilities
- Constitutional responsibilities covered:
  - Legislative, executive, and judicial functions
  - Statutory functions
  - Ad-hoc and discretionary functions
- The digital governance framework will include:
  - Chancellor's Portal
  - Governor's Office Portal
  - Departmental and institutional systems
  - Records of Governor's visits
  - Public engagement (grievances, petitions, memoranda)
  - Matters related to Sixth Schedule areas
  - Governor's initiatives

## 9.CJI NOD TO JUSTICE VARMA'S IMPEACHMENT:



- Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna is learnt to have recommended to the Centre the impeachment of Allahabad High Court Judge Yashwant Varma following his indictment in the cash discovery row by a Supreme Court-appointed committee.
- The CJI wrote to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and shared the report of the three-member committee along with the response received from Justice Varma.
- The move assumes significance in the wake of the established in-house procedure, which entails the CJI writing to the President and Prime Minister for impeachment after their advice to the Judge to resign is not complied with.
- The apex court-appointed panel confirmed the cash discovery allegations against Justice Varma in its inquiry report, sources previously said.
- The three-member panel comprised Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu, Himachal Pradesh High Court Chief Justice G S Sandhawalia and Justice Anu Sivaraman of the Karnataka High Court.
- The report was finalised on May 3.
- Sources had also said the CJI nudged Justice Varma to step down in view of critical findings in the report, which was forwarded to the Judge for his response in line with the principle of natural justice.
- The panel analysed evidence and recorded the statements of over 50 people, including Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora and the Delhi Fire Service chief, who were among the first responders to the fire incident at Justice Varma's Lutyens' Delhi official residence at around 11.35 pm on March 14.
- He was a Judge of the Delhi High Court at that time.
- The allegation was repeatedly denied by Justice Varma in his response to the Delhi High Court Chief Justice and the apex court-appointed panel.
- The controversy was raised following a news report in the cash discovery row and led to several steps, including a preliminary inquiry by Delhi High Court Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya, judicial work being taken away from Justice Varma in the Delhi High Court, and later his transfer to the Allahabad High Court sans judicial work.

## 10.SC DIRECTS STATES/UTS TO FRAME GUIDELINES ON WALKWAYS:

- The Supreme Court directed all States and Union Territories to frame guidelines to ensure proper footpaths for pedestrians, calling it their constitutional right.
- A bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan observed that in the absence of footpaths, pedestrians were forced to walk on roads, making them vulnerable to risks and accidents.
- It stated that the right of pedestrians to use footpaths is guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- The bench directed the Centre to place on record, within two months, its guidelines for protecting the rights of pedestrians.
- Observing that the safety of pedestrians was of utmost importance, the apex court said footpaths ought to be constructed and maintained in a manner that also ensures accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- The top court granted six months to the Centre to constitute a National Road Safety Board and clarified that no further extensions would be granted.
- The directive came in response to a plea raising concerns about pedestrian safety, emphasising the lack of proper footpaths and encroachments on walkways.

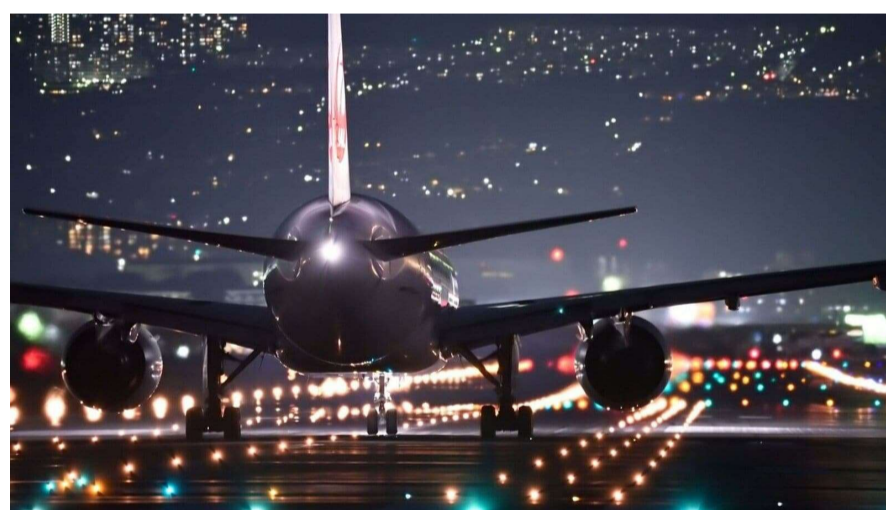
## 11.MDONER SETS AROUND RS 4,000-CR INVESTMENT TARGET FOR REGION:



- The DoNER Minister stated that his ministry has set a target of ₹3,000 to ₹4,000 crore investment pipeline for the Northeast region.
- He briefed reporters at a curtain raiser event for the Rising Northeast Investor Summit, scheduled to be held in New Delhi on May 23 and 24.
- Emphasising the Centre's focus on trade and investment growth in the Northeast, he said the region holds the greatest potential for India.
- He described the eight northeastern States, termed as "Ashta Lakshmi," as central to the transformative growth India is aiming for.
- Six northeastern States have established Investment Promotion Authorities based on 11 parameters to ensure inclusive regional growth.
- Scindia highlighted the Prime Minister's commitment to making the Northeast a key driver of India's future development toward the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

- He stressed that the region's cultural richness, natural resources, and strategic geographical location position it as a powerful gateway to Southeast Asia.
- The two-day Rising Northeast Investor Summit will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- In the lead-up to the summit, an Ambassadors' Meet was held on April 15 in New Delhi, in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs, to introduce foreign investors to the region.
- The meet saw unprecedented participation from Ambassadors and High Commissioners of over 75 countries, indicating strong international interest.
- The Rising Northeast Investor Summit is the culmination of multiple pre-summit initiatives such as investment roadshows, ambassador meets, and bilateral chamber meetings.
- Focus sectors of the summit include:
  - Tourism & Hospitality
  - Agro-Food Processing & allied sectors
  - Textiles, Handloom and Handicrafts
  - Healthcare
  - Education and Skill Development
  - IT/ITeS
  - Infrastructure and Logistics
  - Energy
  - Entertainment & Sports

## 12.AVIATION WATCHDOG BCAS REVOKES SECURITY CLEARANCE FOR TURKISH FIRM CELEBI:



- Aviation watchdog BCAS (Bureau of Civil Aviation Security) has revoked the security clearance of Celebi Airport Services India, a unit of Türkiye's Celebi, with immediate effect, citing "interest of national security".
- The move follows Türkiye's support for Pakistan and its condemnation of India's recent strikes on terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) under 'Operation Sindoor'.
- Turkish drones were reportedly used by Pakistan during the military conflict with India.
- Official sources indicated that the government may discourage travel to Türkiye and Azerbaijan, both of which have supported Pakistan in the conflict.

- This may lead to a **sharp decline in Indian tourist visits, destination weddings, and film shoots** in Turkiye and Azerbaijan in the near future.
- Following the BCAS directive, **Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) has formally ended its association** with Celebi entities managing **ground handling and cargo operations** at **Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA)**.
- **Celebi Airport Services India**, part of Turkiye-based Celebi, has been **operating in India for 15 years**, providing services at **nine airports**: Mumbai, Delhi, Cochin, Kannur, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Goa (GOX), Ahmedabad, and Chennai.
- **Government sources** reiterated that **discouraging travel to Turkiye and Azerbaijan** is under **active consideration**.

### 13.INDIA'S MP TEAMS TO EXPOSE PAKISTAN IN OTHER NATIONS:



- As part of a major diplomatic offensive, the government will send several all-party delegations to different countries, starting next week, to expose Pakistan-sponsored terrorism on the world forum.
- The diplomatic exercise is aimed at presenting India's stance against Pakistan on terror and follows **Operation Sindoor**, the Indian offensive against terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir after the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam.
- Senior leaders, including MPs from various political parties—both ruling and opposition—have been approached, and some parties have already approved the participation of their members.
- Sources said some former ministers will lead the delegations comprising MPs from different parties to clusters of countries worldwide.
- While the final number of delegations or members is not confirmed, over 30 MPs may be part of the outreach effort.
- These delegations will visit different blocs of countries, as designated by the government, for a period of 10 days.
- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) will brief the MPs before their departure.
- MPs from BJP, Congress, TMC, DMK, NCP (SP), JDU, BJD, CPI(M), and others will be part of the delegations, according to sources.
- The MPs have been told to be ready to depart by May 22–23 for the 10-day diplomatic mission.
- Former Union Minister **Anurag Thakur** and BJP's Odisha MP **Aparajita Sarangi** are among the members from the ruling party.

### 14.3 NE MPS IN GLOBAL OUTREACH PROGRAMME:

- Bhubaneswar Kalita, Pradan Baruah, and Phangnon Konyak are the three Parliamentarians from the Northeastern states who will accompany the all-party delegations to other countries to give a diplomatic push to Operation Sindoor and present India's stand against terrorism.
- India has formed seven all-party delegations which will visit key partner nations, including United Nations Security Council (UNSC) member states, starting from May 20.
- The delegations will travel to countries including the US, UK, UAE, South Africa, and Japan, and present India's position on critical issues like Kashmir, counter-terrorism, and Operation Sindoor.
- Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju is coordinating these efforts, while Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri is scheduled to hold two-phase briefings for the seven delegations at the Parliament House ahead of the international mission.
- Along with Members of Parliament from different parties, prominent political personalities and senior diplomats are expected to be part of each delegation.
- Shashi Tharoor (Congress), Ravi Shankar Prasad (BJP), Sanjay Kumar Jha (JDU), Baijayant Panda (BJP), Kanimozhi Karunanidhi (DMK), Supriya Sule (NCP), and Shrikant Eknath Shinde (Shiv Sena) will lead the seven delegations.
- Phangnon Konyak and seven group members will visit Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Algeria.
- Bhubaneswar Kalita and eight team members will visit the US, Panama, Guyana, Brazil, and Colombia.
- Pradan Baruah and eight team members will visit Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan, and Singapore.
- The Central government dropped the name of Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi as suggested by the party.
- The Congress raised objections to the list released by the government, claiming that it had proposed the names of four leaders – Anand Sharma, Gogoi, Syed Nasir Hussain, and Amarinder Singh Raja Warring – but these leaders were not included.

### 15.PM TO INAUGURATE HAIBARGAON RAILWAY STATION ON MAY 22:



- The newly redeveloped **Haibargaon railway station** will be inaugurated by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** on **May 22**, as part of a nationwide initiative to modernise railway infrastructure.

- The Prime Minister will **virtually inaugurate 103 redeveloped railway stations** across the country under the **Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS)**.
- Among these stations, the **historic Haibargaon station** in Assam—originally constructed in **1887**—is a significant beneficiary of the ABSS.
- Located in the **heart of Nagaon**, Haibargaon station has long been a key transportation hub contributing to the region's **socio-economic development**.
- The station has an **average daily footfall of about 1,200 passengers**, and its redevelopment under ABSS reflects the government's vision for **inclusive and sustainable infrastructure growth**.
- The transformation of Haibargaon is **not just a physical upgrade**, but also a reaffirmation of the government's commitment to **enhancing passenger experience** and **boosting regional tourism**.
- With improved facilities and better connectivity, the redeveloped station is poised to serve as a **gateway to major nearby attractions** such as **Kaziranga National Park**, **Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary**, and **Bordowa Than**.

## 16.PM TO INAUGURATE NE INVESTORS MEET TOMORROW:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 'Rising Northeast Investors Summit' in the national capital.
- The two-day event will showcase the investment and trade potential of the Northeast.
- It will be attended by top officials from various Ministries of the Government of India, Members of Parliament, diplomats, and Chief Ministers of Northeastern states.
- The summit aims to highlight the region's geostrategic advantage, abundant natural resources, skilled workforce, and access to captive markets in the Northeast and neighbouring countries.
- Organised by the Ministry of DoNER in partnership with FICCI and Invest India.
- The summit will help investors participate in the Northeast's transformation into a manufacturing and services hub.
- It offers companies access to emerging markets in ASEAN and BBN countries and information on regional incentives and policy frameworks.
- Roadshows were held in seven major Indian cities to promote the investment potential of the Northeast and attract potential investors.
- The summit promises to be a major networking platform for industry leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders.
- Opportunities for tie-ups, expansions, and MoUs will be facilitated through G2B and B2B meetings.
- Over 2,000 delegates including policymakers, industry leaders, investors, multilaterals, and start-ups will participate.
- Discussions will cover over nine priority sectors: agriculture, food processing and allied sectors; textiles, handloom and handicrafts; entertainment and sports; education and skill development; healthcare; IT and ITES; tourism and hospitality; infrastructure and logistics; and energy.

- A high-level delegation of senior officials will represent Assam at the summit.

## 17.INDIA TO MOVE FATF TO PUT PAKISTAN BACK ON 'GREY LIST':



- India will highlight Pakistan's persistent support for terrorism and its funnelling of multilateral funds for arms procurement to build a strong case for reinstating Islamabad on the global money laundering and terror financing watchdog's 'grey list', and block funding from the World Bank.
- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog and sets international standards to prevent these illegal activities.
- The next meeting of the Asia Pacific Group (APG) of FATF is scheduled for August 25, during which India is likely to present its views to the global watchdog.
- The next FATF plenary and working group meeting is scheduled for October 20.
- Currently, there are 25 countries in the FATF 'grey list'. These countries are under increased monitoring and must address strategic deficiencies to counter money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing.
- Pakistan's history with FATF's 'grey list' dates back to February 2008, when it was placed on the monitoring list.
- In June 2010, Pakistan was removed from the list, only to be brought back in February 2012, and then removed again in February 2015.
- It was brought back to the list again for the third time in June 2018 and was later removed in October 2022, with FATF asking Pakistan to continue working with APG to further improve its anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terror (AML/CFT) system.
- Separately, India will next month oppose World Bank funding to Pakistan, just as it had done in the case of IMF, arguing that Islamabad had used such funds in the past to procure arms and ammunition.
- The World Bank is likely to review next month its USD 20 billion lending to Pakistan under the Country Partnership Framework agreed in January this year.

## 18.NEED SPECIAL COURTS FOR NIA CASES: SC:

- The Supreme Court underlined the need for dedicated courts for NIA cases while calling for a "judicial audit" of laws enacted by the Centre and the prospective ones by the States.

- A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh stated that cases entrusted to the NIA were of heinous nature with pan-India ramifications.
- The court observed that each such case involved hundreds of witnesses, and trials did not progress with the required pace as presiding officers were also handling other cases.
- The top court emphasized that the only appropriate course was to set up special courts where trials under special statutes could be carried out with day-to-day hearings.
- The decision of creating additional courts and requisite infrastructure falls under the policy domain of the executive and must be taken in consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court after analyzing data on pending cases, the bench noted.
- The court granted Additional Solicitor General Rajkumar Bhaskar Thakre four weeks to seek instructions and posted the matter for hearing in July.
- The ASG informed the court that a notification had been issued by Maharashtra's Home Ministry designating a court as a special court for NIA-investigated cases.
- The bench, however, questioned the decision taken without consulting the Chief Justice of the High Court.
- The bench reiterated the need to create additional courts and necessary infrastructure for such cases to be heard on a day-to-day basis.

## 19.NITI AAYOG ROLLS OUT 6-POINT ROAD MAP FOR BIG PUSH TO MEDIUM ENTERPRISES:



- NITI Aayog released a report presenting a six-point road map to transform India's medium enterprises into key drivers of economic growth.
- Medium enterprises form only 0.3% of registered MSMEs but contribute 40% of the sector's exports.
- The MSME sector contributes approximately 29% to India's GDP, 40% to exports, and employs over 60% of the workforce.
- The sector is heavily skewed in composition: 97% micro enterprises, 2.7% small, and only 0.3% medium enterprises.
- The report identifies major challenges for medium enterprises, including limited access to tailored financial products, slow

tech adoption, lack of R&D support, inadequate testing infrastructure, and misaligned skilling programmes.

- The proposed six priority intervention areas include:
  - Introduction of a working capital financing scheme tied to enterprise turnover.
  - Launch of a ₹5 crore credit card facility at market rates.
  - Expedited fund disbursal through retail banks under MSME Ministry oversight.
  - Upgrading existing Technology Centres into India SME 4.0 Competence Centres to encourage Industry 4.0 adoption.
  - Creation of a dedicated R&D cell in the MSME Ministry, using the Self-Reliant India Fund for cluster-based projects of national importance.
  - Establishment of sector-specific testing and certification facilities to ease compliance and improve product quality.
- Skilling programmes will be aligned with region- and sector-specific enterprise needs, and new medium enterprise-centric modules will be integrated into current Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programmes (ESDP).
- A dedicated sub-portal within the Udyam platform will be created, featuring scheme discovery tools, compliance support, and AI-based assistance.
- The report stresses that an inclusive policy framework and collaborative governance are essential for unlocking the full potential of medium enterprises.
- Strengthening finance, technology, infrastructure, skilling, and access to information can position medium enterprises as key contributors to innovation, jobs, and exports.
- The report, titled "*Designing a Policy for Medium Enterprises*", was launched by Suman Bery, Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, in the presence of VK Saraswat and Arvind Virmani, Members of NITI Aayog.

## 20.SC DIRECTS REDUCTION IN IPS POSTINGS AT CAPFS:

- In a landmark judgment delivered on May 23, the Supreme Court directed that deputation of IPS officers up to the rank of Inspector General (IG) in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) must be **progressively reduced over two years** to increase promotion opportunities for cadre officers.
- The bench, comprising Justice Abhay S Oka (since retired) and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, stated that **delayed promotions** of CAPF cadre officers negatively affect morale.
- The court also ordered that the **long-pending cadre review** of the CAPFs—stayed since 2020—must be completed within **six months**.
- The five CAPFs—CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, and SSB—function under the Union Home Ministry and perform duties related to law and order, internal security, border guarding, counter-terrorism, and election operations.
- The petitions, filed by around **18,000 CAPF officers** since 2009, sought a cadre review by treating CAPFs as **Organised Group A Services (OGAS)** to resolve issues of delayed promotions and stagnation.

- The court declared that CAPFs are indeed **treated as OGAS**, and therefore **all benefits under OGAS must apply** uniformly to them.
- The court noted that **50% of IG-level posts** and **15% of DIG-level posts** are currently reserved for IPS officers on deputation, along with **5% for Army officers**, leading to limited promotion scope for CAPF cadre officers.
- The petitioners argued that the **dominance of IPS officers in key positions** is blocking the career growth of internal officers, causing long-standing grievances.
- The court emphasized balancing two key objectives:
  - **Career mobility and de-stagnation** of CAPF cadre officers.
  - **Operational requirements** of the forces.
- It recommended that posts earmarked for IPS officers up to the **Senior Administrative Grade (SAG)** be **progressively reduced within two years**.
- The court stated that this move will improve cadre officers' **participation in decision-making** and address their long-standing concerns.
- The Home Ministry opposed the plea, asserting that **IPS officers are essential** to maintain coordination with State governments and police forces, which is crucial to **upholding the federal structure**.

## 21.GOV'T ALLOCATES RS 18,233 CR UNDER RODTEP SCHEME:



- The government has allocated ₹18,233 crore under the RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products) scheme for the financial year 2025-26.
- This allocation covers over 10,750 product categories (HS lines), benefiting exports from both the Domestic Tariff Area and special categories like Advance Authorization holders, Export-Oriented Units (EOUs), and units in Special Economic Zones (SEZs).
- As of March 31, 2025, total disbursements under the RoDTEP scheme have crossed ₹57,976.78 crore.
- Benefits under RoDTEP for goods manufactured in SEZs and EOUs, which had been paused, are being reinstated starting June 1, 2025.
- RoDTEP refunds various embedded central and state duties, taxes, and levies that are not refunded under any other existing scheme.

- The current RoDTEP rates range from 0.3% to 4.3%, depending on the product category.
- Operational since January 1, 2021, the scheme is WTO-compliant and implemented through a fully digital platform to ensure transparency and efficiency.
- The reinstatement of RoDTEP benefits to SEZs and EOUs demonstrates the government's intent to foster a competitive and compliant export ecosystem.
- Economic think tank GTRI (Global Trade Research Initiative) criticized the government's stop-and-start approach, noting that RoDTEP benefits were not available to SEZs, EOUs, and AA holders from February 5 to May 31, 2025.
- GTRI stated that this inconsistency undermines the scheme's purpose, as exporters need stability for pricing and long-term planning.
- While the reinstatement is a positive step, GTRI emphasized that India must ensure uninterrupted RoDTEP coverage for at least five years to be seen as a reliable and competitive export destination.

## 22.RAJNATH APPROVES EXECUTION MODEL FOR 5TH-GEN STEALTH FIGHTER JET PROJECT:



- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved the "execution model" for developing India's fifth-generation stealth fighter jet, the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).
- The AMCA is a medium-weight, deep-penetration fighter jet with advanced stealth features, aimed at enhancing India's air power.
- Alongside the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft, the AMCA is expected to become a key component of the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- The aircraft will be developed by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) in collaboration with industry partners.
- This move comes amid growing focus on strengthening India's air capabilities, particularly in response to China's rapid advancements in the domain.
- The "execution model" ensures equal opportunities for both public and private sector entities, who can bid independently, as joint ventures, or as consortia.
- Participating entities must be Indian companies compliant with national laws and regulations.

- The initiative is a major step toward achieving self-reliance (*aatmanirbharta*) in the aerospace sector by leveraging domestic expertise, capacity, and capability.
- The Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had given in-principle approval to the AMCA programme last year.
- The initial development cost for the AMCA project is estimated at approximately ₹15,000 crore.
- The IAF has strongly backed the AMCA project, considering it vital for fulfilling its long-term operational requirements.

## 23.CABINET APPROVES CONTINUATION OF INTEREST SUBVENTION SCHEME FOR FARMERS:



- The government approved the **continuation of the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS)** for the financial year **2025-26** to provide affordable short-term credit to farmers through the **Kisan Credit Card (KCC)**.
- The decision was taken by the **Union Cabinet**, as announced by

**Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.**

- The continuation of the scheme will cost the exchequer **₹15,640 crore**.
- Under MISS, **short-term loans up to ₹3 lakh** are provided at a **7% interest rate**, with a **1.5% interest subvention** for eligible lending institutions.
- Farmers who **repay their loans promptly** receive a **Prompt Repayment Incentive (PRI)** of up to **3%**, effectively reducing the interest rate to **4%**.
- For loans taken exclusively for **animal husbandry or fisheries**, the interest benefit applies up to **₹2 lakh**.
- No changes have been proposed to the existing structure or components of the scheme.
- There are currently **over 7.75 crore KCC accounts** in the country.
- The scheme supports the **flow of institutional credit to agriculture**, promoting productivity and financial inclusion for **small and marginal farmers**.
- Institutional credit through KCC rose from **₹4.26 lakh crore in 2014** to **₹10.05 lakh crore by December 2024**.
- Overall agricultural credit flow increased from **₹7.3 lakh crore in 2013-14** to **₹25.49 lakh crore in 2023-24**.
- Maintaining the **1.5% interest subvention** is seen as essential due to current lending trends, MCLR, and repo rate movements.
- The Cabinet's decision reinforces the government's commitment to **doubling farmers' income**, strengthening the **rural credit ecosystem**, and ensuring **timely, affordable credit** for agricultural growth.



# APSC CCE 2025

## NEW FOUNDATION BATCH

### ADMISSIONS OPEN

(FOR BOTH ONLINE & OFFLINE BATCHES)

PRELIMS

→

MAINS

→

INTERVIEW



RANK 12, APS

PRADIPTA BORUAH

Asmita Ba, Thank you so much for your guidance. It was a great experience for me.



ASMITA BAA, MENTOR

RANK 9, APSC 19, ALRS  
BM CALCUTTA, JEC

No.1

CREDIBLE TEAM  
FOR APSC

CONTACT US

7638032775/7086013039

📍

3RD FLOOR, ROYAL CIRCLE  
BUILDING, ZOO ROAD, GUWAHATI

## INDIAN ECONOMY

### 24.COMM MIN'S EPM MAY HAVE 12-POINT PLAN TO PUSH EXPORTS, HELP MSME:

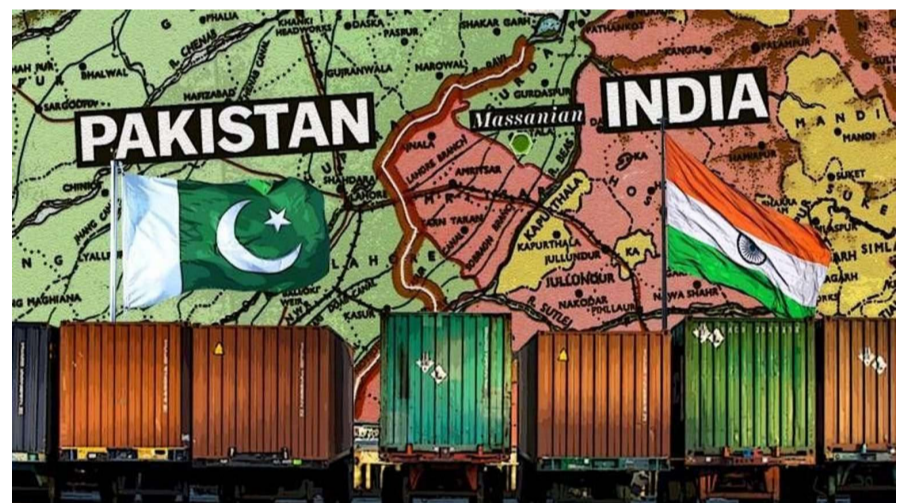


- The Commerce Ministry's **Export Promotion Mission (EPM)** will feature up to 12 components aimed at boosting export potential and strengthening trade tools for small businesses, including MSMEs and e-commerce exporters.
- The mission includes **easy credit schemes**, **overseas warehousing facilitation**, and **global branding initiatives**.
- The **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** presented the mission details to export promotion councils and stakeholders on April 30.
- DGFT has sought feedback from these councils before finalising the schemes.
- The EPM is split into two major categories:
  - **Niryat Protsahan** (Providing Trade Finance Support)
  - **Niryat Disha** (Driving International Holistic Market Access)
- Under **Niryat Protsahan**, six sub-schemes are proposed:
  - **Niryat Rin Vikas (Nirvik)** for MSMEs and new exporters
  - **Support for Emerging Export Opportunities**
  - **Support for Trade Instruments for MSMEs**
  - **Collateral Support for Export Credit for MSME exporters**
  - **E-commerce Export Credit Card Sub-Scheme**
  - **BharatTradeNET**
- Under **Niryat Disha**, the six components include:
  - **Technical Regulations and Compliance Enablement**
  - **Focussed Market Access Initiative**
  - **Facilitating Export Logistics and Overseas Warehousing**
  - **Global Outreach for Branding Exports**
  -

- **Export Planning and Development for Districts and Clusters**
- **R&D Support Sub-Scheme** for India Centre for Lab Grown Diamond at IIT Madras

- All sub-schemes will be run through a **digitally enabled application and monitoring system**, using an online 'intent to claim' process.
- The **Nirvik sub-scheme** aims to provide interest equalisation support to MSMEs for accessing export credit at globally competitive INR rates.
- **Nirvik rates** will be notified annually and benchmarked against rates in competing countries.
- A **cap limit** will apply for interest subvention, reviewed periodically based on uptake.
- A **negative list** of export items (e.g., raw materials, low value-added goods, sensitive items) will be excluded from support under the scheme.
- The **collateral support sub-scheme** will offer up to **80% or more backup collateral** to MSMEs and e-commerce exporters, based on their composite track record.
- Would you like a simplified summary of the two main EPM categories and their goals?

### 25.INDIA BANS DIRECT, INDIRECT IMPORTS FROM PAKISTAN:



- India imposed a ban on the import of goods originating from or passing through Pakistan, halted the exchange of mail and parcels, and prohibited the entry of Pakistani ships at Indian ports as fresh punitive measures against Islamabad in view of the cross-border linkages to the horrific Pahalgam terror attack.
- The new measures came amid escalating tensions between the two countries following the deadly terror attack at Pahalgam last week that killed 26 people.
- A complete ban, with immediate effect, has been placed on direct or indirect import or transit of all goods originating in or exported from Pakistan, whether or not freely importable or otherwise permitted, on grounds of national security and public policy, a notification by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade stated.

- The Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), in a separate notification, said that ships bearing the Pakistan flag shall not be allowed to visit any Indian port.
- Simultaneously, an Indian-flagged ship shall not visit any port of Pakistan.
- The DGS stated that the order has been issued to ensure “safety of Indian assets, cargo and connected infrastructure” and that “any exemption or dispensation from this order shall be examined and decided on case-to-case”.
- The restrictions have been put into place with immediate effect, officials said.
- An order by the Department of Posts, under the Ministry of Communication, said the Government of India has decided to suspend exchange of all categories of inbound mail and parcels from Pakistan through air and surface routes.
- The new moves came a week-and-a-half after India announced a raft of punitive measures against Pakistan, including suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, shutting down of the only operational land border crossing at Attari, and downgrading of diplomatic ties following the terror attack.
- In response, Pakistan shut its airspace to Indian airliners and suspended all trade with India, including through third countries.
- Pakistan also rejected India’s suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty and said any move to stop the flow of water will be seen as an “act of war”.
- Citing “cross-border linkages” to the April 22 attack, India has promised severe punishment to those involved in the strike.
- Under the first set of punitive measures, India also revoked all visas issued to Pakistani nationals.
- The revocation of visas does not apply to the long-term visas already issued.
- India’s decision to impose a fresh ban on all Pakistan-origin imports will prohibit the entry of Pakistani goods routed through third countries.
- A 200 per cent import duty imposed on Pakistani goods in 2019 after the Pulwama terror attack had already effectively halted direct imports.
- India’s exports to Pakistan in April–January 2024–25 stood at USD 447.65 million, while imports were a meagre USD 0.42 million.
- These imports were limited to niche items like figs (USD 78,000), basil and rosemary herbs (USD 18,856), certain chemicals, and Himalayan pink salt.
- The imports were USD 2.88 million in 2023–24.
- A provision has been added in the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023 “to prohibit direct or indirect import or transit of all goods originating in or exported from Pakistan with immediate effect until further orders”, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification dated May 2.
- It added that this restriction is imposed in the interest of “national security and public policy”.

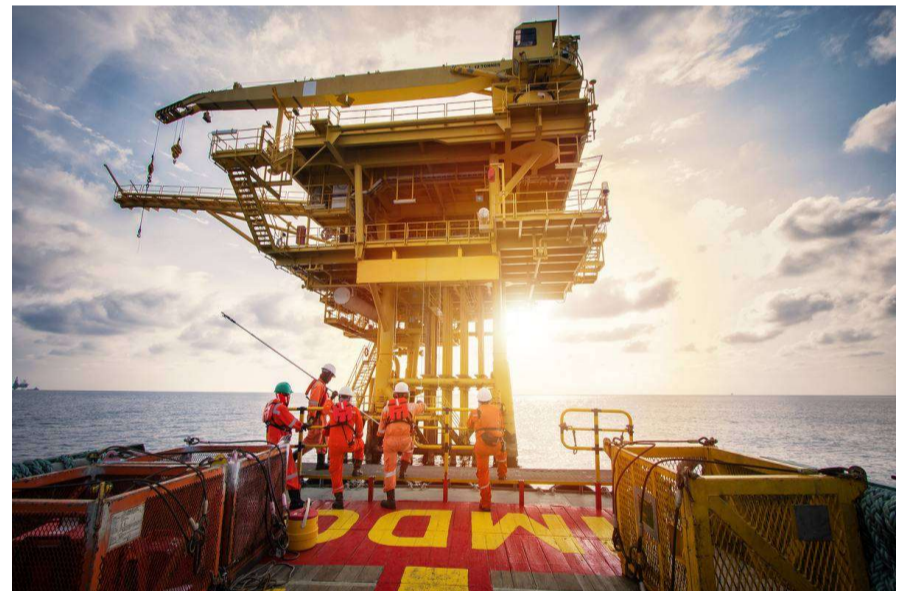
## 26. GOVT TERMINATES INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND ED ABRUPTLY:

- In an unexpected decision, the government has terminated the services of **KV Subramanian** as the **Executive Director**

(ED) at the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, six months before the end of his three-year term.

- The termination is effective from **April 30, 2025**, according to sources, though no official reason has been provided.
- Subramanian was appointed to the IMF role starting **November 1, 2022**, after previously serving as the **Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India**.
- The move comes just days ahead of an important **IMF executive board meeting on May 9**, where financial aid for **Pakistan** will be considered.
- The IMF board is set to review a **new \$1.3 billion climate resilience loan** and conduct the **first review of an ongoing \$7 billion bailout** program for Pakistan.
- India is part of a **four-country IMF constituency** along with **Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan**.
- India has also reportedly initiated efforts to push for **Pakistan’s re-listing on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list**, citing terror financing concerns.
- Pakistan was earlier on the FATF grey list from **June 2018 to October 2022**, which had negatively impacted foreign investment in the country.

## 27. JV COMPLETES INDIA’S FIRST OFFSHORE FACILITIES DECOMMISSIONING PROJECT:



- A joint venture of Shell, Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), and ONGC has successfully completed India’s first offshore facilities decommissioning project in the mid and south Tapti gas fields in the Arabian Sea.
- Decommissioning involves the safe removal of oil and gas extraction facilities after production has ceased; the Tapti field stopped producing in 2016.
- The Tapti Part A Facilities were handed over to ONGC, while the Part B Facilities — including 38 wells, 5 wellhead platforms, and 4 pipelines — were abandoned by the joint venture.
- Shell held a 30% interest in the field, ONGC 40%, and RIL the remaining share.
- The project involved removal of platforms, pipelines, load-in at the dismantling yard, and safe plugging and abandonment of all wells.

- Major contracts were awarded to Indian firms Larsen and Toubro for offshore execution and Chowgule Shipyard (CLSPL) for onshore dismantling.
- This pioneering project has played a key role in shaping India's regulatory and operational framework for offshore decommissioning.
- The safe and successful completion of the Tapti decommissioning sets a new benchmark for responsible offshore energy project closure in India.

## 28.ADANI GROUP DEPLOYS INDIA'S FIRST HYDROGEN-POWERED TRUCK FOR MINING LOGISTICS:



- Adani Group has deployed India's first hydrogen-powered truck for mining logistics in Chhattisgarh, which can carry 40 tonnes of cargo over a 200-km range.
- Adani Enterprises, the flagship company of the group, flagged off hydrogen fuel cell trucks as it looks to promote cleaner transportation.
- These hydrogen-powered trucks will gradually replace diesel vehicles used in the company's logistics operations.
- In collaboration with an Indian and international energy technology firm and a major auto manufacturer, Adani is developing hydrogen fuel cell battery-operated trucks for cargo transport.
- Each truck, equipped with smart technology and three hydrogen tanks, can carry up to 40 tonnes of cargo over a 200-km range.
- The launch of India's first hydrogen-powered truck in Chhattisgarh reflects the State's commitment to sustainability.
- Such initiatives will significantly reduce our carbon footprint and set a new standard for industry.
- Chhattisgarh is not only at the forefront in meeting the country's electricity demands but also leads by example in adopting sustainable practices.
- The state-owned Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company Ltd has appointed Adani Enterprises as the mine developer and operator for the Gare Pelma III block through a competitive bidding process.
- The project is a joint effort between Adani Natural Resources (ANR) and Adani New Industries Ltd (ANIL).

## 29.BLUE-COLLAR WAGES GROWING 5-6 PC ANNUALLY: REPORT



- Blue-collar wages are now growing at an annual rate of **5–6%**, with many companies offering **performance-based incentives** to attract and retain skilled talent, according to a report.
- The report, titled '**Blue-Collar Workforce Trends 2025**' by **Deloitte**, highlights a **10% rise in hiring intent** for blue-collar roles in 2025.
- This increase reflects strong demand for skilled talent across sectors such as **manufacturing, automotive, e-commerce, and logistics**.
- Wage growth, currently at **5–6% annually**, is aligned with rising demand in these sectors.
- **Automotive, metals and mining, and chemicals** sectors are seeing **steady salary increases of about 6%**, driven by investments in **automation and production capacity**.
- The **e-commerce sector** is poised for the **highest wage growth at 7%**, fuelled by expansion in **last-mile delivery, warehousing, and logistics infrastructure**.
- India's blue-collar workforce stands at a crossroads of **technological evolution and policy reform**.
- As **automation, AI, and smart manufacturing** reshape industry, the need for **inclusive skilling, robust social protections, and humane work environments** has become more critical than ever.
- The report draws on insights from **over 15 industries**, with participation from **over 200 companies** and **input from more than 300 manufacturing plants**.

## 30.AGRI, PHARMA, ELECTRONICS, ENGINEERING ACCOUNT FOR OVER 50 PC OF EXPORTS IN FY25:

- Agriculture, pharmaceuticals, electronics, and engineering goods together accounted for **over 50%** of India's **USD 437.42 billion** merchandise exports in **2024–25**, underscoring the country's growing export strength across diverse sectors.

- **Engineering goods** held the largest share at **26.67%**, followed by **agriculture (11.85%)**, **electronics (8.82%)**, and **pharmaceuticals (6.96%)**.
- The **electronics sector** recorded the highest export growth rate at **32.46%**, increasing from **USD 29.12 billion in 2023–24** to **USD 38.58 billion in 2024–25**.
  - Within this, **computer hardware and peripherals** grew by **101%**, from **USD 0.7 billion** to **USD 1.4 billion**.
  - Top destinations: **UAE, US, Netherlands, UK, and Italy**.
- **Engineering goods exports** grew by **6.74%**, reaching **USD 116.67 billion**.
  - Main markets: **US, UAE, Saudi Arabia, UK, and Germany**.
- **Pharmaceuticals exports** rose by **9.4%** to **USD 30.47 billion**, reaching over **200 countries**.
- **Agriculture and allied sectors exports** increased by **7.36%** to **USD 51.86 billion**.
  - Key commodities: **spices, coffee, tea, tobacco, rice, fruits & vegetables, marine products**.
  - **Spices**: **USD 4.45 billion** (from **USD 4.25 billion**); top buyers – **China, US, UAE, Bangladesh, Thailand**.
  - **Coffee**: **USD 1.81 billion** (from **USD 1.29 billion**); major export – **Robusta**; buyers – **Italy, Russia, Germany, UAE, Belgium, US**.
    - **Karnataka** leads in coffee production, followed by **Kerala**, with many GI-tagged varieties.
  - **Tea**: **USD 0.92 billion** (up from **USD 0.83 billion**); main producers – **Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala**.
  - **Tobacco**: **USD 1.98 billion** (up from **USD 1.45 billion**); India is the **second-largest** producer.
    - Key destinations: **UAE, Belgium, Indonesia, Egypt, USA, Turkey**.
    - Sector supports around **45.7 million** livelihoods; major states – **Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka**.
  - **Rice**: Record-high **USD 12.5 billion** (up from **USD 10.4 billion**); India holds **~40%** global market share.
    - Top buyers: **Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, UAE, USA, Yemen**.
  - **Fruits & Vegetables**: **USD 3.9 billion** (up from **USD 3.7 billion**); major exports – **grapes, pomegranates, mangoes, bananas, oranges, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, green chillies**.
    - Importing nations: **Bangladesh, UAE, Netherlands, Nepal, Malaysia**.
  - **Marine products**: **USD 7.2 billion**; number of destination countries rose from **105 (2014–15)** to **130 (2024–25)**.

## 31.UN REPORT SEES INDIA AS BRIGHT SPOT AMID GLOBAL SLOWDOWN:



- At a time when the global economy is facing what the United Nations calls a “precarious moment,” India has emerged as a rare bright spot.
- The UN’s mid-year update of the *World Economic Situation and Prospects* projects India’s growth at 6.3 per cent in the current fiscal year, the highest among large economies.
- This momentum is expected to continue into 2026, with growth estimated at 6.4 per cent.
- In contrast, the global outlook remains subdued due to rising trade tensions, policy uncertainty, and a decline in cross-border investments.
- Global economic growth is projected to slow to 2.4 per cent in 2025, down from 2.9 per cent in 2024, and 0.4 percentage points below the January forecast.
- Amid these global headwinds, India stands out not just for headline growth but for the breadth of progress, including buoyant capital markets, robust manufacturing, record-breaking exports, and a rapidly growing defence sector.
- These gains are rooted in sound policy choices, strong domestic demand, and growing global confidence in India’s economic trajectory.
- The report was released in mid-2025 as an update to the *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025* report issued on January 9, 2025. It was prepared by the Global Economic Monitoring Branch of the UN DESA.
- India’s growth is being driven by strong domestic demand and consistent government spending, which have supported stable employment and helped contain inflation.
- Inflation is expected to fall to 4.3 per cent in 2025, staying within the Reserve Bank of India’s target range.
- Financial markets reflect this optimism, with stock indices showing solid gains supported by sustained investor confidence.
- Manufacturing activity is picking up, driven by favourable policies and resilient external demand.
- Exports, particularly in strategic sectors like defence production, are expanding steadily.
- These indicators show that India’s economy is not only stable but advancing in an uncertain global environment.

- India's capital markets have played a key role by channelling domestic savings into investments, strengthening the financial system.
- As of December 2024, the stock market hit record highs and outperformed many emerging markets despite geopolitical tensions and domestic uncertainties.
- The primary market has also been active, attracting multinational firms like Hyundai and LG to list their local subsidiaries in India.
- This trend signals India's growing importance as a strategic partner in the global financial ecosystem.

### 32.RBI TO PAY GOVT DIVIDEND OF RS 2.69 LAKH CR:



- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a record ₹2.69 lakh crore dividend to be paid to the government for the fiscal year ended March 2025, marking a 27.4% increase from the ₹2.1 lakh crore payout in 2023-24.
- For the fiscal year 2022-23, the payout was ₹87,416 crore.
- The decision on the dividend payout was taken at the 616th meeting of the Central Board of Directors of the RBI, chaired by Governor Sanjay Malhotra.
- The board reviewed the global and domestic economic scenario, including risks to the outlook, according to an RBI statement.
- It also discussed the working of the Reserve Bank during April 2024 – March 2025 and approved the RBI's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year 2024-25.
- The transferable surplus for the year has been determined based on the revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF), approved by the Central Board in its meeting on May 15, 2025.
- The revised framework stipulates that risk provisioning under the Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB) be maintained within a range of 6.50% to 5.50% of the RBI's balance sheet.
- Based on the revised ECF and the macroeconomic assessment, the Central Board decided to further increase the CRB to 7.50%, the RBI said.

### 33.INDIA 4TH LARGEST ECONOMY, AHEAD OF JAPAN: NITI CEO:

- India has become the fourth largest economy in the world, overtaking Japan, according to NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam.
- Citing IMF data, Subrahmanyam stated that India is now larger than Japan.
- Until 2024, India was the fifth-largest economy in the world.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its April World Economic Outlook (WEO) report, projected that India will be the fourth largest economy with a GDP of USD 4.19 trillion in 2025.
- India's nominal GDP for 2025 (FY26) is expected to be USD 4.187 trillion, marginally more than Japan's estimated GDP of USD 4.187 trillion.
- According to IMF data, India's per capita income has doubled from USD 1,438 in 2013-14 to USD 2,880 in 2025.
- The IMF's WEO report also projected the Indian economy to grow at 6.2% in 2025-26, a revision down from the earlier estimate of 6.5% due to heightened trade tensions and global uncertainty.
- The report projected global growth at 2.8% in 2025, down by 0.5 percentage points from previous estimates, and at 3% in 2026.
- The NITI Aayog's approach paper, titled *Viksit Rajya For Viksit Bharat @ 2047*, noted that India has risen from being one of the 'Fragile Five' economies to one of the top five economies within a decade.
- The World Bank defines high-income countries as those with annual per capita income above USD 14,005 (2024-25).
- India aims to become a high-income country by 2047.
- The approach paper envisions *Viksit Bharat @ 2047* as a USD 30 trillion economy.
- To achieve this goal, a comprehensive framework for strategic interventions and reforms has been proposed.
- The framework includes six key building blocks and 26 thematic areas.
- The six building blocks are: Macro-Economic Goals and Strategy; Empowered Citizens; A Thriving and Sustainable Economy; Technology and Innovation Leadership; A Global Leader (Vishwa Bandhu); and Enabling Factors – Governance, Security, and Justice Delivery.

### 34.INDIA REGISTERS 3-FOLD GROWTH IN RENEWABLE ENERGY CAPACITY IN LAST DECADE:

- India has achieved **threefold growth** in renewable energy capacity over the past decade, reaching **232 GW** in 2024, up from **75.52 GW** in March 2014.
- This figure includes **large hydropower plants** and reflects India's emergence as a **global front-runner** in the renewable energy sector.
- The **tariff for grid-connected solar power** has dropped by **80%**, falling to **Rs 10.95 per unit** (for 170 MW at Neemuch), making solar power significantly more affordable.
- **Solar energy capacity** increased from **2.82 GW in 2014** to over **108 GW in 2024**—a **nearly 40-fold rise**.
- **Wind energy capacity** has more than **doubled**, from **21 GW in 2014** to **51 GW** today.

- In 2014, India had **only 2 GW** of solar module production and **almost no domestic solar cell and wafer production**.
- By 2024, India has ramped up:
  - **Solar module manufacturing to 90 GW,**
  - **Solar cell production to 25 GW,**
  - **Wafer production to 2 GW,**
  - **Fully integrated production capacity to 3.2 GW.**
- India targets by 2030:
  - **150 GW** of solar module capacity,
  - **100 GW** of solar cell capacity,
  - **40 GW** of wafer production,
  - **24 GW** of fully integrated solar manufacturing.
- **Biopower generation capacity** has grown by **42%**, from **8.1 GW to 11.5 GW**.
- The **Compressed Biogas (CBG) sector** has expanded from **1 project (8 TPD)** in 2014 to **150 projects with 1,211 TPD capacity** in 2024.
- The **PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana** has benefitted **13.3 lakh households**, with **nearly 12 lakh installations** in the last 10 months.
- India added a **record 25 GW** of renewable capacity in 2024, marking a **34.63% increase** from the **18.57 GW** added in 2023.
- India's renewable energy target is **500 GW by 2030**, requiring the addition of **approximately 50 GW annually** for the next 5–6 years.
- Four key agencies—**SECI, NTPC, NHPC, and SJVN**—have issued **44 GW worth of RE power procurement tenders** for FY 2024-25.
- In **April 2024**, India became the **world's third-largest producer** of electricity from **wind and solar energy**, overtaking **Germany**.

### 35.RBI'S BUMPER DIVIDEND EASES GOVT'S FISCAL POSITION, SAYS SBI REPORT:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a record dividend of Rs 2.69 lakh crore for the financial year 2024-25, a 27.4% increase from the Rs 2.11 lakh crore transferred in FY24.
- This bumper dividend is expected to ease the fiscal position of the government and support economic growth in India, now the world's fourth-largest economy.
- The Finance Minister, in the Union Budget for 2025-26, had projected a total dividend income of Rs 2.56 lakh crore from the RBI and public sector financial institutions.
- With the latest RBI dividend, actual receipts will significantly exceed the budgeted estimates.
- The increase in surplus follows a revision in the contingency risk buffer range to 6% ±1.5%, compared to the earlier 5.5%-6.5% range (held at 6% in FY23).
- In September 2024, India's foreign exchange reserves peaked at USD 704 billion, during which the RBI intervened heavily in the forex market by selling dollars to stabilise the rupee.

- The RBI's surplus was influenced by its Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) operations and interest income from domestic and foreign securities.
- Between June 3 and December 13, 2024, RBI was in absorption mode under LAF operations.
- After mid-December, the system liquidity shifted to injection mode until March 2025.
- The average liquidity absorption under LAF contributed to RBI's operational expenses.
- By March 31, 2025, system liquidity was in surplus mode, standing at Rs 1.2 lakh crore.
- From December 16, 2024, to March 28, 2025, the average liquidity deficit was Rs 1.7 lakh crore.
- Durable liquidity is expected to remain in surplus in FY26 due to factors such as open market operations (OMO) purchases, the RBI's large dividend transfer, and a projected balance of payments (BOP) surplus of USD 25–30 billion.

### 36.INDIA TO REMAIN FASTEST-GROWING ECONOMY, RBI'S BALANCE SHEET HITS RS 76.25 LAKH CR:



- The balance sheet of the RBI increased to ₹76.25 lakh crore as of March 31, 2025, marking an 8.20 per cent rise, aided by nearly 33 per cent gains in foreign exchange transactions.
- This expansion resulted in a bumper dividend of ₹2.7 lakh crore to the Central government, according to the RBI's Annual Report for 2024-25.
- The Indian economy is projected to remain the fastest-growing major economy in 2025-26, supported by sound macroeconomic fundamentals, a robust financial sector, and a commitment to sustainable growth.
- During 2024-25, the economy showed resilience amid geopolitical tensions and global economic fragmentation, thanks to proactive policy measures and strong macroeconomic fundamentals.
- The financial sector contributed to economic activity through improved asset quality and well-capitalised banks.
- Despite multiple global headwinds, Indian financial markets displayed resilience and orderly movements.
- The report flagged downside risks to growth and upside risks to inflation due to global financial market volatility, geopolitical tensions, trade fragmentation, supply-chain disruptions, and climate-induced uncertainties.
- Easing supply-chain pressures, softening global commodity prices, and higher agricultural production due to an above-

normal southwest monsoon are expected to support a favourable inflation outlook.

- However, tariff policy changes could trigger volatility in financial markets, and exports may face challenges due to inward-looking policies and tariff wars.
- India's ongoing and planned trade agreements are expected to mitigate these risks, while strong services exports and remittances are likely to keep the current account deficit "eminently manageable."
- The RBI noted "greater confidence" in achieving durable alignment of headline inflation to its 4 per cent target over a 12-month horizon.
- It advised banks to manage interest rate risks in both trading and banking books, especially as net interest margins moderate.
- RBI's income for 2024-25 increased by 22.77 per cent, while expenditure rose by 7.76 per cent.
- The year ended with an overall surplus of ₹2,68,590.07 crore, up 27.37 per cent from ₹2,10,873.99 crore the previous year.
- The balance sheet increased by ₹5,77,718.72 crore from ₹70,47,703.21 crore in March 2024 to ₹76,25,421.93 crore in March 2025.
- Growth on the assets side was driven by increases in gold (52.09%), domestic investments (14.32%), and foreign investments (1.70%).
- Exchange gain from foreign exchange transactions rose by about 33 per cent to ₹1.11 lakh crore from ₹83,615.86 crore a year earlier.

### 37.MANUFACTURING PULLS DOWN Q4 GDP TO 7.4 PC; FY25 GROWTH TO 6.5 PC:



- India's economic growth slowed to **7.4%** in the January-March 2025 quarter, pulling down the annual growth rate for 2024-25 to a **four-year low of 6.5%**, mainly due to a slowdown in the manufacturing sector.
- The size of the Indian economy rose to **Rs 330.68 lakh crore** (about **USD 3.9 trillion**), setting the stage for achieving the **USD 5 trillion** target in the next few years.
- In comparison, the economy grew **9.2%** in the previous fiscal year, 2023-24.
- China registered an economic growth of **5.4%** in the first three months of 2025.
- Quarterly GDP growth for 2024-25:
  - **April-June: 6.5%**

- **July-September: 5.6%**
- **October-December: 6.4%**
- **January-March: 7.4%**

- GDP in Q4 of 2024-25 (Jan-Mar) is estimated at **Rs 51.35 lakh crore**, compared to **Rs 47.82 lakh crore** in the same quarter the previous year — a **7.4%** increase.
- Nominal GDP for Q4 is estimated at **Rs 88.18 lakh crore**, up from **Rs 79.61 lakh crore**, a **10.8%** growth.
- Real GDP for FY 2024-25 is estimated at **Rs 187.97 lakh crore**, compared to **Rs 176.51 lakh crore** in FY 2023-24, showing a **6.5%** growth.
- Nominal GDP is estimated at **Rs 330.68 lakh crore**, up from **Rs 301.23 lakh crore**, a **9.8%** increase.
- Real Gross Value Added (GVA) for FY 2024-25 is estimated at **Rs 171.87 lakh crore**, registering a **6.4%** growth over the previous year.
- Nominal GVA for FY 2024-25 is **Rs 300.22 lakh crore**, showing a **9.5%** increase over **Rs 274.13 lakh crore** in FY 2023-24.
- Sector-wise annual growth:
  - **Manufacturing:** Slowed to **4.5%** from **12.3%** in FY 2023-24.
  - **Agriculture:** Improved to **4.6%** from **2.7%** in the previous year.
- Q4 (Jan-Mar 2025) sectoral performance:
  - **Manufacturing:** Slowed to **4.8%** from **11.3%** a year ago.
  - **Services (trade, hotel, transport, communication, and broadcasting):** Grew by **6%**, marginally lower than **6.2%** a year ago.
  - **Financial, real estate & professional services:** Grew by **7.8%**, down from **9%**.
  - **Public administration, defence & other services:** Posted almost flat growth at **8.7%**.

### 38.CENTRE MANAGES TO MEET FY25 FISCAL DEFICIT:

- The Central government has met its **fiscal deficit target of 4.8% of GDP** for 2024-25, according to provisional data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).
- In the **Revised Estimates (RE)** presented to Parliament in February, the fiscal deficit was pegged at **Rs 15,69,527 crore** (4.8% of GDP).
- The actual fiscal deficit stood at **Rs 15,77,270 crore**, which is **100.5%** of the revised estimate.
- The **nominal GDP** for 2024-25 is estimated at **Rs 3,30,68,145 crore**.
- The government received **Rs 30.78 lakh crore** (97.8% of RE 2024-25 total receipts), comprising:
  - **Tax revenue (net to Centre):** Rs 24.99 lakh crore
  - **Non-tax revenue:** Rs 5.37 lakh crore
  - **Non-debt capital receipts:** Rs 41,818 crore
    - Recovery of loans: Rs 24,616 crore

- Miscellaneous capital receipts: Rs 17,202 crore
- The **total expenditure** incurred by the Centre was **Rs 46.55 lakh crore** (98.7% of RE 2024-25), which includes:
  - **Revenue expenditure:** Rs 36.03 lakh crore
  - **Capital expenditure:** Rs 10.52 lakh crore
- Of the revenue expenditure:
  - **Interest payments:** Rs 11.16 lakh crore
  - **Major subsidies:** Rs 3.88 lakh crore

- **Devolution to States** as share of taxes stood at **Rs 12,86,885 crore**, which is **Rs 1,57,391 crore higher** than the previous year.
- Iera Chief Economist Aditi Nayar commented that the fiscal deficit marginally exceeded the RE for FY2025 due to a positive overshooting in capital expenditure, which was partly offset by lower-than-expected receipts and considerable savings in revenue expenditure.
- The **upward revision in FY2025 nominal GDP** is seen as a positive factor for meeting the fiscal deficit and debt-to-GDP targets for **FY2026**.



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## INTERNATIONAL

### 39.UK FTA TO BOOST INDIAN APPAREL, LEATHER EXPORTS VS BANGLADESH, VIETNAM: EXPORTERS:



- **Import duties have been removed** on a range of Indian goods under a **free trade agreement (FTA)** with the UK, especially in **labour-intensive sectors** like:
  - Apparel
  - Clothing
  - Leather
- **Exporters say** this move will boost the **competitiveness of Indian products** in the UK market, particularly against countries like **Bangladesh and Vietnam**.
- The FTA has **eliminated or significantly reduced tariffs** on a wide range of Indian goods, providing:
  - **Preferential access** to the UK market
  - Entry into one of the **world's most affluent and consumption-driven economies**
- Beneficiary sectors include:
  - **Woven and knitted apparel**
  - **Made-ups**
  - **Footwear**
  - **Carpets**
  - **Marine products**
- These products will now benefit from **tariff advantages ranging from 5–9%** in the UK.
- **Projected export growth by 2027:**
  - Woven apparel: from **USD 753 million** to **USD 1.6 billion**
  - Knitted apparel: from **USD 654 million** to **USD 1.13 billion**
  - Made-ups: from **USD 276 million** to **USD 477 million**
  - Footwear: from **USD 279 million** to **USD 545 million**
  - Carpets: from **USD 102 million** to **USD 185 million**
  - Marine products: from **USD 107 million** to **USD 185 million**

- **Industrial sectors** set to benefit:
  - **Auto components and vehicles:** from **USD 286 million** to **USD 572 million** (8% tariff advantage)
  - **Aluminum and its products:** from **USD 102 million** to **USD 200 million**
  - **Organic chemicals:** from **USD 420 million** to **USD 966 million**
- **Gautam Hari Singhania**, Chairman of Raymond Group, emphasized that such agreements are:
  - Crucial for integrating India into **resilient global value chains**
  - Important for strengthening India's image as a **trusted manufacturing and export partner**
- The **India–UK trade deal** is described as a '**landmark**' agreement, aiming to:
  - Remove taxes on Indian exports of **leather, footwear, and clothing**
  - Make **British whisky and cars cheaper** in India
  - **Double bilateral trade** to **USD 120 billion** by 2030
- The agreement was concluded after **three years of on-and-off negotiations** between the **world's 5th and 6th largest economies**.

### 40.INDIA, CHILE INK TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR COMPREHENSIVE FTA:



- India and Chile have **signed Terms of Reference (ToRs)** to begin negotiations for a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**.
- The two countries have had a **Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)** in place since **2006**, which was expanded in **September 2016** and came into effect on **May 16, 2017**.
- In **April 2019**, both nations agreed to further expand the PTA.
- The CEPA is aimed at **deepening economic engagement, boosting employment, and promoting investment, cooperation, and exports**, according to India's Commerce Ministry.
- It will build on the existing PTA and broaden the scope to include sectors such as **digital services, investment promotion, MSMEs, and critical minerals**.

- Both sides emphasised the need to upgrade the current trade framework to **unlock new growth opportunities**.
- The leaders welcomed the **launch of CEPA negotiations**, with the goal of achieving a **balanced, ambitious, comprehensive, and mutually beneficial agreement** for deeper economic integration.

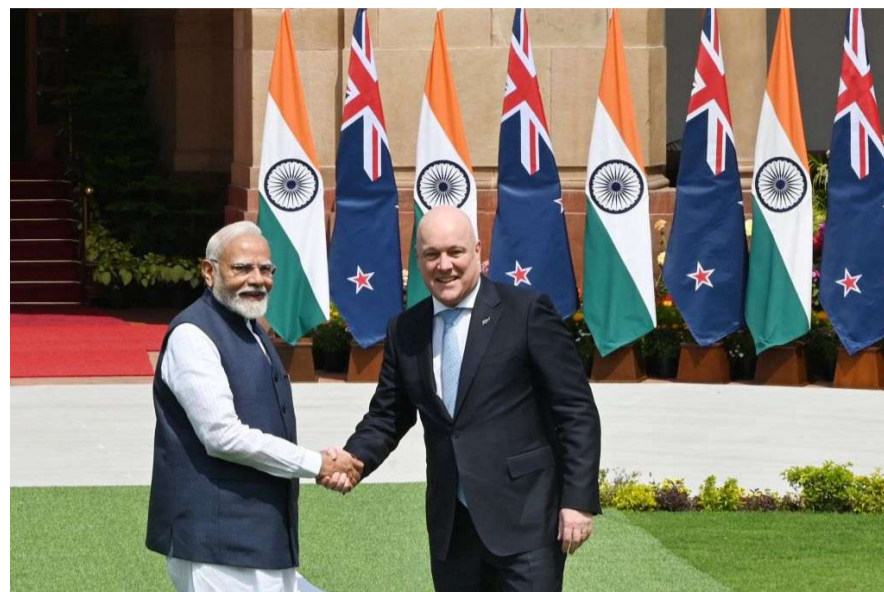
## 41. ROYAL THAI RITUAL PREDICTS GOOD YEAR FOR FARMERS



- Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn presided over an elaborate annual ceremony marking the start of the rice-planting season and honouring the nation's farmers.
- The Royal Ploughing Ceremony is held to read auguries that predict farming conditions for the year ahead.
- As is usually the case, good times were predicted, despite Thailand's sluggish economy.
- The King and Queen Suthida were sheltered from the bright sun by ornate umbrellas at the ceremony's traditional venue, Sanam Luang, or "Royal Ground," near the Grand Palace in Bangkok.
- According to Thai historians, the ritual dates back about 700 years.
- Then, as now, rice cultivation was and remains central to Thailand's culture and economy.
- The ceremony is meant to encourage farmers as the new planting season begins.
- The ceremony was led by the highest-ranking civil servant in the Agriculture Ministry, serving as the Lord of the Ploughing Ceremony.
- Wearing a colourful traditional costume, he chose from a selection of cloths; the one selected was interpreted to signify satisfactory rainfall and an abundant harvest.
- In the second stage of the ceremony, the Lord anointed the heads of two "sacred" oxen, who then pulled a plough around a section of the field several times.
- He scattered seeds at the front of a small procession accompanied by more traditionally garbed participants.
- The two oxen, named "Por" and "Piang" – together meaning "sufficiency" – chose from food offerings presented by Brahmin priests.
- The oxen chose water, grass, and liquor, symbolising adequate water supplies, food abundance, and good international trade, respectively.

- After the King and Queen departed, onlookers sprinted onto the field to collect scattered seeds as souvenirs or to mix with their own rice stores at home for merit.

## 42. 1ST ROUND INDIA-NEW ZEALAND FTA TALK ENDS:



- The five-day talks between India and New Zealand for a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) concluded on Friday.
- The negotiations aim to boost bilateral trade and investment between the two countries.
- After a 10-year gap, India and New Zealand resumed FTA talks on March 16, 2025.
- The two nations began discussions on a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) in April 2010 but stalled after 10 rounds in February 2015.
- Bilateral trade surpassed USD 1 billion during April-January 2025, highlighting growing economic ties.
- A major challenge in the FTA talks is the disparity in tariff structures between the two countries.
- New Zealand's average import tariff is 2.3%, with over half its tariff lines duty-free, giving Indian goods substantial market access.
- India's average tariff is 17.8%, meaning it would need to reduce tariffs significantly, making a traditional FTA less attractive for India.
- New Zealand has previously demanded greater access to India's dairy market, which India has resisted to protect its domestic farming industry.
- India's dairy imports from New Zealand currently stand at around USD 0.57 million, with no duty concessions in this sector under any trade pact.
- New Zealand may also seek duty concessions on products like meat and wine.
- Bilateral trade in 2023-24 was USD 873.4 million (India's exports: USD 538.33 million; imports: USD 335 million), down from USD 1.02 billion in 2022-23.
- India's key goods exports to New Zealand include clothing, textiles, medicines, refined petrol, agricultural machinery, auto, iron and steel, paper products, electronics, shrimps, diamonds, and basmati rice.
- Main imports from New Zealand include agricultural goods, minerals, apples, kiwifruit, meat products, milk albumin, lactose syrup, coking coal, timber, wool, and scrap metals.

- In FY24, India's services exports to New Zealand were USD 214.1 million, while New Zealand's services exports to India were USD 456.5 million.
- India's major services exports include IT and software services, telecom services, healthcare services (medical tourism, pharmaceutical research, telemedicine), and financial services.
- New Zealand's key services export to India is education, with thousands of Indian students studying in the country.

### 43. MALDIVES THANKS INDIA FOR OFFERING \$50-MILLION FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

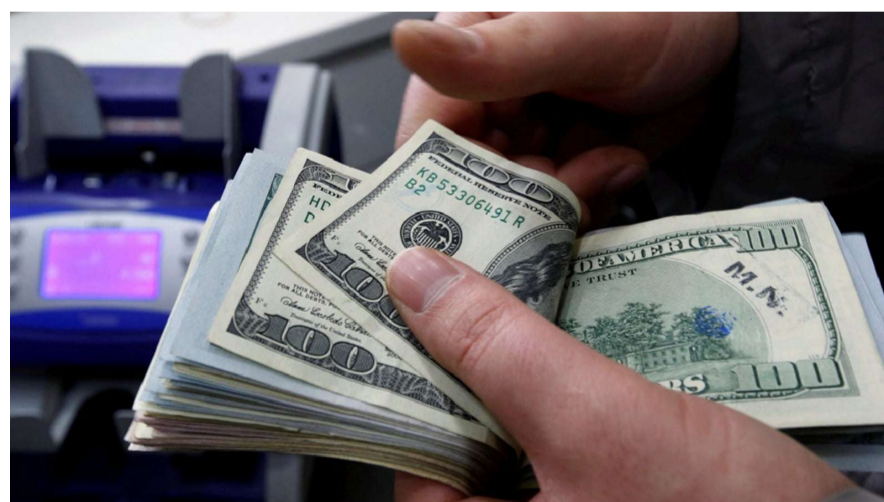


- Maldives expressed gratitude to India for offering a Government Treasury Bill of \$50 million, which has supported the island nation's fiscal reform efforts toward economic stability.
- Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Khaleel thanked External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar and the Indian government for the timely financial assistance.
- On the request of the Government of Maldives, the State Bank of India (SBI) has subscribed, for one more year, to a \$50 million Government Treasury Bill issued by the Ministry of Finance of Maldives.
- The High Commission of India in Maldives confirmed the subscription in a press release.
- Since March 2019, the Government of India has facilitated the subscription of several such Treasury Bills by the SBI and has rolled them over annually, interest-free, to the Government of Maldives.
- This initiative has been carried out under a unique Government-to-Government arrangement as emergency financial assistance to the Maldives.
- India considers the Maldives a key maritime neighbour and an important partner in its 'Neighbourhood First' policy and Vision 'MAHASAGAR' (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions).

### 44. INDIA ONLY RESERVED RIGHT TO IMPOSE RETALIATORY DUTY ON US GOODS:

- India has **reserved its right** under WTO norms to impose **retaliatory duties** on certain American products in response to US tariffs on steel and aluminum, though it may choose to address the issue through **ongoing bilateral trade agreement (BTA) negotiations**.
- The retaliatory measures are being considered under **World Trade Organization (WTO)** rules, which permit such action if a member imposes safeguard measures without proper notification or consultation.
- An official noted that India had previously issued similar notifications to the WTO against the **European Union's steel safeguard measures** in 2019 and 2021, but those were **not implemented**.
- The US tariffs, initially imposed in **March 2018** (25% on steel and 10% on aluminum), have impacted approximately **\$7.6 billion** worth of Indian exports, resulting in an estimated **\$1.91 billion** in additional duties collected by the US.
- India had sought **consultations with the US in April**, but Washington maintained the tariffs were based on **national security grounds**, not safeguard measures.
- India's notification to the WTO, issued on **May 12**, formally invokes its rights under the **Agreement on Safeguards (AoS)**, allowing for the suspension of concessions.
- If implemented, the retaliation could involve **higher tariffs on selected US goods**. While the specific products haven't been disclosed, in a similar move in **2019**, India had targeted **28 US products**, including **almonds, apples, and chemicals**.
- India's **first use of WTO-sanctioned retaliation** occurred in **June 2019**, after the US removed India from the **Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)**. That move affected about **\$240 million** in trade and was reversed in **September 2023**, following a resolution of seven WTO disputes.
- Trade experts believe India's latest move to reserve its retaliation rights serves as a **strategic bargaining chip** in negotiations aiming to boost bilateral trade to **\$500 billion by 2030**, up from the current **\$191 billion**.

### 45. US TAX ON OUTWARD REMITTANCES TO PINCH INDIANS SENDING MONEY HOME:



- The cost for Indians in the US sending money back home is expected to rise significantly as the Trump administration proposes a 5% tax on outward remittances.
- The total annual outgo due to this tax could exceed **USD 1.6 billion**, based on remittance data for 2023–24 compiled from a recent RBI article.

- The tax proposal, part of President Donald Trump's priority Bill, would apply to remittances made by over 40 million individuals, including green card and H1B visa holders, but **not to US citizens**.
- India's annual remittances have more than **doubled** from **USD 55.6 billion in 2010–11 to USD 118.7 billion in 2023–24**, according to the RBI's March Bulletin.
- The RBI's sixth round of the **India's Remittances Survey (2023–24)** indicates a shift in remittance sources from the Gulf to **advanced economies** such as the US, UK, Singapore, Canada, and Australia.
- These advanced economies collectively contributed **over 50%** of India's total inward remittances in 2023–24.
- The **US remained the largest single contributor**, with its share rising to **27.7% in 2023–24** from **23.4% in 2020–21**, amounting to approximately **USD 32.9 billion**.
- A 5% tax on remittances from the US would mean an added **cost of around USD 1.64 billion** for senders.
- According to the RBI, remittance costs include **fees at various transaction stages** and **currency exchange rate margins**.
- Since remittances are primarily sent for **family maintenance**, the increased cost could have **significant socioeconomic impacts**.
- Reducing remittance costs has been a **key global policy objective** for over a decade.
- The RBI article was authored by **Dhirendra Gajbhiye, Sujata Kundu, Alisha George, Omkar Vinherkar, Yusra Anees, and Jithin Baby**, all from the Department of Economic and Policy Research.
- According to the **World Bank**, India has been the **top global remittance recipient since 2008**, with its global share rising from **11% in 2001 to 14% in 2024**.
- The **top five remittance-receiving countries in 2024** were:
  - **India** – USD 129 billion
  - **Mexico** – USD 68 billion
  - **China** – USD 48 billion
  - **Philippines** – USD 40 billion
  - **Pakistan** – USD 33 billion

## 46. INDIAN ACADEMIC INSTITUTES CANCEL MOUS WITH TURKISH INSTITUTIONS:

- **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee** has **formally cancelled its memorandum of understanding (MoU)** with **Inonu University, Turkiye**.
  - The MoU earlier aimed to facilitate **academic and research collaborations**, including **student and faculty exchanges**.
- **Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU)**, a Central university based in Hyderabad, has also **cancelled its MoU** with **Turkiye's Yunus Emre Institute**, which was for a diploma course.
- **Lovely Professional University (LPU)**, Jalandhar, became the **first private Indian university to terminate MoUs** with

**institutions in both Turkiye and Azerbaijan**, citing **geopolitical developments** deemed **contrary to India's national interest**.

- **Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU)** has also **immediately ended its MoU** with **Istanbul University, Turkiye**.
- These terminations reflect a broader **academic and diplomatic backlash** from Indian institutions in response to **Turkiye and Azerbaijan's positions** on sensitive geopolitical issues involving India.

## 47. INDIA, EU AGREE TO REACH DEAL IN TWO PHASES:

- India and the European Union (EU) chief negotiators have concluded another round of talks on the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) and agreed to reach a deal in two phases, according to an official.
- The two sides decided on a phased approach due to the uncertain global trade environment, particularly influenced by US tariff actions under President Donald Trump.
- The talks focused on areas such as market access offers in goods, services, and investment.
- India has followed a similar two-phase negotiation approach in trade pacts with Australia and is adopting the same strategy for talks with the US.
- The EU is demanding significant duty cuts in sectors like automobiles and medical devices, as well as tax reductions on products such as wines, spirits, meat, and poultry, along with a stronger intellectual property regime.
- If successfully concluded, the FTA could make Indian exports such as ready-made garments, pharmaceuticals, steel, petroleum products, and electrical machinery more competitive in the EU market.
- The India-EU trade pact negotiations cover 23 policy areas or chapters, including Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Investment, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Technical Barriers to Trade, Trade Remedies, Rules of Origin, Customs and Trade Facilitation, Competition, Trade Defence, Government Procurement, Dispute Settlement, Intellectual Property Rights, Geographical Indications, and Sustainable Development.
- India's bilateral trade in goods with the EU reached \$137.41 billion in 2023–24, with exports at \$75.92 billion and imports at \$61.48 billion, making the EU India's largest trading partner in goods.
- The EU accounts for about 17 per cent of India's total exports, while EU exports to India comprise 9 per cent of its total overseas shipments.
- In 2023, bilateral trade in services between India and the EU was estimated at \$51.45 billion.
- The two sides are also negotiating an investment protection agreement and an agreement on geographical indications (GIs), in addition to the FTA.

## 48. INDIA-UK APPAREL, TEXTILES TRADE TO DOUBLE IN 5-6 YEARS UNDER FTA:

- India's apparel and home textiles trade with the United Kingdom is poised for significant growth, with volumes

expected to double over the next five to six years, driven by the recently concluded Free Trade Agreement (FTA), according to a report by credit rating agency ICRA.

- The FTA is expected to become operational in calendar year (CY) 2026, pending legal review.
- India and the UK entered into the FTA on May 6, following nearly three years of negotiations.
- Under the agreement, India will reduce tariffs on 90 per cent of British goods, with 85 per cent becoming completely duty-free over ten years.
- In return, Britain will lower tariffs on certain products, resulting in 99 per cent of India's exports to the UK facing zero duties.
- Currently, India-UK trade accounts for around 2 per cent of India's total trade, reflecting an underutilised partnership given the potential of both economies.
- India is the 12th largest trading partner of the UK and ranks fifth in apparel and home textiles imports.
- UK's apparel and home textiles imports from India stood at USD 1.4 billion in CY2024, representing a 6.6 per cent share of UK's total textiles imports.
- The US and the EU continue to be the dominant export markets for Indian apparel and home textiles, accounting for 61 per cent of exports in CY2024.
- The UK's share has remained stable at 7–8 per cent over the past five years but is expected to grow to 11–12 per cent by CY2027, reflecting a projected CAGR of 11 per cent from CY2024 to CY2027.
- Currently, the UK levies an 8–12 per cent duty on apparel and home textiles from India.
- With tariffs set to be eliminated on 99 per cent of Indian goods under the FTA, including textiles, new production capacities are likely to be added over the next 4–5 years to meet increased demand.
- In CY2024, China was the largest exporter of apparel and home textiles to the UK with a 25 per cent share, followed by Bangladesh (22 per cent), Turkey (8 per cent), and Pakistan (6.8 per cent).
- Post-FTA implementation, India will gain zero-duty access for apparel and home textiles, achieving a level playing field with countries like Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Pakistan that already enjoy duty-free access.

## 49.UK, EU HAIL NEW CHAPTER AS THEY INK NEW DEALS:



- Britain and the European Union marked a renewed phase in their relationship on Monday, signing new agreements on

defence cooperation and easing trade, during their first formal summit since Brexit.

- A key outcome is the establishment of a **UK-EU defence and security partnership**, which grants the UK access to an EU defence loan programme valued at **150 billion euros (approx. USD 170 billion)**.
- Trade-related agreements include the **removal of certain checks on animal and plant products**, aimed at facilitating smoother food trade across borders.
- A **12-year extension** was agreed upon, allowing EU fishing vessels to continue operating in UK waters.
- Despite the EU remaining the UK's **largest trading partner**, UK exports have declined by **21% since Brexit**, due to added border checks, complex paperwork, and other non-tariff barriers.
- **Post-Brexit visa restrictions** have disrupted professional mobility (for bankers, lawyers, etc.) and cultural exchanges, including **touring bands and school trips**.
- Since assuming office in July, Prime Minister **Keir Starmer** has prioritized **resetting UK-EU relations**, aiming to stabilize and improve ties after years of Brexit-related tensions.

## 50.UK TO GIVE NONDISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT TO INDIAN FIRMS IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT UNDER FTA:

- For the **first time**, the UK has agreed to offer **non-discriminatory treatment** to Indian companies in its **public procurement system** under the **India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
- On **May 6**, both countries **announced the conclusion of FTA negotiations**, which will be **implemented next year**.
- Under the UK's **Social Value law**, public authorities must consider economic, social, and environmental well-being in public services contracts.
- The FTA provides **UK businesses with unique access** to India's **public procurement market**, which includes **about 40,000 tenders** valued at approximately **£38 billion per year**.
- **India has agreed to allow British companies** to participate in public procurement, but **only in non-sensitive sectors**.
- **UK firms will be excluded** from procurements by **State government entities and local bodies**.
- **UK-based suppliers can bid for Indian tenders above Rs 200 crore**, qualifying as **Class-II local suppliers** under Indian public procurement norms.
- India previously opened its **government procurement sector to UAE firms** under a similar FTA, allowing bids for tenders above Rs 200 crore.
- In **2020**, India revised its public procurement norms to promote '**Make in India**', introducing the **Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India), Order 2017**.
- Suppliers are categorized as:
  - **Class-I:** Local content of **50% or more** – highest preference

- **Class-II:** Local content **more than 20% but less than 50%**
- **Non-local:** Local content **less than 20%**
- India's **government procurement market** is among the **largest globally**, estimated at nearly **USD 600 billion annually** (about **15% of GDP**).
- Beyond budgeting, **government procurement is a vital industrial policy tool**, used to **promote local manufacturing**, support **MSMEs**, and advance national initiatives like **Make in India** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.

## 51.INDIA, MALDIVES TO TAKE STOCK OF IMPLEMENTATION TODAY:



- **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** and **Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Khaleel** are set to review the progress of the **India-Maldives comprehensive economic and maritime security partnership**.
- Khaleel, accompanied by a **high-level delegation**, is on a **three-day visit to India**, marking his **third trip to India** this year.
- The **vision document** for the partnership was adopted by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **President Mohamed Muizzu** in **October 2023**.
- Khaleel will lead the Maldivian delegation at the **second High-Level Core Group (HLCG) meeting** to assess implementation progress of the vision document.
- He will also hold **bilateral talks** with **EAM Jaishankar** to **strengthen economic and maritime cooperation**.
- The visit aims to **enhance strategic collaboration** between the two countries amid regional security and economic challenges.
- **India-Maldives relations** had been under strain following **Muizzu's election in November 2023**, due to his **pro-China stance** and his **demand for Indian military withdrawal**.
- In response, **Indian military personnel were replaced by civilians**, reducing direct military presence.
- Relations began to improve when **Muizzu pledged to boost bilateral ties** during his **October visit to Delhi**, signaling a shift toward cooperative engagement.

## 52.DELHI AIRPORT AMONG TOP 10 HUB AIRPORTS IN ASIA PACIFIC, MIDDLE EAST:

- **Delhi airport** has been ranked among the **top 10 hub airports** in the **Asia-Pacific and Middle East** regions, according to the **Air Connectivity Ranking 2024** by **Airports Council International Asia-Pacific & Middle East**.

- **Delhi airport** holds the **10th spot**, with **Dubai International Airport** topping the list.
- The ranking reflects a **14% year-on-year increase** in air connectivity across the regions, driven by strong international travel demand and network recovery.
- The **top 10 hub airports** for 2024 are:
  - Dubai International Airport (UAE)
  - Shanghai Pudong International Airport (China)
  - Hamad International Airport (Qatar)
  - Incheon International Airport (South Korea)
  - Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport (China)
  - Beijing Capital International Airport (China)
  - Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport (Thailand)
  - Singapore Changi Airport (Singapore)
  - Kuala Lumpur International Airport (Malaysia)
  - Delhi Indira Gandhi International Airport (India)
- The **Hub Connectivity Index** evaluates an airport's efficiency as an international transfer point, based on factors like viable transfer windows, route deviation, and onward connectivity strength.
- **Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL)**, which operates Indira Gandhi International Airport, noted that the airport connects to **153 destinations—81 domestic and 72 international**.
- This achievement aligns with the government's vision to develop **IGIA as a global transit hub**, DIAL added.

## 53.NEPAL'S MOUNTAINEERING COMMUNITY CELEBRATES 72ND ANNIV OF MT EVEREST CONQUEST:



- Nepal's mountaineering community celebrated the conquest of the world's highest mountain with a rally of climbers, guides, and others on the occasion of International Everest Day.
- The event marked the 72nd anniversary of the first successful summit of Mount Everest on May 29, 1953, by New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay.
- Nepal's Minister for Culture and Tourism led the celebrations in Kathmandu, which included a city walk and a gathering at the old palace.

- The celebration was described not only as a mountaineering event but also as a festival for Nepal and the world, according to Tshering, who has guided hundreds of climbers in the Himalayas.
- Nepal is home to eight of the world's highest peaks and attracts hundreds of foreign climbers each year.
- Climbers employ thousands of local people for tasks such as carrying gear, cooking, and supporting them during their mountain expeditions.
- The Nepalese government collects revenue from climbers through permit fees.
- The end of May also signifies the close of the popular spring mountaineering season, as climbers descend before the onset of the monsoon and adverse weather conditions.

- According to Nepal's Department of Mountaineering, 468 foreign climbers from 57 countries received permits to climb Everest by the end of May, alongside a similar number of Nepalese mountain guides.
- Many climbers reached the summit, but the department is still verifying the total number of successful ascents.
- Climbers must submit proof of their summit and confirm they cleared their garbage to receive an official summit certificate.
- Renowned Sherpa guide Kami Rita reached the Everest summit for the 31st time on Tuesday, breaking his own record for the most ascents of the mountain.



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## SCIENCE & TECH

### 54. GLOBAL MEDIA DIALOGUE AT WAVES RESOLVES TO ENSURE ETHICAL USE OF AI:



- The WAVES declaration was adopted by representatives of 77 countries at the Global Media Dialogue.
- The declaration focused on ensuring the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI).
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar emphasized that “technology and tradition must go hand-in-hand.”
- Jaishankar and Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw chaired the Global Media Dialogue during the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES).
- The declaration was finalized after nearly two hours of deliberation.
- The 13-point declaration aims to prevent the spread of misinformation and disinformation.
- It promotes media integrity, fact-based journalism, and responsible advertising for enlightened public discourse.
- Participating nations committed to supporting choice, access, and affordability in media consumption to reduce the digital divide.
- They also pledged to maintain open and inclusive spaces for creativity, culture, and collaboration.
- Jaishankar reiterated the vast possibilities of AI and the importance of aligning technological progress with traditional values.

### 55. INDIA TEST-FIRES ADVANCED UNDERWATER NAVAL MINE:

- India has successfully test-fired an advanced underwater naval mine designed to strengthen the Navy’s capabilities against modern stealth ships and submarines.
- The test comes amid rising tensions between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack.
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy conducted combat firing of the

indigenously developed multi-influence ground mine (MIGM) with reduced explosives.

- The MIGM was developed by the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory, Visakhapatnam, in collaboration with other DRDO labs.
- Bharat Dynamics Ltd, Visakhapatnam, and Apollo Microsystems Ltd, Hyderabad, are the system's production partners.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh praised DRDO, the Indian Navy, and industry partners, stating the system will significantly enhance the Navy’s undersea warfare capabilities.

### 56. DOT ISSUES LETTER OF INTENT TO MUSK’S STARLINK FOR SATCOM SERVICES:



- **Elon Musk’s Starlink** has taken its first step toward launching satellite internet services in India by securing a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** from the Department of Telecommunications.
- Starlink must now obtain a **license** before it can begin operations in the country.
- **Starlink**, developed by **SpaceX**, offers **high-speed, low-latency broadband internet** globally using **low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites**.
- Unlike traditional geostationary satellite services, Starlink operates at **550 km altitude**, enabling faster connectivity.
- The firm has partnered with India’s top telecom operators, **Reliance Jio** and **Bharti Airtel**, to deliver services to Indian customers.
- Starlink's LEO satellite constellation currently includes **7,000 satellites**, with plans to expand to **over 40,000**.
- The system supports streaming, gaming, and video calls, with typical **download speeds between 50–150 Mbps** and latency between **20–60 milliseconds**.
- Starlink hardware includes a **user terminal (dish)**, **WiFi router**, **power supply**, **cables**, and **base**, requiring a clear sky view.
- It is designed to function in **extreme weather** and **remote locations**, making it ideal for rural and underserved areas.
- Starlink is already active in **over 100 countries**, playing key roles in **disaster relief** and **war zones**, notably in **Ukraine**, where it sustained military communications after Russian attacks.

- SpaceX has also offered **free services during natural disasters**, such as hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024.
- India's **satellite broadband market** is lucrative, with the space economy projected to grow from **USD 8.4 billion in 2022 to USD 44 billion by 2033**, according to a FICCI-EY report.

## 57.COUNTDOWN FOR LAUNCH OF PSLV-C61 MISSION STARTS:



- The 22-hour countdown for the launch of an Earth imaging satellite onboard a PSLV rocket commenced at Sriharikota.
- The lift-off for the PSLV-C61 is scheduled for 5:59 am on May 18 from the first launch pad at the spaceport.
- This marks the 101st mission for the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency.
- The PSLV, in its 63rd mission, will carry the Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-09).
- EOS-09 is capable of capturing high-resolution images of the Earth's surface under all weather conditions.
- The satellite will provide round-the-clock imaging, crucial for applications such as agriculture, forestry monitoring, disaster management, urban planning, and national security.
- Weighing approximately 1,696.24 kg, EOS-09 will join the constellation of Earth Observation satellites to enhance real-time coverage across India's vast territory.
- EOS-09 (RISAT-1B) is a follow-on to the RISAT-1 satellite with similar configuration.
- It complements and supplements data from Resourcesat, Cartosat, and RISAT-2B series satellites.
- EOS-09 is a repeat satellite of EOS-04, which was launched in 2022.

## 58.CHINA LAUNCHED SPACECRAFT WILL YIELD 'GROUNDBREAKING DISCOVERIES':



- China launched the Tianwen-2 spacecraft early Thursday aboard a Long March 3-B rocket from southern China, aiming to return samples from an asteroid near Mars.
- The mission targets asteroid 2016HO3 for sample collection and will also explore the main-belt comet 311P, which lies even farther from Earth than Mars.
- The China National Space Administration stated that the mission is expected to return samples from 2016HO3 in about two years.
- These celestial bodies were chosen due to their relatively stable orbits and potential to offer insights into Earth's formation, including the origins of water.
- China previously made history by returning rock samples from the Moon's far side and has expressed interest in international cooperation.
- However, U.S. law currently prohibits direct bilateral cooperation between NASA and China due to national security concerns.
- The Moon's far side, which is more rugged and harder to access than the near side, presents unique scientific challenges and opportunities.
- China also operates its own space station, Tiangong ("Heavenly Palace"), a fully Chinese-built station developed after being excluded from the International Space Station.
- The Chinese space program is overseen by the People's Liberation Army, the military arm of the ruling Communist Party.
- Since launching its first human into space over 20 years ago, China has rapidly expanded its space ambitions, becoming the third nation to independently send humans into space.
- China's achievements include landing an unmanned explorer on Mars and a rover on the Moon's far side.
- The country has set a goal to land astronauts on the Moon by 2030.

## 59.3 MORE STARTUPS SELECTED FOR DEVELOPING INDIGENOUS AI FOUNDATION MODEL:



- After **Sarvam AI**, India has selected three more startups – **Soket AI**, **Gan AI**, and **Gnani AI** – to build **indigenous artificial intelligence foundation models**.
- This is part of India's broader AI strategy, which includes boosting **AI infrastructure** and developing **local language models**.
- The government has announced the availability of **16,000 additional GPUs**, bringing the total compute facility to **34,000 GPUs**, with support from industry partners.
- The expanded **cloud-based compute capacity** will offer a common AI platform for training and inference—crucial for developing AI models tailored to the Indian context.
- IT Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** highlighted that significant progress has been made on the **IndiaAI Mission**, with a focus on **democratising technology**.
- Seven bidders submitted proposals for AI compute units:
  - **Cyfuture India**
  - **Isha n Infotech**

- **Locuz Enterprise Solutions**
- **Netmagic IT Services**
- **Sify Digital Services**
- **Vensysco Technologies**
- **Yotta Data Services**
- **New AI model development initiatives:**
  - **Soket AI** will develop an **open-source 120-billion parameter foundation model** optimised for India's **linguistic diversity**, with applications in **defence, healthcare, and education**.
  - **Gan AI** will build a **70-billion parameter multilingual model**, targeting capabilities to **surpass the current global leaders**.
  - **Gnani AI** will create a **14-billion parameter Voice AI model** focused on **multilingual real-time speech processing** with **advanced reasoning capabilities**.
- Minister Vaishnaw stressed that these efforts will help build a **complete and inclusive AI ecosystem** in India and also support **reverse brain drain**.
- Under the **IndiaAI Applications Development Initiative**, the winners of the **IndiaAI I4C CyberGuard AI Hackathon** were announced.
- The hackathon, conducted in collaboration with the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, focused on developing AI-based solutions to:
  - Enhance classification of cybercrime complaints
  - Identify emerging crime patterns and trends on the **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP)**
- These AI models are capable of interpreting complex inputs such as **handwritten FIRs, screenshots, and audio calls** with improved speed and accuracy.



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## ART & CULTURE

### 60.10-YEAR-OLD SHIKHI KAKATI HONoured WITH 'DESH RATNA AWARD 2025':



- Ten-year-old Shikhi Kakati from Morigaon district of Assam has been conferred with the prestigious Desh Ratna Award–2025 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Indian culture through Satriya dance and acting since the age of five.
- The award ceremony was held at Mandi House, Kamani Auditorium in Delhi on Tuesday evening and was a joint initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Defence, and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, in collaboration with the Bharti Yuva Welfare Association (Bharat) under the Government of NCT of Delhi.
- The event was graced by Union Tourism and Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, Uttar Pradesh Labour and Employment Minister Raghuraj Singh, former UP Education Minister Shatish Chandra Drivedi, and noted Bollywood actors Mushtaq Khan and Rahul R Butcher.
- Apart from the Desh Ratna Award, Shikhi Kakati has also received several other honours including Rashtra Seva Samman, Bharatiya Ratna Samman, Rashtriya Pratibha Samman, Bharatiya Sutraikari Samman, National Excellence Achievers Award, Swami Vivekananda Pride Achievers Award, Rashtriya Seva Samman, and Ratna–2025 (National Gem of Service).

### 61.WANGALA DANCE TO BE SHOWCASED AT CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA:



- Meghalaya's colourful and energetic Wangala dance will be showcased at the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025, alongside other cultural dances from the North East.
- Wangala is a traditional harvest dance of the Garo community, performed during the Wangala festival to celebrate life, nature, and the cultural identity of the Garos.
- WAVES 2025 is a four-day cultural extravaganza taking place at the Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai, from May 1 to 4.
- The event will place a cultural spotlight on North East India, offering an immersive showcase of the region's rich artistic heritage and traditions.
- The theme of the summit is 'Connecting Creators, Connecting Countries'.
- The cultural programme includes performances from all eight North Eastern states, providing audiences a unique journey through India's vibrant cultural mosaic.
- Along with Wangala, other featured performances include:
  - Sattriya dance by the Sattriya Kendra, Guwahati
  - Gumrag harvest dance (tribal)
  - Tamang Selo
  - Singhi Chham of Sikkim
  - Tripura's Hojagiri dance
  - Manipuri dance by the Jawaharlal Nehru Manipuri Dance Academy
  - Mizoram's Cheraw (bamboo dance)
  - Arunachal Pradesh's Kaa Kingnara Kingnari, a peacock-inspired dance
- Nagaland will open the cultural festivities with the soulful harmonies of the Tetseo Sisters, preserving the Li folk tradition in the Chokri dialect, and a group performance, Nzanta, by Lotha women.
- The event is being organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Culture, Government of Maharashtra, and other partners.

### 62.AO NAGAS CELEBRATE MOATSU FESTIVAL:



- The Ao Naga tribe celebrated the Moatsu Festival at Imkongmeren Sports Complex in Mokokchung with a daylong programme.

- The festival is held to seek **divine blessings for prosperity, good health, and community harmony**.
- **Moatsu**, also known as the ‘**Mini Hornbill Festival**’, is an important cultural event for the Ao community.
- The festival was initiated by **Ao legislators** and the **Nagaland Government**, and was organised by **Ao Senden**, the apex body of the Ao Nagas.
- The theme of this year’s celebration was ‘**Celebrating Our Roots**’, highlighting the tribe’s rich heritage and traditions.

### 63.KUZU FESTIVAL MARKING 50 YEARS OF SIKKIM’S STATEHOOD GETS UNDER WAY:



- The **Kuzu Cultural Festival** was inaugurated by **Deputy Speaker Raj Kumari Thapa** at **Gangtok** to commemorate **50 years of Sikkim’s Statehood**.
- Organised by the **Culture Department**, the festival aims to **showcase Sikkim’s rich cultural heritage and traditions**.
- It brings together **21 ethnic communities** in a celebration of **unity and pride**.
- As part of the inauguration, **Thapa flagged off a heritage walk and an art exhibition**.
- The **heritage walk**, running from **May 1 to 10**, offers participants a chance to explore **Gangtok’s cultural institutions, oral histories, and spiritual heritage**, guided by **local storytellers**.
- The walk highlights the city’s **diverse communities, rituals, and connection to nature**, encouraging cultural appreciation and preservation.
- The **art exhibition**, titled ‘**Yiwarra: The Canning Stock Route Exhibition**’, explores the **cultural, artistic, and historical ties of Aboriginal people with the Canning Stock Route**.
- It showcases **25–30 conserved artefacts**, highlighting their **transformation through ethical conservation, with before-and-after treatment records and reference photographs**.
- The exhibition and artefacts from the **Sikkim State Archives** are on display at **Bhanu Udhyan**, near the **State Archives Building**, from **May 1 to 10**.

### 64.BUDDHA’S SACRED RELICS FROM INDIA ARRIVE IN VIETNAM:



- The sacred relics of Buddha from India arrived in Vietnam on **Friday**.
- They were first brought to the **Vietnam Buddhist University** for a special ceremony.
- A grand procession then carried the relics to **Thanh Tam Pagoda**, where they will be publicly displayed.
- Minister of Minority Affairs **Kiren Rijiju** led the delegation and shared on social media that the experience was deeply moving.
- The Holy Relics will remain in Vietnam from **2 to 21 May 2025** as part of the **UN Vesak Day** celebrations.
- Earlier, monks, bhikkhunis, diplomats, and the Sangha gathered at the **National Museum in New Delhi** for chanting and prayers.
- The relics were transported from **Sarnath**, having originally been excavated at **Nagarjuna Konda, Andhra Pradesh**.
- The relics are enshrined in the **Mulagandha Kuti Vihar** in **Sarnath** and are believed to be older than **246 CE**.
- The **Ambassador of Vietnam to India, Nguyen Thanh Hai**, and the **Acting High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to India, Priyanga Wickramasinghe**, participated in the prayers.
- The **Ministry of Culture, Government of India**, in collaboration with the **International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)**, is organizing the first-ever exposition of the Sacred Relics in four Vietnamese cities.
- The event coincides with **UN Vesak Day** celebrations.
- **India and Vietnam** share long-standing cultural and civilizational ties.
- **Buddhist connections** between the two nations date back thousands of years.
- **Vietnamese pilgrims and Buddhist scholars** frequently visit India, including at the **Vietnamese Buddhist pagoda in Bodhgaya**.

## 65.KOCH COMMUNITY CELEBRATES PABUNI FESTIVAL WITH TRADITIONAL FERVOUR:



- The **Pabuni Festival** was celebrated with vibrant enthusiasm and traditional grandeur on Sunday at **Gandhipara**, organized by the **Meghalaya Koch Association** in collaboration with the **Meghalaya Koch Students' Union**.
- Held annually during the **Assamese month of Baishakh (April)**, Pabuni is regarded as the **national festival of the Koch community in Meghalaya**.
- The festival marks the **beginning of the Assamese New Year** and holds deep **spiritual and traditional significance** for the Koch people.
- Celebrations took place at the **Pabuni Shali (sacred site)**, where the **Deusi (priest)**, assisted by **Chathung Laoni**, conducted **traditional rituals**.
- **Offerings of rice beer (Chokot) and rice cakes (Fap)** were made to **goddess Pabuni**, a revered nature deity believed to bring **rain and sunshine**.
- The word '**Pabuni**' is derived from '**Paoni**', meaning "**calling**" or "**welcoming**" the spring season.
- Beyond its spiritual dimension, the festival serves to **reinforce the cultural identity** of the Koch community and **strengthen social bonds**.

## 66.15 NURSING PROFESSIONALS RECEIVE NAT'L FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE AWARDS:



- President Droupadi Murmu presented the National Florence Nightingale Awards, 2025 to fifteen nursing professionals as a mark of recognition for their meritorious services.
- The National Florence Nightingale Award was instituted in 1973 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to honour outstanding nursing personnel in various settings.
- Each awardee received a certificate of merit, a cash reward of Rs 1 lakh, and a medal.
- This year's awardees include nursing professionals from various States and Union Territories, representing categories such as auxiliary nurse midwife (ANM), lady health visitor (LHV), and staff nurse.
- In the ANM category, the awardees included:
  - Reba Rani Sarkar (Andaman & Nicobar Islands)
  - Valiveti Subhavathi (Andhra Pradesh)
  - Saroj Fakirbhai Patel (Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu)
  - Raziya Beegum PB (Lakshadweep)
  - Sujata Ashok Bagul (Maharashtra)
- In the staff nurse category, the awardees included:
  - Kijum Sora Karga (Arunachal Pradesh)
  - Dimple Arora (Delhi)
  - Major General Sheena PD (Delhi)
  - Dr Banu MR (Karnataka)
  - Leimapokpam Ranjita Devi (Manipur)
  - Ms V Lalhmangaihi (Mizoram)
  - LS Manimozhi (Puducherry)
  - K Alamelu Mangayarkarasi (Tamil Nadu)
  - Doli Biswas (West Bengal)
- In the LHV category, Bina Pani Deka from Assam was honoured.

## DEFENCE

### 67.GRSE DELIVERS FIRST ASW SHALLOW WATER CRAFT TO NAVY:



- Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd has delivered the first of eight anti-submarine warfare (ASW) shallow water crafts to the Indian Navy.
- The ASW shallow water crafts enhance the Indian Navy's ability to patrol coastal areas for potential enemy submarines.
- The vessel delivered, named '**INS Arnala**', is the first in the series of eight ASW SWCs being constructed by GRSE.
- The ship is 77.6 metres long and 10.5 metres wide, capable of full-scale sub-surface surveillance and conducting search-and-attack missions.
- It can also coordinate anti-submarine operations with aircraft.
- The ship was constructed through a public-private partnership (PPP) model, with GRSE collaborating with L&T's Kattupalli shipyard in Tamil Nadu.
- GRSE received the **Raksha Mantri's Award in 2022** for designing the Arnala, described as the "most silent ship."
- The ship is named after **Arnala Island**, which has a historic fort off the coast of Maharashtra.
- It has approximately **88% indigenous content**.
- GRSE is currently building 16 more warships, including:
  - 3 P17A advanced stealth frigates
  - 7 ASW shallow water crafts
  - 2 survey vessels
  - 4 next-generation offshore patrol vessels

### 68.AKASHTEER: UNSEEN FORCE BEHIND INDIA'S NEW WAR CAPABILITY:

- Akashteer**, India's **fully indigenous**, automated Air Defence Control and Reporting System, has emerged as a cutting-edge solution for air defence, proving its superiority during **India-Pakistan hostilities** by intercepting and neutralizing inbound projectiles.
- Unlike **Pakistan's reliance on imported HQ-9 and HQ-16 systems**, which failed to detect and intercept Indian strikes,

**Akashteer** demonstrated **India's dominance** in real-time, automated air defence warfare during Pakistan's retaliation following **Operation Sindoor**.

- Akashteer** is designed for **intelligent warfare**, featuring an integration of multiple radar systems and sensors, including **Tactical Control Radar REPORTER**, **3D Tactical Control Radars**, **Low-Level Lightweight Radar**, and **Akash Weapon System Radar**.
- The system provides a **common, real-time air picture**, ensuring coordinated air defence operations across **control rooms, radars, and defence guns**, significantly reducing the possibility of **friendly fire** and enabling rapid engagement of hostile targets.
- It gathers and processes data from multiple sources, allowing for **automated, real-time engagement decisions**, functioning as part of the larger **C4ISR** framework, which includes **Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance** systems.
- Akashteer** is **vehicle-mounted and mobile**, making it highly suitable for **deployment in hostile environments**, offering a shift from traditional **ground-based** air defence models that rely on **manual decisions**.
- With seamless integration across **India's Army, Navy, and Air Force**, **Akashteer** enables real-time coordination, improving **situational awareness** and reducing the risk of **friendly fire**.
- It marks a **strategic shift** in India's defence philosophy—from **passive defence** to **proactive retaliation**, with effective offensive and defensive capabilities facilitated through **Akashteer's integration** with platforms like **IACCS** (Indian Air Force) and **TRIGUN** (Indian Navy).
- The development of **Akashteer** is part of India's growing ecosystem of **indigenous defence platforms**, such as the **Dhanush Artillery Gun**, **ATAGS**, **LCA Tejas**, **Arjun MBT**, and various **naval assets**, which reflect India's ambition to be a **global defence manufacturing hub**.
- Through initiatives like **Make in India**, India has reduced its import dependency, with **65% of defence equipment now manufactured domestically**, representing a significant shift from previous **import reliance**.
- Akashteer** is being hailed as a "**seismic shift in warfare strategy**" and has positioned India as one of the few nations with fully integrated, automated **Air Defence Command and Control** capabilities. It represents a major step forward in **countering asymmetric warfare, hybrid threats, and cross-border terrorism**.



## 69. INDIGENOUSLY MADE WEAPONS PLAYED MAJOR ROLE IN OPERATION SINDOOR:



- Weapons and missiles developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) have played a major role in making India self-reliant in the production of weapons, as proven during the recent conflict with Pakistan where indigenously manufactured weapons were effectively used.
- Among the prominent productions of DRDO is **Akash**, a short-range surface-to-air missile system designed to protect vulnerable areas and points from air attacks. The Akash system can engage multiple targets simultaneously in group or autonomous mode and includes built-in electronic counter-counter measures (ECCM). It is configured on mobile platforms and has been inducted and made operational with both the Indian Air Force and the Indian Army.
- Varunastra** is a ship-launched, heavyweight, electrically propelled anti-submarine torpedo capable of targeting quiet submarines in both deep and shallow waters, even in intense countermeasure environments. It can be fired from all anti-submarine warfare ships capable of launching heavyweight torpedoes and was inducted by the Indian Navy in 2016.
- BrahMos** is a universal long-range supersonic cruise missile system that can be launched from land, sea, and air. Jointly developed by DRDO and Russia's NPOM, BrahMos has variants for both anti-ship and land-attack roles. It is operational with the Indian Navy and Army and was used during the recent conflict. A new BrahMos manufacturing unit has also been established.
- Panchi** is a variant of the Nishant UAV, featuring the capability of conventional takeoff and landing. It includes an all-composite landing gear, improved flight envelope, and endurance. Panchi carries a stabilized payload platform including a daylight camera, infrared camera, and laser designator. Powered by an indigenously developed rotary Wankel engine, it is capable of surveillance, reconnaissance, target location detection, and artillery fire correction. Five successful test flights have proven its conventional takeoff and landing concept.
- The **MSS Cluster** is responsible for the design and development of advanced missiles and strategic systems for national defence and deterrence. It comprises laboratories like DRDL, RCI, ASL, TBRL, ITR, and additional testing and analysis centres. The cluster works on technologies including aerodynamics, propulsion (solid, liquid, ramjet, scramjet), guidance systems, warhead development, and command and control systems.

- The **vision** of the MSS Cluster is to empower India with state-of-the-art indigenous missile systems that are deployable from underwater to outer space.
- The **mission** includes the design, development, and production of missile-based weapon systems, ensuring their maintenance, upgrade, and replacement, and establishing critical infrastructure for design, testing, and evaluation.
- The **3D Surveillance Radar** for the Navy is a ship-borne radar system with a digital receiver and programmable signal processor, offering high resolution, accuracy, and real-time information. It can automatically track up to 150 targets and includes IFF (MkXI) association and ECCM features. It supports antenna rotation rates of 6, 12, and 24 RPMs.

## 70. BORDER TALKS WITH INDIA, BHUTAN ADVANCING: CHINA'S WHITE PAPER:



- China has stated that talks to resolve border disputes with India and Bhutan "continue to advance"**, according to a newly released **White Paper on national security** titled "*China's National Security in the New Era*."
- The **23-page document**, released in Mandarin, outlines a wide range of **internal and external threats** facing China and emphasizes the need to safeguard the country's **one-party political system**.
- China has resolved boundary issues with **12 of its 14 land neighbors**, with **India and Bhutan** being the two exceptions.
- The White Paper notes that:
  - China has completed **demarcation of the Beibu Gulf waters** with **Vietnam**.
  - It has signed **border defense cooperation agreements** with **nine neighboring countries**.
  - China has established **border defense dialogue mechanisms** with **12 countries** and conducts **joint patrols, working talks, friendly visits, and cross-border crime drills**.
- Despite progress with others, China still has **maritime disputes** in the:
  - East China Sea** (with **Japan**)
  - South China Sea** (with the **Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan**)
- India and China have held 23 rounds of Special Representatives-level talks** to resolve their **3,488 km** boundary dispute along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.

- **China and Bhutan** have engaged in **25 rounds of talks** over a **400 km** boundary dispute.
- The White Paper places a strong emphasis on **political security**, particularly:
  - **Regime security** and **system security** under the **Communist Party of China (CPC)**.
  - It stresses that maintaining the **CPC's leadership and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics** is the "most fundamental" security concern.
- The document warns that a failure to maintain political security could lead to national fragmentation and hinder the **"great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."**
- It also highlights the importance of:
  - Enhancing **political sensitivity and discernment**
  - **Eliminating political risks** promptly
  - Preventing **non-political risks from becoming political threats**.

## 71.INDIA, EU NAVIES TO CONDUCT JOINT EXERCISE IN INDIAN OCEAN ON JUNE 1-3:



- India and the European Union will participate in a joint naval exercise from June 1

to 3 in the Indian Ocean focusing on advanced counter-piracy operations, interoperability, tactical manoeuvres, and enhanced communication protocols, reflecting growing maritime security cooperation between the two sides.

- The exercise will involve Indian Navy ships and two frigates from the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operation ATALANTA — the Italian ship Antonio MARCEGLIA and Spanish ship REINA SOFIA — along with their respective air assets.
- The ships are currently docking in Mumbai.
- Over time, there has been growing recognition by both India and the EU of the importance of cooperation in maritime security, especially in this region of the Indian Ocean.
- This exercise builds on the visit of the College of Commissioners to India in February 2025, where one of the key deliverables was enhancing engagement on maritime domain awareness for shared assessment, coordination, and interoperability.
- Launched in 2008 to tackle piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Aden, Operation ATALANTA's mandate has expanded to include counter-narcotics, arms smuggling, and combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Horn of Africa and western Indian Ocean.
- EUNAVFOR ATALANTA warships deployed in the Indian Ocean have previously conducted "Passing Exercises" (PASSEX) with the Indian Navy.
- Rear Admiral Davide Da Pozzo, Force Commander of EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, stated that piracy incidents have decreased since the operation began.
- The fourth EU-India Maritime Security Dialogue held in March 2025 emphasized countering illicit maritime activities and exploring new joint maritime initiatives aligned with the objectives of this exercise.
- Vice Admiral Ignacio Villanueva Serrano, Operation Commander of EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, visited India in April to enhance bilateral cooperation with the Indian Navy.



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## SPORTS

### 72.INDIA TOPS ASIAN U-15 BOXING C'SHIPS MEDAL TALLY WITH 11 GOLDS:



- Putting up a dominant show, India topped the U-15 category by claiming a rich haul of 25 medals, including 10 gold, at the U-15 and U-17 Asian Boxing Championships.
- The women pugilists led the charge, securing 10 gold and four bronze medals across 15 weight categories, winning every final bout they contested on Tuesday.
- Komal (30–33 kg) started the gold rush by narrowly defeating Kazakhstan's Aiaru Onggarbek in a 3:2 split decision.
- Khushi Ahlawat (35 kg) followed with a 4:1 win, and Tamanna (37 kg) clinched gold via second-round RSC (Referee Stops Contest).
- Svi (40 kg), Milky Meinam (43 kg), Princi (52 kg), Navya (58 kg), Sunaina (61 kg), Trushana Mohite (67 kg), and Vanshika (70+ kg) all won their finals unanimously, securing a clean sweep for the Indian U-15 girls' team.
- On the boys' side, four Indians reached the finals. Sanskar Vinod (35 kg) bagged a gold, while three others earned silver medals, in addition to seven bronze finishes.
- India had already secured a total of 43 medals before the finals, with 25 in the U-15 category and 18 in the U-17 category, whose finals are yet to be contested.

### 73.SATWIK, CHIRAG GET THEIR KHEL RATNA:



- Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya presented the prestigious Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award to

badminton stars **Chirag Shetty** and **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy**.

- This felicitation completed a **long-pending recognition** for the duo, originally selected for the **2023 Khel Ratna** award.
- The players could not attend the **Rashtrapati Bhawan ceremony last year** due to their **playing commitments**.
- A second attempt to honour them in **February 2024** was postponed due to the **sudden demise of Satwik's father, R Kasi Viswanatham**, on the day of the scheduled event.
- The pair expressed that receiving the award now comes at a **crucial time**, helping them navigate a **difficult phase marked by fitness issues**.
- Chirag and Satwik are among India's **top badminton doubles players**, consistently achieving success at international tournaments.

### 74.INDIA BAG FIVE MEDALS IN COMPOUND SECTION:



- Capping a dream comeback, Madhura Dhamangaonkar clinched her maiden individual World Cup gold to headline India's glittering medal collection in the compound section – two gold, one silver and two bronze at the Archery Stage 2 showpiece at Shanghai.
- Unranked for being in the sidelines for three years, Madhura produced a sensational upturn in the final, edging out USA's Carson Krahe 139-138 to seal the top podium.
- The 24-year-old from Amravati, Maharashtra, had earlier bagged a team silver and a mixed team bronze, completing a fine three-medal haul.
- Madhura's individual final was a roller-coaster affair.
- She opened with a perfect 30, including two Xs, but faltered with two 8s in the second end and a costly 7 in the third, trailing 81-85.
- Krahe, ranked 52nd and a World Cup team bronze medallist last year, capitalised with a perfect 30 in the third end.
- Undeterred, Madhura showed nerves of steel, shooting a near-flawless 29 in the fourth to level the match at 110-all.
- In the decisive final end, she fired two Xs and a 9, while Krahe managed only 28, sealing Madhura's dramatic one-point win.

- Earlier, India's medal tally began with a gold in the men's team event, where the trio of multiple World Cup gold medalist Abhishek Verma, Ojas Deotale, and Rishabh Yadav defeated Mexico 232-228 in a tense final.
- The top-seeded Indian team started strong with a 59 to Mexico's 57, but saw the match level at 115-115 by the halfway mark.
- India regained control with a 58 in the third end and sealed the victory with a brilliant 59 in the final end, as Mexico managed only 56.
- The 22-year-old Yadav went on to claim his maiden individual World Cup medal, defeating South Korea's Kim Jongho 145-145 (10\*-10) in a dramatic shoot-off for bronze.
- Having led after the first end, Yadav lost the next two but bounced back with a perfect 30 to level scores at 115-115.
- Both archers shot flawless 30s in the final end, but Yadav's arrow was closer to the centre in the shoot-off.
- Yadav earlier lost to world No. 1 and multiple world champion Mike Schloesser of the Netherlands 144-147.
- Madhura, who topped Indian qualifiers to earn the third seeding, began her individual campaign by knocking out Turkey's world No. 13 Hazal Burun – a double World Cup team medallist – with a composed 143-141 win built on two flawless opening ends.
- In the women's team final, Madhura partnered with Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Chikitha Taniparthi to take silver after a 221-234 loss to a strong Mexican outfit.
- Despite the one-sided result, the Indian team showed promise throughout the tournament.
- Madhura added to her tally with a mixed team bronze alongside Verma, beating Malaysia 144-142 in a low-scoring playoff.
- These results highlight India's growing depth and consistency in compound archery on the world stage.
- With compound archery set to make its Olympic debut at the Los Angeles 2028 Games with a single mixed team event, India will be eyeing its first Olympic medal in the sport.

## 75.NIMAS TEAM CONQUERS MOUNT KANGCHENJUNGA:



- A team from the **National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS)**, Dirang, Arunachal Pradesh, successfully **summitted Mt Kangchenjunga (8,586 metres)** on **May 18**.
- Mt Kangchenjunga is the **third highest mountain in the world** and the **highest in India**.
- The expedition was led by **Colonel Ranveer Singh Jamwal**, a seasoned mountaineer.
- This ascent marked the **culmination of the 'Har Shikhar Tiranga' campaign**, a patriotic mission aimed at hoisting the **Indian National Flag** on the **highest peak in each of India's 28 States**.
- The campaign was conceptualised to **celebrate unity and national pride through adventure**.
- Mt Kangchenjunga, located in **Sikkim**, served as the **symbolic crown of the campaign**.
- The NIMAS team achieved a **100% summit success rate** on Mt Kangchenjunga this season — the **only Indian expedition to do so**, a rare accomplishment due to the **mountain's extreme weather and challenging terrain**.
- Every climber in the team reached the summit, showcasing their **meticulous planning, exceptional physical endurance, and unbreakable determination**.



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## NORTH-EAST & ASSAM

### 76.RS 22,864-CR SHILLONG-SILCHAR HIGH-SPEED CORRIDOR APPROVED:



- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday (April 30, 2025) approved the development of a 166.80 km greenfield high-speed corridor from Mawlyngkhung in Meghalaya to Panchgram in Assam on hybrid annuity mode at a total cost of ₹22,864 crore.
- According to an official statement, the project length of 166.80 km (NH-6) lies in Meghalaya (144.80 km) and Assam (22 km).
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the proposal for the development, maintenance and management of four-lane greenfield access-controlled 166.80 km of National Highway No 06 from Mawlyngkhung (near Shillong) in Meghalaya to Panchgram (near Silchar) in Assam on hybrid annuity mode at a total capital cost of ₹22,864 crore.
- The proposed greenfield high-speed corridor will improve the service level for the traffic moving between Guwahati to Silchar.
- The development of this corridor will improve the connectivity to Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur and the Barak Valley region of Assam from mainland and Guwahati with substantially reduced travel distance and travel time.
- The corridor will improve connectivity between Assam and Meghalaya and spur economic development, including the development of industries in Meghalaya, as it passes through the cement and coal production areas of Meghalaya.

### 77.INITIATIVE LAUNCHED TO UPSKILL 2 LAKH NE RUBBER GROWERS:



- In a major move to strengthen India's natural rubber ecosystem, a new initiative called iSPEED (INROAD Skilling and Production Efficiency Enhancement Drive) was launched under Project INROAD (Indian Natural Rubber Operations for Assisted Development).
- The initiative was launched in Guwahati by Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA) chairman Arun Mammen and INROAD chairman Pravin Tripathi.
- INROAD is a first-of-its-kind global project where the tyre industry—specifically Apollo, Ceat, JK, and MRF—financially contributes to the development of rubber plantations, with implementation by the Rubber Board of India.
- iSPEED is a ₹145-crore, five-year initiative aimed at directly benefiting over 2 lakh smallholder rubber farmers and nursery owners across the Northeastern states and West Bengal.
- The initiative focuses on structured skill training, modern infrastructure deployment, and quality enhancement at the source.
- Under Project INROAD, rubber cultivation in the Northeast has significantly expanded, with more than 1.36 lakh new growers taking up plantations in the past four years.
- Challenges such as limited access to scientific tapping methods, quality processing infrastructure, and effective disease management continue to affect productivity.
- To bridge these gaps, iSPEED will provide:
  - 3,000 smokehouses for producing high-quality rubber sheets
  - 3,000 sheet rolling machines (manual and motorised)
  - Model nurseries and demonstration units at key field stations
  - Processing and grading centres for post-harvest management
  - A network of lead farmers to facilitate community-based knowledge sharing
- ATMA chairman inaugurated smokehouses in Tripura and Assam, constructed using locally sourced materials, tailored to regional needs.
- As most beneficiaries are smallholders (with less than one-acre land holdings), INROAD promotes a group-based approach to building infrastructure for collective empowerment.
- Smokehouses play a vital role in drying and curing latex tapped from rubber trees, helping produce high-quality rubber sheets.
- The Rubber Board will lead implementation, in collaboration with regional institutions like Tripura University and domain experts.

### 78.TAP WATER CONNECTIONS TO ALL RURAL HOUSEHOLDS IN STATE BY MARCH 2026:

- Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura have assured the Centre of providing tap water connections to all rural households by March 2026.

- These six northeastern states were among 15 states and union territories that committed to achieving this target by next year.
- In Assam, 81.32% (58.76 lakh) of the total 72.25 lakh rural households have tap water; the remaining 13.49 lakh will receive connections by March 2026.
- In Manipur, 3.59 lakh out of 4.52 lakh rural households (79.59%) have tap water; the rest 0.92 lakh will be covered by next March.
- In Meghalaya, 5.32 lakh of 6.51 lakh rural households (81.76%) have tap water; 1.19 lakh households are yet to be covered.
- In Nagaland, 3.37 lakh of 3.64 lakh rural households (92.69%) have tap water; 0.27 lakh will be provided by next March.
- In Tripura, 6.38 lakh of 7.51 lakh rural households (84.95%) have been provided with tap water connections.
- Many states reported delays due to long gestation periods for multi-village schemes, poor groundwater sources, geogenic contamination, hilly terrain, and lack of technical capabilities.
- Other challenges include delays in clearances, lack of matching state share funds, and disruptions due to COVID-19 and lockdowns.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) was launched on August 15, 2019, to provide tap water to all rural households in collaboration with states.
- The total estimated outlay for JJM was Rs 3.60 lakh crore, with the Centre contributing Rs 2.08 lakh crore over five years.
- At launch, only 3.23 crore (17%) of rural households had tap water connections.
- Since then, 12.19 crore rural households have been provided with tap water connections.
- As of now, out of 19.36 crore rural households, around 15.45 crore (79.81%) have potable tap water at home.
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the extension of the Jal Jeevan Mission till 2028 during the 2025-26 Budget speech.

## 79.WOMEN REFEREES FROM NE BREAK NEW GROUND:



- **Riiohlang Dhar**, a 35-year-old from **Ladthadlaboh in Jowai, West Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya**, has risen from a small village to the international football stage through resilience and determination.
- She was recently honoured with the **AIFF Best Assistant Referee of the Year** award, which holds deep personal significance, especially in memory of her late parents.

- In 2024, Riiohlang made history by becoming only the **second Indian woman assistant referee** to officiate in a **FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup**, held in the **Dominican Republic**.
- This year marked the **first time the All India Football Federation (AIFF)** introduced specific award categories to **honour women referees**.
- Joining Riiohlang in this milestone is **Tekcham Ranjita Devi** from **Manipur**, who was named the **AIFF Best Referee of the Year**.
- A **FIFA badge holder since 2018**, Ranjita started her career as a football player in 1999 and turned to refereeing after an illness ended her playing career in 2009.
- She passed the **State Class III exam in 2007** and **National Grade II in 2016**.
- The **Male Referee of the Year** award was given to **Venkatesh R**, while **Vairamuthu P** was named **Male Assistant Referee of the Year**.

## 80.TRIPURA TO INTRODUCE BIOMETRIC ATTENDANCE SYSTEM IN GOVT-RUN TRIBAL HOSTELS:

- The Tripura Tribal Welfare Department will introduce a biometric attendance system in all government-run tribal hostels to monitor student presence.
- The department currently operates 164 tribal hostels, while 43 are managed by the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC).
- The State government spends Rs 80 crore annually on the operation of these hostels.
- The biometric system will be extended to TTAADC and NGO-run hostels in the second phase.
- A dedicated software is being developed to support the new attendance system.
- The department will also provide a digital library facility with 5G internet connectivity in all hostels.
- Solar lighting systems will be installed in hostels to improve infrastructure and sustainability.

## 81.MIZORAM GOVT ANNULS APPOINTMENT OF LAI COUNCIL CEM, DIRECTS TRUST VOTE:

- A major political upheaval has affected the **Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC)**.
- The **Mizoram Government** issued a notification declaring the appointment of **V. Zirsanga** as **Chief Executive Member (CEM)** as **null and void**.
- This development has thrown the LADC into fresh turmoil and **invalidated the 2025-2026 budget** passed under Zirsanga's leadership.
- The order was issued by **Zodingliani**, Secretary for District Council and Minority Affairs, on behalf of **Mizoram Governor Lt Gen VK Singh (Retd)**.
- The order states:

- Zirsanga's appointment as CEM on **February 24**, as leader of the **Zoram People's Movement (ZPM)** legislature party, is **annulled**.
- The **budget passed on April 22** under his leadership is also **declared invalid**.
- The Governor has directed that:
  - The **Council must not conduct any legislative or executive business** until **N. Zangura**, the **newly appointed CEM**, proves his **majority** in the council.

## 82.NAGALAND MLA LAUNCHES 'ONE RUPEE PROJECT FOR CHANGE':



- Nagaland legislator **Tseilhoutuo Rhutso** announced the launch of a **community-led initiative** titled '**One Rupee Project for Change**' in Kohima.
- The project encourages citizens to **voluntarily contribute**:
  - **₹1 per day**
  - **₹30 per month**
  - **₹365 per year**
- Funds will go toward **public welfare work** across the city.
- The initiative aims to:
  - **Promote civic responsibility**
  - Encourage **shared investment in urban development**
  - Especially engage **urban residents** in community betterment

## 83.STATE GOVT SETS UP DIRECTORATE OF PROSECUTION:

- The State government has recently established the Directorate of Prosecution.
- Before its establishment, prosecutors had no opportunity to scrutinise police reports.
- Experienced lawyers and police will work together to ensure effective prosecution, strengthen police-public relations, and support the judiciary in delivering impartial and efficient justice.
- The Directorate aims to reduce unnecessary court cases and improve the quality of cases presented.

- The Directorate of Prosecution will be headed by the Director of Prosecution, functioning under the administrative control of the Home Department.
- Every Deputy Director or Assistant Director of Prosecution will be subordinate to the Deputy Director of Prosecution.
- All public prosecutors, additional public prosecutors, and special public prosecutors appointed by the State government will be subordinate to the Director of Prosecution.
- The Assam government appointed Makhan Phukan as the first Director of Prosecution; he was a public prosecutor at the Gauhati High Court.
- Three Deputy Directors appointed are Dhanesh Das, Santanu Bhattacharyya, and Manash Haloï, all experienced public prosecutors.

## 84.REGIONAL SAMARTH SUPPORT AND COORDINATION CENTRE AT GU:



- The Regional SAMARTH Support and Coordination Centre (RSSCC), Assam, was inaugurated at the Gauhati University campus.
- The centre aims to strengthen the digital transformation of higher education institutions across the State.
- SAMARTH is an open-source, cloud-based e-governance platform developed by the Union Ministry of Education.
- It is designed to support universities and colleges in managing their operations digitally.
- The new RSSCC at Gauhati University will function as a support and coordination hub.
- It will assist colleges and universities in Assam in adopting and using the SAMARTH platform.
- The centre will work closely with the SAMARTH team in New Delhi and the Higher Education Department to implement policies and provide technical support.

## 85.PEACE, DEVELOPMENT MARK FOUR YEARS OF THIS GOVT: CM:

- The State Cabinet approved the decision to name the Dibrugarh Airport after Dr Bhupen Hazarika.
- Under the 'Eti Koli Duti Pat' scheme, tea garden workers would be paid Rs 5,000 as one-time incentive to commemorate 200 years of the tea industry.

- It was also decided that employees of NHM, Sarba Siksha Abhiyan, ASTEC, profitable PSUs and other offices which works with the State Government would now be eligible for the Apon Ghar and Apon Vahon schemes.
- Further, the muster roll workers, work-charged employees, and casual staff would now also be eligible for 50 per cent house rent.
- A new scheme named 'Mukhyo Mantrir Jeevon Prerona' would also be launched under which students of government/public-run universities who had graduated in 2024-25 would get Rs 2,000 per month for a period of one year in order to help them appear in various job interviews.
- The scheme would also cover research scholars including Divyangs who would be given Rs 20,000 and Rs 40,000 respectively.
- It was also decided in the Cabinet meeting that the State Government would give additional incentive to manufacturing units under Assam Electronics Component Manufacturing over and above the Electronics Component Manufacturing scheme launched by the Centre.
- Moreover, in view of the escalating tension between India and Pakistan, the Chief Minister has decided to suspend all meetings, ceremonies or activities like foreign trips which involve monetary requirements and announced a slew of austerity measures as a mark of solidarity for the country's armed forces and their family members.

## 86.MEGHALAYA ADOPTS MIYAWAKI FOREST METHOD TO RESTORE GREENERY, FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE:



- Meghalaya is taking a big step toward protecting the environment by using the Miyawaki Forest method – a fast and effective way of growing dense, native forests.
- This method was developed in Japan by botanist Akira Miyawaki and is now being used across the State as part of a major afforestation project led by the Soil and Water Conservation Department, Government of Meghalaya.
- To support this effort, the State has initiated different interventions, including Green Meghalaya and has partnered with different organisations to promote conservation and afforestation programmes.
- The State government is also providing financial incentives through the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) for the conservation of forest cover.
- Recently, the Chief Minister visited a Miyawaki forest site at Mawsharoh, Ummir in East Khasi Hills, where the method is being used to grow a forest on a 1.5-hectare area.

- Currently, similar projects are being implemented on a total of 25,000 hectares throughout Meghalaya.
- The project is being carried out with strong support from local communities, who are actively involved in the planting and caring for these forests.
- The first Miyawaki forest plantation in Meghalaya began three years ago in Garo Hills as a pilot project.
- The Miyawaki method not only helps restore greenery but also brings many other benefits.
- These mini-forests help absorb carbon dioxide, fight climate change, improve air quality, reduce noise pollution, and provide shelter for wildlife.
- Meghalaya's rich soil and unique climate make it ideal for growing these forests.

## 87.APDCL LAUNCHES 'SAFELINE' INITIATIVE TO ENHANCE LINEMEN SAFETY:

- The Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL) has launched the 'SafeLine Campaign' to safeguard the welfare of on-field personnel and prevent electrical mishaps, in association with AMISP partner IntelliSmart Infrastructure.
- As part of SafeLine, linemen will receive comprehensive safety training.
- During the launch, Chairman Syedain Abbasi emphasized the importance of safety, APDCL's commitment to regular training and awareness, and the goal of cultivating a safety-first culture.
- Under the leadership of Syedain Abbasi, APDCL has become one of the most successful and advanced DISCOMs in the country, achieving significant loss reduction and improved operational efficiency with a strong focus on consumer empowerment.
- The training program has begun with around 150 linemen across seven sub-divisions: Jagiroad, Jhargaoan, Charaibahi, Laharighat, Morigaon, Mazbat, and Kalaigaon.
- Phase-wise training will be conducted on the 6th of each month until the end of the current calendar year.
- Trained safety professionals from IntelliSmart will conduct on-site safety training sessions for linemen across Assam, reinforcing the message that "life is priceless and safety cannot be compromised."
- IntelliSmart is also actively rolling out smart electricity meters across Assam, with over 9 lakh meters already installed.
- The company is committed to building a smarter and sustainable energy ecosystem for the state.

## 88.EXPERTS INSPECT ROCKFALL-PRONE SITES IN MIZORAM CAPITAL:

- In the aftermath of the recent rockfall tragedy that claimed the lives of three members of a single family, the Mizoram Government has engaged two experts to assess high-risk zones and recommend preventive measures.
- Manthan Chauhan, Senior Manager of Maccaferri Geotechnical Solutions, and Dr. C. Sawmliana, Chief Scientist at CSIR-Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research (CIMFR), arrived on Monday for onsite inspections and risk assessment.

- The experts were accompanied by Aizawl Deputy Commissioner Lalhriatpuia (also Chairman of the District Disaster Management Authority) and senior officials from the State's Geology and Mining Department, Disaster Management and Rehabilitation Department, Public Works Department (PWD), and Mizoram University's Geology faculty.
- The team visited Pukpui Falls along the Aizawl-Lengpui Airport Road, where a massive rockfall on April 28 led to the death of a couple and their daughter. Their son was critically injured.
- The inspection team also surveyed Ngaizel in south Aizawl, known for frequent rockfalls, and further assessed high-risk areas at Melthum and Hlimen on the city's southern outskirts.
- These areas were severely affected during a deadly rockfall and landslide triggered by Cyclone Remal on May 27 and 28 last year, which claimed 25 lives.
- Maccaferri, an Italian company established in 1879, is renowned for inventing the 'Gabion Wall' in 1893 — a key technology in global landslide and erosion control projects.

## 89.ASSAM GOVT, BRITISH ENVOYS DISCUSS POTENTIAL AREAS OF COLLABORATION:



- A team of Assam government officials led by Chief Secretary Ravi Kota held discussions with a team of visiting British diplomats and discussed potential areas of collaboration.
- The meeting was a follow-up to the Advantage Assam 2.0 investment summit.
- The visiting delegation, led by Deputy High Commissioner (East and Northeast) Andrew Fleming, made a comprehensive presentation highlighting key focus areas for result-oriented collaborations across various sectors in partnership with the Government of Assam.
- Fleming emphasized that a comprehensive strategic partnership could be developed, offering mutual benefits to both the Governments of India and the United Kingdom.
- The discussions primarily focused on exploring potential areas for an Assam-UK partnership, with the UK's expertise and support playing a key role in sectors like skilling and employment generation, education, incubation and start-up ecosystem, climate financing and knowledge exchange, agritech and bio-manufacturing.
- The meeting discussed the possibility of setting up Centres of Excellence in universities across Assam to foster academic growth, implementation of short-term certification courses and faculty development programmes, and international engagement.

- Collaborating with renowned UK agencies like Sport England and UK Sport to enhance grassroots to elite-level sports participation in Assam was also part of the discussion, besides exploring sports tech innovations and investments supported by passionate fan bases and cutting-edge sports education.
- Additionally, the contribution of hydrocarbons in developing a sustainable transport system by reducing emissions and pollution was also addressed.
- The Government of Assam expressed strong interest in partnering with the UK Government across these sectors.

## 90.ASSAM: 70 ORCHID SPECIES DOCUMENTED IN KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK:

- In a recent survey conducted at **Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR)**, a UNESCO World Heritage site, **70 orchid species** across **36 genera** were documented.
- KNPTR Director **Sonali Ghosh** stated that this orchid survey was part of ongoing efforts to systematically document Kaziranga's rich **floristic and faunal diversity**.
- Of the 70 recorded orchid species, **46 are epiphytes** (growing on other plants) and **24 are terrestrial** (growing in soil).
- Notable orchid species recorded include:
  - ✓ *Acanthophippium sylhetense*
  - ✓ *Aerides odorata*
  - ✓ *Biermannia bimaculata*
  - ✓ *Bulbophyllum ornatissimum*
  - ✓ *Cleisostoma appendiculatum*
  - ✓ *Dendrobium jenkinsii*
  - ✓ *Eulophia kamarupa*
  - ✓ *Peristylus constrictus*
  - ✓ *Phalaenopsis mannii*
  - ✓ *Zeuxine membranacea*
- **Terrestrial orchids** such as *Eulophia dabia*, *Zeuxine lindleyana*, and *Nervilia juliana* thrive in the **grasslands along riverbanks**, while species like *Acanthophippium striatum* and *Hetaeria affinis* flourish on the **dense forest floor**.
- Species such as *Biermannia bimaculata*, *Eulophia kamarupa*, and *Zeuxine lindleyana* are **endemic to India**.
- Orchids like *Bulbophyllum ornatissimum*, *Erythrodies blumei*, *Eulophia kamarupa*, and *Zeuxine membranacea* are considered **rare in Assam**.
- Prior to the survey, a **conservation outreach program** was conducted to engage local youth in biodiversity awareness.
- The **Orchid and Butterfly Walk**, held on **April 18 and 19 in Panbari**, saw the participation of **over 50 students** from various schools and colleges.
- During the event, three brochures were released: **Birds of Panbari**, **Butterflies of Kaziranga**, and **Orchids of Kaziranga**, aiming to promote awareness of the region's biodiversity.
- This discovery of orchid diversity highlights **Kaziranga's thriving ecosystem** and reflects its **ongoing conservation efforts**.

## 91. NEW STATE POLICY AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING, WITCH-HUNTING NOTIFIED:



- In a landmark move aimed at eradicating two social evils, the State government notified the Assam State Policy to Combat Human Trafficking and End Witch-Hunting.
- The policy, formulated by the Department of Women and Child Development, is now in force, promising a systemic, multi-level response to crimes that have long plagued Assam's most vulnerable populations.
- The policy addresses human trafficking and witch-hunting as both legal and social problems, deeply intertwined with poverty, gender discrimination, illiteracy, and lack of access to justice.
- The commitment to victim-centred rehabilitation is central to the policy. Survivors will be eligible for interim financial relief, safe housing, trauma counselling, vocational training, educational assistance, and support for employment or self-employment.
- Rescued children will be rehabilitated under the juvenile justice system, while women rescued from trafficking or witch-hunting will be linked to One Stop Centres and Shakti Sadans.
- In extreme cases, provisions exist for relocation of survivors under new identities to ensure safety and dignity.
- The policy ensures access to legal representation and mandates victim-witness protection throughout the prosecution process.
- Assam's geographical position—sharing borders with several Northeastern States and neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Bhutan—makes it a well-documented trafficking corridor.
- According to police records, 690 cases of human trafficking were registered across Assam between 2020 and 2024, although actual numbers are believed to be higher due to underreporting caused by fear, stigma, or lack of support systems.
- Witch-hunting, though legally criminalized since 2018, continues in certain tribal and rural pockets, especially in Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Karbi Anglong, and parts of upper Assam.
- The new policy introduces an institutional structure for coordinated action, with committees to be constituted at the State, district, and village levels under Mission Shakti.

- These committees will have defined responsibilities ranging from rescue and rehabilitation to legal aid and awareness building.
- They will also maintain migration registers, monitor vulnerable pockets, and ensure safe reintegration of victims into society.
- Local self-government institutions, civil society organizations, schools, SHGs, and Village Defence Parties will be engaged to build a community-led safety net.
- To ensure legal redress, the policy directs the establishment of special courts for speedy trial of trafficking and witch-hunting cases.
- Law enforcement and judicial officers will be trained to sensitively handle such matters.
- Guidelines for asset seizure from traffickers and perpetrators have been included, allowing proceeds to be used for survivor rehabilitation.
- Implementation will require convergence across more than a dozen departments, including Home, Education, Health, Labour, Social Justice, Tribal Affairs, and Urban Development.
- The government plans to utilize existing schemes such as Mission Vatsalya, Shakti, and Orunodoi while committing to create a dedicated budget head for policy execution and annual social audits to assess impact and plug gaps.
- Pointing to previous instances where well-drafted laws failed to yield real-world change, social activist Divyajyoti Saikia recalled how the Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Act, 2018, despite being passed in 2015, received Presidential assent only in June 2018.

## 92. LUMMER DAI LITERARY AWARD FOR 2025 ANNOUNCED:



- The Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society (APLS) has announced the prestigious Luminous Lummer Dai Literary Award 2025.
- The award will be conferred on Ramchandra Chutia and Dr. Ashok Kumar Pandey in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the literary landscape of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Lummer Dai Literary Award honours individuals who have made significant contributions to the literary field.
- Since its inception in 2016, a total of 11 distinguished writers have received the award, including Kaling Borang (2016), Mamang Dai (2017), Tagang Taki (2019), and Jumsi Siram (2023).

- Ramchandra Chutia, born in Dhakuakhana, Assam, in 1952, has authored 29 books, including eight on the socio-anthropological aspects of various tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Writing in both Assamese and English, his literary works span poetry, novels, short stories, travelogues, and memoirs.
- Dr. Ashok Kumar Pandey, an associate professor in the Department of Commerce at Dera Natung Government College, Itanagar, was born in Uttar Pradesh in 1967 and has been residing in Arunachal Pradesh since 1992.
- A versatile writer, he has published 11 books covering poetry, short stories, and drama, along with five academic works that are widely acclaimed in scholarly circles.

### 93.GOV'T DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR TRADE REMEDY PROBES:

- The government is developing a digital platform to enable the electronic submission of documents in trade remedy investigations, aiming to promote transparency, efficiency, and ease of access for all stakeholders.
- These investigations are conducted by the commerce ministry's Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR).
- Since 1995, India has initiated over 1,200 trade remedy investigations.
- Recent interventions have protected domestic sectors, including solar energy and advanced materials like solar cells and copper wire rods, from unfairly priced imports and subsidized goods.
- The digital platform is expected to go live soon and will offer enhanced transparency, efficiency, and accessibility for stakeholders.
- The main objective of DGTR is to protect sensitive sectors from adverse impacts of trade liberalization, such as dumping and subsidies from exporting countries, through time-bound investigations.
- DGTR's key functions include conducting anti-dumping, anti-subsidy/countervailing duty (CVD), and safeguard investigations.
- The finance ministry takes the final decision to impose these duties.
- DGTR also has a trade defence wing that contests the imposition of trade remedy measures by foreign authorities.
- These efforts have led to reduced duties or complete relief on Indian exports, protecting India's international trade interests.
- DGTR was established in 2018 by consolidating the Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties and the Directorate General of Safeguards.

### 94.RDSO APPROVED DBR OF NEW SARAIGHAT BRIDGE PROJECT:



- In a significant development for the Agthori-Kamakhya rail-cum-road bridge, the Research Design and Standard Organisation (RDSO) recently approved the Design Basis Report (DBR) for the project.
- This update was revealed in a report titled *Brief of all Projects* issued by the Construction wing of the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR).
- The NFR has officially commenced work on the double line project, featuring a rail-cum-road bridge over the Brahmaputra River at Saraighat near Guwahati.
- The project, spanning 7.062 km, has an estimated cost of ₹1,473.77 crore and is targeted for completion by December 2029.
- The DBR, which outlines the project's design principles, assumptions, and constraints, was approved by RDSO on March 7, 2025.
- RDSO, the R&D wing of the Ministry of Railways, is responsible for standardizing and testing railway infrastructure and equipment.
- The bridge was originally included in the 2017-18 railway budget to improve connectivity and decongest routes between Agthori (north bank) and Kamakhya (south bank) in Guwahati.
- As of March 2024, ₹1.364 crore has been spent, with the project's financial progress standing at 0.09%.
- A detailed estimate of ₹1,473.77 crore was sanctioned by the Railway Board on February 19, 2024.
- Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES) Ltd is handling Detailed Design Consultancy (DDC), including geotechnical investigations, general arrangement drawing (GAD), and design of substructure, superstructure, and bill of quantities (BOQ).
- Following this phase, the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) tender will be floated.
- The North Eastern Hydraulic and Allied Research Institute (NEHARI), part of the Brahmaputra Board, completed a hydraulic model study on the bridge in January 2025 and submitted the report to NFR.
- In September 2022, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari announced that the project was approved under PM Gati Shakti at a cost of ₹996.75 crore, with cost-sharing between NHAI and the Ministry of Railways.
- The viaducts and approach roads, costing ₹322 crore, will be built entirely by NHAI.

- The bridge is expected to significantly enhance rail and road connectivity across the Brahmaputra River, improving both passenger and freight movement.

## 95. ASSAM MP DILIP SAIKIA HONoured WITH SANSAD RATNA AWARD 2025 FOR PARLIAMENTARY EXCELLENCE:

- Dilip Saikia, Assam Pradesh BJP president and sitting Member of Parliament from Darrang-Udalguri, has become the first-ever parliamentarian from Northeast India to be honoured with the prestigious Sansad Ratna Award 2025.
- The Sansad Ratna Award, instituted in 2010 by the Prime Point Foundation, recognises contributions to democratic governance and outstanding performance in Parliament.
- The jury panel for this year's awardees was chaired by Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, Chairperson of the National Commission for Backward Classes.
- Saikia's selection is a significant recognition of his consistent parliamentary performance and dedication to public service.
- His inclusion among this year's awardees is seen as a landmark moment for Assam and the broader Northeastern region, highlighting its growing role in national discourse and legislative excellence.
- The 15th edition of the Sansad Ratna Awards will be held in New Delhi in late July and will honour a total of 17 MPs from both houses of Parliament.
- Two high-performing parliamentary standing committees—the Standing Committee on Finance and the Standing Committee on Agriculture—will also be recognised.
- Additionally, four senior parliamentarians—Bhartruhari Mahtab, NK Premachandran, Supriya Sule, and Shrirang Appa Barne—will receive Special Awards for their "Outstanding and Consistent Contribution to Parliamentary Democracy," recognising their exemplary service across multiple Lok Sabha terms.

## 96. MIZORAM FIRST TO ACHIEVE STATUS AS FULLY LITERATE STATE:



- In a milestone achievement that sets a precedent for the rest of India, **Mizoram officially became the country's first fully literate State.**
- The announcement was made by Chief Minister **Lalduhoma** at a State-level function held at the Mizoram University auditorium in Tanhril, in the presence of Union Minister of State for Education, **Jayant Chaudhary.**
- This achievement marks the successful culmination of a focused literacy mission under the **New India Literacy Programme (NILP)**, also known as **ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society).**
- The campaign represented a strong integration of government policy and grassroots volunteerism, and has been described as a **model of community-led transformation.**
- Although Mizoram already had a high literacy rate of **91.33%** in the 2011 Census (third highest in India), fresh surveys under NILP identified **3,026 individuals** as still illiterate. Of these, **1,692 were enrolled** in basic literacy programmes.
- The backbone of this achievement was a group of **292 volunteer educators** including students, teachers, government staff, Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators (CRCCs), and other educationists.
- These volunteers, inspired by the **Mizo code of Tlawmngaihna** (a spirit of selfless service) and the national ethos of '**Kartavya Bodh**' (a sense of civic responsibility), worked tirelessly across remote villages and urban areas to reach learners.
- Following a detailed evaluation by the State's Education Department, Mizoram was assessed to have achieved an **overall literacy rate of 98.2%**, the highest in India, and was thus officially declared **fully literate.**
- Mizoram, which became the **23rd State of India on February 20, 1987**, spans **21,081 square kilometres** and has consistently been a leader in human development indicators in the North East.
- A strong civil society and a culture that deeply values education have helped Mizoram maintain top rankings in **literacy and school enrolment** across the country.

## 97. ASSAM: KAZIRANGA ACHIEVES RECORD FOOTFALL; 3RD MOST VISITED PARK IN INDIA:

- Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) has achieved a record in becoming the 3rd most visited Park in the country, with a footfall of 4,43,636 tourists in the park between October 1 and May 18, 2025.
- According to the Director of KNPTR, Sonali Ghosh, the footfall indicates an overall increase of over 35% in the total number of visitors since last year.
- Especially notable was the number of 1,84,63 foreigners, indicating an increase of 25% of such visitors, boosting Kaziranga's position as a symbol of wildlife conservation and a top-choice destination for families and wildlife aficionados. She also revealed that the park collected revenue amounting to over Rs 11 crore in this tourist season.
- Compared to 1,32,943 tourists visiting KNPTR in 2014-15, the footfall registered in the park was 4,43,636 in 2024-25.

## 98.HAILAKANDI FULFILS TARGETS AS NITI AAYOG'S ASPIRATIONAL DIST:

- **Hailakandi district** has successfully achieved all the targets set for it under the **Aspirational Districts Programme**, showcasing significant improvement in various development indicators.
- Union Minister of State for Water Resources highlighted Hailakandi's notable progress in the **aspirational district rankings**, reflecting its transformation across key sectors.
- Hailakandi is among the **112 aspirational districts** identified by **NITI Aayog** across 27 states in India, chosen for their potential for rapid development and improvement.
- A **zila parishad official** reported that the district currently has **1,52,781 active job cards**, and **45,747 houses** have been constructed under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)**.
- The **Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL)** informed that **solar power** has been provided under the **Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana** in the district.
- The **Social Welfare Department** reported that **56 victims of domestic violence** have been rehabilitated through the **'One Stop Centre'** initiative in the district.
- The **Agriculture Department** stated that around **73,000 farmers** in the district have benefited from the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM-KISAN)**.
- Additionally, **2,613 farmers** have benefited from the **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)**, achieving **85%** of the district's target under the crop insurance scheme.

## 99.FM ASSURES CM OF ALL HELP FOR STATE'S GROWTH:



- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman assured Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of full support for the state's ongoing growth trajectory.

- The



assurance came during an official meeting between Sarma and Sitharaman at her office in North Block, New Delhi.

- Sarma shared Assam's development plans, including the aim to achieve a ₹10 lakh crore Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) by 2027-2028.
- He highlighted the economic progress made by Assam, driven by several initiatives undertaken by the state government.
- Sarma also met Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to discuss timelines for operationalising the new Indian Institute of Management (IIM) campus in Guwahati.
- In a related development, the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways floated the tender for the long-awaited **Jorhat-Majuli Bridge**.
- The proposed Jorhat-Majuli Bridge will be a 6.81 km, 2-lane bridge with an estimated project cost of ₹600.51 crore.

## 100.NE COMPLETE PACKAGE FOR TOURISM: MODI:

- Stating that the Northeast is the most diverse part of the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the region has become a complete package for tourism.
- Inaugurating the Rising North East Investors Summit 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, Modi said that the Northeast is synonymous with a thriving bio-economy and bamboo industry, tea production and petroleum, sports and skill, as well as an emerging hub for eco-tourism.
- The region is paving the way for organic products and stands as a powerhouse of energy.
- The region is an ideal destination for global conferences, concerts, and destination weddings, positioning it as a complete tourism package.
- He emphasized the vast potential spanning trade, tradition, textiles, and tourism, stating that the region's diversity is its greatest strength.
- Emphasizing the critical role of Eastern India in achieving a Viksit Bharat, the Prime Minister described the Northeast as its most vital component.
- The Prime Minister highlighted that over the past decade, ₹21,000 crore has been invested in the Northeast's education sector.
- He noted key developments, including the establishment of over 800 new schools, the region's first AIIMS, nine new medical colleges, and two new IIITs.

- He also cited the creation of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication campus in Mizoram and nearly 200 new skill development institutes across the region.
- Modi further remarked on the growing role of Assam in strengthening India's semiconductor ecosystem.
- He announced that the first Made in India chip will roll out from a Northeast-based semiconductor plant, signalling a major milestone for the region.

## 101.ASSAM: RARE 'VULNERABLE' SNAKE SPECIES DISCOVERED IN DIBRUGARH BY DR. TIKENDRAJIT GOGOI:

- A rare species of snake, *Elaphe taeniura*, commonly known as the Beauty Snake or Striped Trinket Snake, has been discovered in Dibrugarh under the observation of Dr. Tikendrajit Gogoi.
- According to the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** Red List, the Beauty Snake is classified as 'Vulnerable,' indicating a high risk of endangerment in the wild. This discovery highlights the rich yet fragile biodiversity of the region and underscores the importance of continued research and conservation efforts in Assam.
- Earlier, a group of herpetologists discovered a new frog species in Garbhanga Reserve Forest, a major biodiversity hotspot near Guwahati, Assam.
- The new species, *Leptobrachium aryatium*, is named in honor of Arya Vidyapeeth College because of the researchers' affiliation with it. The frog is identified by its orange-and-black eyes, clear throat marks, and a unique melodious call that resonates at dusk.

The findings were published in the April 14 edition of *Zootaxa*, a respected journal based in New Zealand that focuses on animal taxonomy.

## 102.INVEST IN ELECTRONICS SECTOR OF ASSAM: CM TO ENTREPRENEURS:



- Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma urged entrepreneurs to invest in Assam, emphasizing the State's strategic location in the northeastern region and its proximity to Bhutan and Bangladesh, as well as its role in India's Act East Policy.

- Speaking at the Assam Electronics Round Table 2025, he stated that Assam's economy is robust and has seen consistent GDP growth of 13–15% over the last decade, excluding the Covid period.
- He highlighted that Guwahati and other areas in Assam have the necessary infrastructure, a favorable atmosphere, and skilled manpower for the electronics industry.
- Sarma invited investors to explore opportunities in Assam's electronics sector.
- He revealed that Assam received investment proposals worth ₹5.30 lakh crore during the investors' summit in February, with additional proposals continuing to come in post-event.
- The Chief Minister stated that the Tata Group's OSAT facility in Jagiroad is in an advanced stage and is expected to produce 48 million chips daily this year, placing it ahead of the Semiconductor Fab in Gujarat.
- To meet the electronics sector's demand for skilled manpower, Assam is sending youth to Bengaluru for training and developing local talent through NIELIT and Assam Skill University, which is funded by the Asian Development Bank with ₹1,000 crore.
- Investors will receive several incentives, including free land, 60% additional incentives over those provided by the Government of India, 100% GST reimbursement on finished products, and benefits under the Central and State Electronics Policies, Assam State Industrial Policy, and UNNATI Policy.
- Sarma assured that the State government is ready to customize and tweak its policies to meet the specific needs of any industry.
- Three integrated satellite townships, including one in Jagiroad, will be developed near the Tata OSAT facility.

## 103.KAKAYA: THE SECOND-LARGEST TEXTILE WEAVING HUB OF ASSAM:



- The textile industry in Assam has a long history, with references in ancient literature such as the 'Kishkindha' section of the *Ramayana*, which mentions 'Koshakaranombhumi'—the land of cocoon rearers in ancient Kamrup.
- Sualkuchi is widely known as a major silk weaving centre in Assam and India.

- Kakaya, located about 15 km from Nalbari town under the Belsor Police Station, is recognized as the second-largest silk weaving hub in Assam.
- Weaving of silk products like *pat* and *muga sador-mekhela*, *phulam gamosa*, etc., formally began in Kakaya in 1982, initiated by local resident Harmohan Nath.
- In 1988, Madan Nath, a former Assam Movement activist, established the Shreenath Resom Udyog at Barnibari near Kakaya.
- Subsequently, local youths formed two cooperative societies in Kakaya: Sankardev Bayan Samabai Samiti and Samannay Bayan Samabai Samiti.
- Other units such as Arati Silk Merchant, Jaymati Silk House, Mallika Silk Centre, Labanya Resom Udyog (in Kakaya), and Matri Silk House (in Barnibari) were established, functioning as both production and sales centres.
- Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kakaya area had around 300 *pat-muga* weaving looms, including 170 *gamosa*-weaving looms.
- The industry employed over 320 weavers and 50 assistants.
- Annually, over 12,000 *pat-muga* dresses and 1,70,000 *gamosas* were produced and sold through cooperatives, silk shops, and individual sales.
- Today, local weavers use computer scanners to design textiles.
- Products are sold in districts like Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Sonitpur, Sivasagar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nagaon, and Kamrup (Metro).
- These textiles are also distributed across India through ARTFED, including in Delhi.
- ARTFED purchases thousands of *phulam gamosas* annually from the Kakaya area.

## 104.ASSAM: DEFENCE CORRIDOR UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION OF CENTRE:

- The Defence Ministry is actively exploring the establishment of a **defence corridor in Assam**, which will support armed forces along the eastern frontier and advance the **Prime Minister's 'Make in India' vision**, while creating economic opportunities in the Northeast.
- To support this, the **Government of Assam has launched the Assam Aerospace and Defence Manufacturing Policy 2025**, aiming to position the state as a **leading hub** for aerospace and defence manufacturing in India.
- The policy capitalizes on Assam's **strategic location, existing infrastructure, and natural resources** to attract investments and promote innovation in the sector.
- Key incentives provided under the policy include:
  - **Capital subsidies**
  - **SGST reimbursement**
  - **Transport subsidies**
  - **Production-linked subsidies**
- The policy also emphasizes the **development of a skilled workforce**, offering incentives to support training and capacity-building in defence and aerospace sectors.
- Focus sectors under the policy include:

- **Aircraft manufacturing**
- **Defence equipment production**
- **Avionics**
- **MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Operations) services**
- **Simulation technologies**
- **Research and Development (R&D)**
- Assam's policy vision aligns with the **Ministry of Defence's national target** of achieving a **\$26 billion turnover in aerospace and defence manufacturing by 2025**, with **\$5 billion earmarked for exports**.
- The state government is proactively **seeking partnerships** with both **domestic and international defence manufacturers**, as well as **startups and technology innovators**, to realize this vision.

## 105.ASSAM: PRESIDENT CONFERS PADMA AWARDS ON THREE CULTURAL ICONS OF STATE:

- **President of India Droupadi Murmu** conferred the **Padma Bhushan** to veteran Xatriya dance exponent **Jatin Goswami** and **Padma Shri** to **Reba Kanta Mahanta** and **Gita Upadhyay** from Assam in the fields of **Art, Art, and Literature & Education**, respectively.
- The awards were presented during the **Civil Investiture Ceremony** in New Delhi.
- **Jatin Goswami (Padma Bhushan – Art)**
- Born on **August 2, 1933**, he is a veteran Xatriya dance exponent and founder of **Sattriya Akademi**, Guwahati.
- Received early training from his father and learned Xatriya dance from renowned gurus Late Maniram Dutta Muktiar and Late Roseswar Saikia Bar Bayan of Sri Sri Kamalabari Satra.
- Trained under **Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha** in Assamese folk music, dance, and *Ankia Nat* (Bhaona).
- First to present *Ankia Nat* on modern stage and form a mobile cultural group for Xatriya dance performances.
- Provided training to various mobile theatre groups in Assam.
- Served in key cultural institutions like **Sangeet Natak Akademi** and **ICCR**.
- Previous honours include:
  - **Padma Shri (2008)**
  - **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2004)**
  - **Kalidas Samman (2017)**
  - **Akademi Ratna (2019)**
  - **Bharatiyam Samman (2002)**

### Best Dance Director Award, Assam (1997-98)

- **Reba Kanta Mahanta (Padma Shri – Art)**
- Born on **April 19, 1935**, Xatradhikar of **Khatpar Satra**, Sivasagar, Assam.
- A renowned figure in **Xatriya mask making** and **Mukha Bhaona** (masked dance drama).

- Learned from his father and served as a teacher and school headmaster.
- Key contributor to cultural preservation with a **museum** at his xatra campus showcasing masks and Xatriya artefacts.
- Masks have been showcased globally — in **Russia, Japan, Australia**, and major Indian institutions like **IGNCA, National Museum (Washington)**, and **Indian Museum (Kolkata)**.
- Major recognitions:
  - **State Award for Excellence in Handicrafts (2003)**
  - **Shilp Guru Award (2008)**
  - **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2015)**
  - **Bishnurabha State Award (2019)**
- Felicitated by over **100 organizations** throughout his life.
- **Gita Upadhyay (Padma Shri – Literature & Education)**
- Born on **February 14, 1939**, a distinguished **writer, translator, academician, and social worker**.
- First woman from the **Gorkha community in Assam** to earn a postgraduate degree.
- Retired as **Head of Political Science Department**, Sibsagar College after 30 years.
- Notable works:
  - **Janmabhoomi Mero Swadesh** (Sahitya Akademi Award)
  - **Dorbar ki Susart** – Nepali translation of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's Assamese play
  - Translations: *Diary of a Young Girl*, *Ramayan*, *Muna Madan*, *Kata Suruj*, *Bhumiputra*, and *Abhiyatri*
  - Original works in both **Assamese** and **Nepali** such as *Ma Moi First Holu*, *Amma Ma First Bhayert*, *Nepal Deshar Sadhu*, *Suvasit Batah*, *Kathanjali*
- Promoted **cultural harmony** between Assamese and Nepali-speaking communities.
- Active in **social work** and served on the Board of **Tezpur University** and as a member of the **Juvenile Court, Tezpur District**.

## 106.ARMS LICENCE SOON TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN ‘VULNERABLE’ AREAS: CM:



- The State Cabinet approved a new scheme to issue armed licences to eligible original inhabitants and indigenous Indian citizens in vulnerable, remote, and border areas to address unlawful threats from hostile elements.
- Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma chaired the Cabinet meeting and informed the media that arms licences would be issued under the Arms Act after proper verification of applicants' antecedents.
- The scheme, named **Special Schemes for Grant of Armed Licence to Original Inhabitants and Indigenous Citizens in Vulnerable and Remote Areas of Assam**, aims to enhance the sense of security among local populations.
- Sarma mentioned that had the scheme been implemented earlier, many indigenous people might not have been forced to sell their land and property due to threat perception.
- Districts highlighted where people feel insecure include **Dhubri, Nagaon, Morigaon, Barpeta, South Salmara, and Goalpara**.
- The Cabinet approved a **900 MW power generation project in Karbi Anglong**, attracting an investment of ₹6,000 crore.
- The **Sarusajai Sports Complex** has been renamed **Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah Sports Complex**.
- The **State Institute of Rural Development** has been renamed **Golap Borborua State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development**.
- The **district stadium of Mangaldai** will now be called **Roja Dharmanarayan Stadium**.

## PERSON IN NEWS

### 107.ARVIND SHRIVASTAVA TAKES CHARGE AS REVENUE SECY:



- Arvind Shrivastava took charge as Revenue Secretary in the finance ministry.

### 108.MIKAELA APPOINTED CHAIR OF COORDINATION COMMISSION FOR BRISBANE 2032:



- International Olympic Committee (IOC) Executive Board (EB) member Mikaela Cojuangco Jaworski has been appointed as the new Chair of the IOC Coordination Commission for the Olympic Games Brisbane 2032.
- The appointment was made by IOC president Thomas Bach following a request from president-elect Kirsty Coventry, who stepped down from the role after she was elected IOC president.
- A former equestrian athlete who represented the Philippines internationally, Jaworski has been a member of the IOC EB since 2020.
- She has strong connections with Australia, having trained and competed in the country, including in Brisbane, for her entire career.

### 109.PARAMESWARAN IYER TO REPRESENT INDIA AT IMF BOARD:



- Parameswaran Iyer, Executive Director at the World Bank, has been temporarily assigned as India's nominee director on the board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- This nomination fills the vacancy created by the early termination of KV Subramanian's tenure as executive director at the IMF, which ended six months ahead of schedule.
- The appointment is significant as the IMF Executive Board is set to meet on May 9 to decide on a new USD 1.3 billion climate resilience loan and review the ongoing USD 7 billion bailout package for Pakistan.
- Without India's nomination, the alternate executive director Harischandra Pahath Kumbure Gedara of Sri Lanka would have assumed the executive director's duties by default, as per IMF rules.

### 110.NEW POPE:



- Robert Prevost, a Chicago-born missionary who spent his career ministering in Peru, was elected the first pope from the United States in the history of the Catholic Church.
- Prevost, a 69-year-old member of the Augustinian religious order, took the name Leo XIV.
- He previously led the Vatican's powerful office of bishops before becoming pope.

## 111. AISENGFA GOGOI BREAKS YOUTH NATIONAL RECORD IN WEIGHTLIFTING:



- Assam's Aisengfa Gogoi clinched the 55kg weightlifting gold with an overall lift of 183kg at the ongoing Khelo India Youth Games.
- The event was held at the Rajgir Sports Complex in Rajgir, Bihar.
- The 17-year-old trains at Sports Authority of India's (SAI) National Centre of Excellence (NCOE) in Lucknow.
- She has been training there since 2023 under coach Rahul Sharma.
- Gogoi shattered the youth national record for overall lift of 182kg.
- The previous record was set by Koyel Bar of West Bengal at the 2024 Asian Championships in Doha, Qatar, last December.

## 112. HARVANSH CHAWLA APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF BRICS CCI:



- The BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) has appointed **Harvansh Chawla**, a lawyer and expert in international trade law, as its new **chairman**.
- Chawla brings **over three decades of experience** in international law, trade policy, infrastructure development, and corporate advisory.

- He has served as **legal advisor** to several global corporations, including **Northrop Grumman**, **Singapore Airlines**, **Denso Corporation**, and **Alcatel**.
- In his new role, Chawla will lead **policy advocacy**, facilitate **high-level trade delegations**, and promote collaboration in **priority sectors** such as **technology**, **manufacturing**, and **agriculture**.

## 113. JUSTICE BR GAVAI SWORN IN AS CJI:



- Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai, who has been part of several benches that delivered landmark rulings, including the one upholding the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 bestowing special status to Jammu and Kashmir, was on Wednesday sworn in as the 52nd Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- The 64-year-old was administered oath by President Droupadi Murmu at a brief ceremony at the Ganatantra Mandap in the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- He took the oath of affirmation in Hindi.
- He succeeds Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who demitted office on Tuesday on attaining the age of 65.
- CJI Gavai, who was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court on May 24, 2019, will have a tenure of over six months and would demit office on November 23.

## 114. POET-LYRICIST GULZAR, SANSKRIT SCHOLAR RAMBHADRACHARYA RECEIVE JNANPITH AWARD FOR 2023:



- **President Droupadi Murmu** presented the **58th Jnanpith Award** for the year **2023** to **poet-lyricist Gulzar** and **Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya**.
- **Gulzar** (Sampoorn Singh Kalra), acclaimed for his contributions to **Hindi cinema** and recognized as one of the finest **Urdu poets** of the era, could not attend the ceremony due to **health-related issues**.
- **Jagadguru Rambhadracharya**, aged 75, is a **renowned Hindu spiritual leader, educator, and author of over 240 books**, including four epics. He is the **founder and head of Tulsi Peeth** in Chitrakoot.

## 115.NEERAJ CHOPRA FINALLY BREACHES 90M MARK:



- **Neeraj Chopra** finally **breached the 90m mark** with a **throw of 90.23m**, marking a major career milestone, but finished **second** in a thrilling men's javelin event at the **Doha leg of the Diamond League** on Friday.
- **Julian Weber of Germany** clinched the top spot with a **final throw of 91.06m**, surpassing Neeraj in dramatic fashion.
- With this throw, **Neeraj** became the **third Asian** and **25th athlete globally** to register a **90m+ javelin throw**.
- The throw came on Neeraj's **third attempt**, placing him among elite company, including his coach **Jan Železný** of Czechia, a legend in javelin history.
- The only two other Asians to have crossed the 90m barrier are:
  - **Arshad Nadeem** of Pakistan – **92.97m**
  - **Chao-Tsun Cheng** of Chinese Taipei – **91.36m**
- Neeraj, 27, is a **double Olympic medallist** and continues to be one of India's most celebrated athletes on the global stage.

## 116.USTM VC ELECTED AS NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE PRESIDENT:

- The University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya (USTM) has announced that its Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gauri Dutt Sharma, has been elected as the President of the National Academy of Social Science, Allahabad, by the Indian Social Science Academy (ISSA) for two consecutive years.
- Professor Sharma completed his post-doctorate (honorary) at Sheffield University, United Kingdom, in 1991.
- He was awarded the Doctor Narasimhan Medal in 1994 for the best research paper.

- In 2005, the Ministry of External Affairs deputed Professor Sharma to the University of Rangoon, Myanmar, to help enhance the standards of higher education.
- His engagements with academic and diplomatic communities in countries like Bhutan, Myanmar, and Bangladesh have contributed to strengthening India's educational and socio-political relations with its neighbours.

## 117.ASSAM'S KINGSHUK MORAN WINS ZEE CINE AWARD 2025 FOR EXPERT SOUND DESIGN IN STREE 2:



- In a significant achievement, **Kingshuk Moran** from Naharkatia in Assam's Dibrugarh district has made the state proud by winning the Expert Sound Design award at the **Zee Cine Awards 2025**.
- He was honoured for his outstanding work in **Stree 2**, the horror-comedy blockbuster directed by Amar Kaushik.
- The film stars Rajkummar Rao, Shraddha Kapoor, Pankaj Tripathi, Abhishek Banerjee, and Aparshakti Khurana.

## 118.ASTROPHYSICIST JAYANT NARLIKAR PASSES AWAY:

- Astrophysicist Dr. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar, who was globally acclaimed for co-developing the Hoyle-Narlikar theory of gravity – an alternative to Einstein's general relativity – and for popularising science among common people, passed away.
- A towering figure in Indian science, Dr. Narlikar was widely known for his pioneering contributions to cosmology, his efforts to popularise science, and for setting up premier research institutions in the country.
- He was also known for championing the steady-state theory of the universe, a bold counterpoint to the widely accepted Big Bang model.
- He migrated to Cambridge for higher studies, becoming a Wrangler and Tyson Medallist in the Mathematical Tripos.
- While in the United Kingdom, he and his doctoral adviser Fred Hoyle developed the famous Hoyle-Narlikar theory of gravity.
- In 2014, the Sahitya Akademi selected his autobiography for its highest prize in regional language (Marathi) writing.

## 119.INTERNATIONAL BOOKER PRIZE FOR KANNADA WRITER:



- Writer, activist, and lawyer Banu Mushtaq's short story collection *Heart Lamp* (*Hridaya Deepa*) has become the first Kannada title to win the International Booker Prize in London.
- Mushtaq received the prize at a ceremony held at Tate Modern in London, alongside her translator Deepa Bhasthi.
- Deepa Bhasthi translated the work from Kannada to English.
- *Heart Lamp* is the first book-length translation of Banu Mushtaq's work into English.
- The collection features 12 short stories written over a span of 30 years, from 1990 to 2023.
- The stories depict the resilience, resistance, wit, and sisterhood of everyday women in patriarchal communities in southern India.
- The collection draws on a rich tradition of oral storytelling.
- The International Booker Prize is awarded annually for a single book translated into English and published in the United Kingdom or Ireland.
- It is distinct from the Booker Prize, which is the leading literary award for English-language fiction.

## 120.KAUSTABH PARASHAR RECEIVES 2ND PANCHANAN MEDHI MEMORIAL AWARD:



- The Panchanan Medhi Memorial Award is an initiative instituted in memory of nationally acclaimed educationist Panchanan Medhi, who was honoured with the National Teacher Award in 1975 by the President of India.
- Late Medhi—a visionary educator and committed social reformer—established the Sapatgram Amalgamated Academy in Dhubri district during India's fight for independence, with the aim of instilling core educational values in the younger generation.
- To carry forward his ideals, the Panchanan Medhi Research and Development Foundation (PMRDF) initiated the award in 2023 to recognize students from Nalbari district who secure the highest marks in the High School Leaving Certificate ([HSLC](#)) Examination each year. The award comprises a cash prize derived from interest on the corpus fund, a certificate of appreciation, and a memento.
- The award is presented annually at the session of the Nalbari District Employees' Association. This year, the district's top scorer, Kaustabh Parashar, received the award at the 28th annual session held at Karia HS School, Nalbari.

## 121.DRDO CHIEF GETS 2ND 1-YEAR EXTENSION:

- The Central government has extended the tenure of DRDO chief Samir V. Kamat by one more year, until May 31, 2026.
- This marks his second extension in the post.
- Kamat, a distinguished scientist, was appointed as Secretary of the Department of Defence Research and Development (DDR&D) and Chairman of DRDO on August 25, 2022.
- His first extension was granted on May 27, 2024, and was set to end this month.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved his latest extension under Fundamental Rule 56(d).
- This rule allows the Central government to extend the services of individuals in select posts if it serves the public interest.
- Kamat's new term will run from June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026, or until further orders.

## NEWS IN SHORT

### 122.PAK TEST-FIRES MISSILE WITH 450-KM RANGE:

- Pakistan announced that it has conducted a successful training launch of the Abdali Weapon System – a surface-to-surface missile with a range of 450 km – amid heightened tensions with India following the Pahalgam terror attack.
- The launch was aimed at ensuring the operational readiness of troops and validating key technical parameters, including the missile's advanced navigation system and enhanced manoeuvrability features, according to a statement by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the Pakistani army.
- The army said the missile launch was part of 'Exercise INDUS' but provided no further details about the exercise.
- Pakistan's missile test firing comes about 10 days after terrorists killed 26 people, mostly tourists, in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on April 22.

### 123.PM MODI ANNOUNCES USD 200 MILLION FOR MODERNISATION OF ANGOLAN ARMED FORCES:



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a USD 200 million defence credit line for Angola and expressed India's firm commitment to act decisively against terrorists and their backers, a statement made days after the Pahalgam terror strike.
- Modi made the remarks following wide-ranging talks with Angolan President Joao Manuel Goncalves Laurengo, focusing on enhancing overall bilateral ties, including cooperation in digital public infrastructure.
- In his media statement, the Prime Minister said that President Laurengo's visit to India not only provides a new direction to bilateral relations but also strengthens the broader India-Africa partnership.
- The two leaders also discussed cooperation in the repair, overhaul, and supply of defence platforms.
- India will share its capabilities with Angola in digital public infrastructure, space technology, and capacity building.

### 124.BITCOIN TRADE IN INDIA IS REFINED WAY OF DOING HAWALA BUSINESS: SC



- The Supreme Court has remarked that trading in Bitcoin in India resembles "a refined way of hawala business," criticizing the Centre's lack of a clear regulatory framework for virtual currencies.
- The comments were made by a bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh while hearing the bail application of Shailesh Babulal Bhatt, who was arrested for alleged illegal Bitcoin trading.
- The Centre had informed the court in January 2023 that it was still considering a mechanism to regulate cryptocurrencies and investigate related offences.
- On February 25, 2022, the Supreme Court had asked the government to clarify whether cryptocurrency trading, including Bitcoin, is legal in India.

### 125.BRAHMOS MISSILE FACTORY TO BE INAUGURATED IN LUCKNOW ON MAY 11:



- A **BrahMos missile manufacturing unit** built with an investment of **Rs 300 crore** will be inaugurated in **Lucknow on May 11**, an official said.
- The plant was completed in **3.5 years** under the **Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor**.

- The announcement comes amid ongoing armed conflict with Pakistan, including heavy shelling across the **Line of Control** and the destruction of several terror camps in Pakistan.
- The unit is expected to provide employment to around **500 engineers and technicians**, with **thousands more** indirectly employed as skilled, semi-skilled, and general workers.
- The **BrahMos missile** is developed by **BrahMos Aerospace**, a **joint venture between India and Russia**.
- Uttar Pradesh is emerging as a key hub for defence manufacturing and has allocated **117.35 hectares of land to 12 other defence companies** under the Defence Corridor initiative.

## 126.GOV'T SETS FOODGRAINS PRODUCTION TARGET FOR 2025-26:

- **India is targeting 354.64 million tonnes** of foodgrain production for the **2025–26 crop year**, beginning in July, based on forecasts of better monsoon rains.
- For the current **2024–25 crop year**, the government had set a target of **341.55 million tonnes**.
- **Foodgrains** include **paddy, wheat, coarse cereals, and pulses**.
- As of now, India has produced **330.92 million tonnes** in the **kharif and rabi** seasons of 2024–25; production estimates for the **summer (zaid)** season are pending.
- In the **2023–24 crop year**, **zaid production** stood at **16.5 million tonnes**, sown between February and June.
- The target for **rice production** in 2025–26 is **147.35 million tonnes**, up from the estimated **136.44 million tonnes** in the 2024–25 kharif and rabi seasons.
- **Paddy** is grown in all three seasons—**kharif, rabi, and zaid**.
- For **wheat**, grown only in the **rabi season**, the 2025–26 target is **117.40 million tonnes**, compared to an estimated **115.43 million tonnes** in 2024–25.

## 127.MORNINGSTAR DBRS UPGRADES INDIA'S SOVEREIGN RATING:

- Global rating agency Morningstar DBRS has upgraded India's sovereign rating to '**BBB**' with a stable outlook.
- The upgrade is attributed to structural reforms driven by infrastructure investments, digitisation, and macroeconomic stability.
- The rating balances India's public finance challenges against its strong economic growth potential.
- Morningstar DBRS raised India's Long-Term Foreign and Local Currency Issuer Ratings from **BBB (low)** to **BBB**.
- The agency cited the cumulative and ongoing benefits of India's structural reform efforts as key to fiscal consolidation.
- The upgrade also reflects the improved resilience of India's banking system.

## 128.CM COMMISSIONS PIPED NATURAL GAS PROJECT FOR CITY:

- Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated the first phase of piped natural gas supply project for Guwahati.
- Altogether 101 households in the Geetanagar locality got piped gas connections in the first phase.
- Sarma also virtually inaugurated Barak Valley's first Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) station in Silchar.
- He also laid the foundation stone for the commencement of work for providing piped gas connections at Hajo, Sualkuchi, Rangia, and Baihata Chariali.
- Speaking on the occasion, Sarma described the pipeline-based natural gas initiative, undertaken by Purba Bharati Gas Private Limited, as a promising step towards a sustainable future.
- He said that Purba Bharati Gas Private Limited will invest Rs 2,616.95 crore for the project, which is projected for completion in Kamrup and Kamrup Metropolitan districts by September 2028.

## 129.BRAHMOS IS A MESSAGE OF INDIA'S MILITARY STRENGTH: RAJNATH:

- BrahMos is not just a weapon but a "message" of India's military strength, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said at the inauguration of the largest integration and testing facility of the supersonic cruise missile system.
- Singh said the facility is a concrete step towards making India an attractive defence product manufacturing hub.
- A huge market for selling arms and equipment awaits India and the government is moving ahead with the idea of making military equipment for the country as well as for exports, he said while virtually addressing the event from Delhi.
- The country's largest BrahMos integration and testing facility centre at the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor will strengthen India's efforts towards self-reliance in the defence sector.
- Citing a report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Rajnath Singh said that the report stated that the world military expenditure in 2024 has increased to \$2,718 billion.

## 130.NEW ULUBARI MARKET COMPLEX INAUGURATED:



- The Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) observed 'Guwahati Bashi Sewar Din' to commemorate the completion of three years of the elected body.

- The upgraded market aims to enhance urban infrastructure, promote hygienic conditions, and facilitate efficient commercial activity for vendors and residents alike.
- An MoU was signed with Axis Bank for the welfare of GMC employees.
- Under this initiative, employees will receive accidental death insurance coverage of Rs 1 crore, along with several other benefits.
- The existing accounts of GMC employees will be converted into salary accounts under Axis Bank.
- Sanction letters were distributed to three employees to formally initiate the implementation of this scheme.
- To promote the safety and dignity of sanitation workers, protective gear was distributed to five labourers of the Engineering division.
- Copies of the latest edition of the GMC Act, with all amendments over the last few years, were distributed among relevant stakeholders to ensure enhanced statutory awareness and compliance.

### 131.PADMANATH GOHAIN BARUA AWARD PRESENTED:

- The All Assam Ahom Sabha conferred the Padmanath Gohain Barua Award on eminent writer and researcher of Tai Ahom language and literature, Dr. Puspa Gogoi.
- The award was given in recognition of Dr. Gogoi's immense contribution to the community.
- Dr. Puspa Gogoi was honoured with a traditional phulam gamosa, seleng sador, a citation, and a cash award by the office bearers of the Sabha during the open session.

### 132.CAMBODIA HOSTS CHINA FOR THEIR LARGEST JOINT MILITARY DRILL :

- Cambodia's armed forces launched their latest – and largest – Golden Dragon joint military exercise with China, with land, sea, and air operations planned over the next two weeks.
- The initial exercise was held in 2016, marking deepening relations between Cambodia and China.
- During this period, Cambodia cancelled similar exercises with the United States.
- Cambodian officials have recently proposed reviving exercises with US forces.
- This follows several visits by high-ranking US military and civilian officials over the past year, aimed at increasing Washington's influence.

### 133.CABINET APPROVES RS 3,706 CR FOXCONN DISPLAY CHIP PLANT IN UP:



- The Union Cabinet approved a ₹3,706-crore semiconductor plant at Jewar in Uttar Pradesh, to be set up by the HCL-Foxconn joint venture.
- The plant will manufacture display driver chips for mobile phones, laptops, automobiles, and other devices.
- It will have the capacity to handle 20,000 wafers per month and produce 3.6 crore chips monthly, according to Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.
- This plant will be the sixth semiconductor plant approved by the Cabinet and represents advanced technology in chip manufacturing.
- Display driver chips produced at the plant will control the quality and format of content displayed on screens.
- Foxconn, the world's largest electronics manufacturer and a key supplier for Apple's iPhone, is part of this joint venture.
- The HCL-Foxconn JV semiconductor plant is expected to become operational in 2027.
- The project is estimated to create employment for 2,000 people.
- Currently, India's electronics manufacturing industry employs around 25 lakh people.

### 134.INDIA NOW RANKS AMONG TOP 6 NATIONS GLOBALLY IN 6G PATENT FILINGS:



- Over 111 research projects have been funded in India with a sanctioned amount of ₹300 crore to advance 6G technology.

- India now ranks among the top six countries globally in terms of 6G patent filings.
- Union Minister of State for Telecom stated that 6G will utilize TeraHertz frequency bands.
- This will enable data rates of up to 1 terabit per second, which is 100 times faster than 5G.

### 135.ISRO TO LAUNCH ITS 101ST SATELLITE ON SUNDAY: NARAYANAN:

- ISRO will launch its 101st satellite on May 18, its Chairman V. Narayanan asserted.
- He stated that the space agency's programmes are planned to ensure the safety and security of the country.
- India's 101st satellite – the Earth Observation Satellite **RISAT-18** – will be launched aboard the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C61)**.
- The PSLV bolsters India's surveillance and disaster management capabilities.
- He said ISRO's missions are driven by the country's requirements in diverse fields.
- ISRO is technologically capable of delivering on these national needs.

### 136.RATION CARDS NOW ACCEPTED FOR FREE ADMISSION IN ASSAM: DR. RANOJ PEGU:

- In a move aimed at **easing the admission process** for economically disadvantaged students, the government has **allowed ration cards as valid proof of income** for availing **free admission in government and provincialised educational institutions** across the state.
- This step is expected to **streamline documentation** and ensure that **no eligible student is excluded** due to the lack of formal income certification.
- The move has been **widely welcomed** as a **practical solution** to a long-standing issue faced by **BPL (Below Poverty Line) families**.
- Earlier in the year, the **Assam government increased the annual income eligibility cap** for the free admission scheme from **₹2 lakh to ₹4 lakh**, expanding its coverage.
- According to official data, in 2024, over **71%** of the **1.66 lakh students** who took admission in various colleges across the state **benefited from the scheme**.
- Out of the total **1,66,123 students**, **1,18,199** availed **free admission** under the **updated guidelines**.

### 137.AMUL TO SET UP DAIRY PROCESSING PLANT AT RANI:

- To give a fillip to dairy production, the State Cabinet today approved a proposal to lease out 20 bighas of land to Amul for setting up a state-of-the-art dairy processing plant at Rani on the outskirts of Guwahati.
- The unit will come up on the Institute of Farm Management campus at Rani.

- Amul will set up the processing unit with a capacity of 1 lakh litres per day at an estimated cost of Rs 75 crore, which may go up to Rs 150 crore.
- The plant will benefit around 20,000 dairy farmers and is part of an MoU signed during Advantage Assam 2.0.

### 138.SC BARS CENTRE FROM GRANTING RETROSPECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCES:

- The **Supreme Court** ruled that the **right to live in a pollution-free atmosphere** is part of the **fundamental right to life** under the Constitution.
- It **struck down** a **Central Government office memorandum** that permitted **retrospective (ex post facto) environmental clearances** for projects that had already violated environmental norms.
- A bench of **Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan** delivered the judgment in a case filed by **Vanashakti**, an environmental organisation.
- The Court issued **strong criticism** of the Centre's move, stating that it was trying to do **"something which is completely prohibited under the law."**
- The judgment emphasized that the **Union Government**, like individual citizens, has a **constitutional duty to protect the environment**.

### 139.ASSAM: FINANCE DEPARTMENT CLARIFIES HRA, CCA ELIGIBILITY FOR GOVT EMPLOYEES:

- The **Finance (Audit & Fund) Department of Assam** has issued a significant clarification regarding the **House Rent Allowance (HRA)** and **City Compensatory Allowance (CCA)** for government employees. This clarification comes in response to multiple queries from various departments about entitlement concerns for employees posted at one location but assigned duties elsewhere.
- Key points from the circular are:
- **Eligibility for HRA and CCA:** Employees will receive **HRA and CCA based on the rates applicable to their original place of substantive posting**, rather than the location where their services are temporarily attached.
- **Priority for Direct Postings:** The circular also urges all departments to prioritize **direct postings of officials** instead of frequently attaching them to subordinate offices, to minimize confusion and ensure entitlements are processed correctly and promptly.
- The Finance Department's goal is to reduce administrative complications and ensure that employees receive their rightful allowances based on their actual posting location.

### 140.BENGALI TRANSLATION OF TWO LITERARY WORKS OF MAMONI GOSWAMI RELEASED:



- The Bengali translation of two prominent literary works by Dr. Mamoni Raisom Goswami – *Mamore Dhora Tarowal* and *Datal Hatir Uiye Khowa Howdah* – were released at Guwahati.
- The translation was done by eminent Bengali poet and academician Ashok Kumar Sadhu.

## 141.ISRO'S 101ST MISSION ENDS IN FAILURE:

- ISRO failed to put its Earth observation satellite in orbit after its trusted PSLV rocket developed a fault minutes after launch from the spaceport.
- In ISRO's 101st mission from the spaceport, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C61) had a textbook lift-off at 5:59 am, only to experience an anomaly in the 12th minute of the flight.
- This was the third failure of the PSLV, ISRO's trusted warhorse rocket that launched the Chandrayaan-1 and Mars Orbiter Mission.
- The PSLV has had 63 launches so far.
- The previous failures were in 1993, the inaugural flight of the PSLV, and in 2017 when it did not succeed in putting in orbit a navigation satellite.

## 142.INDIA U-19 BOYS CLINCH SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE:



- The Indian Under-19 football team won the SAFF Championship 2025 title following a dramatic and fiercely contested final against Bangladesh at the Golden Jubilee Stadium in Yupia, Itanagar.
- The India U-19s showed nerves of steel to outlast Bangladesh 4-3 on penalties, after the match ended 1-1 in regulation time.

## 143.RUSSIA OUTLAWS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IN LATEST CRACKDOWN ON DISSENT:

- The Russian authorities on Monday outlawed Amnesty International as an “undesirable organisation,” a label that under a 2015 law makes involvement with such organisations a criminal offence.
- The decision by the Russian Prosecutor General's office, announced in an online statement, is the latest in the unrelenting crackdown on Kremlin critics, journalists and activists that intensified to unprecedented levels after Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022.
- The designation means the international human rights group must stop any work in Russia and it subjects those who cooperate with it or support it to prosecution.
- Russia's list of “undesirable organisations” currently covers 223 entities, including prominent independent news outlets and rights groups.
- Amnesty International was launched in 1961. The group documents and reports human rights violations across the globe and campaigns for release of those it deems unjustly imprisoned.
- It has released reports on Russia's war in Ukraine, accusing Moscow of crimes against humanity, and has spoken out against the Kremlin's crackdown on dissent that has swept up thousands of people in recent years.
- The Prosecutor General's office in their statement accused the group of running “Russophobic projects” and activities aimed at Russia's “political and economic isolation.”
- Amnesty International did not immediately comment on the move.

## 144.INDIA, MALDIVES SIGN 13 MOUS FOR PROJECTS UNDER INDIAN GRANT ASSISTANCE:



- India has signed 13 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Maldives to enhance ferry services in the island nation with a grant of MVR 100 million.
- The initiative aims to expand maritime connectivity and uplift community livelihoods in the Maldives.

- The MoUs are part of the Indian grant assistance scheme under the High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) Phase III.
- The signing ceremony took place at the Maldives' Ministry of Foreign Affairs, marking a significant milestone in the growing partnership between India and the Maldives.
- The 13 projects under this phase amount to a total grant of MVR 100 million (approximately Rs 55.28 crore).
- The projects primarily focus on improving ferry services, enhancing regional connectivity, and supporting local community development across the Maldives.

## 145.PRESUMPTION OF CONSTITUTIONALITY IN FAVOUR OF WAQF LAW, SAYS SC:

- The Supreme Court has **reserved interim orders** on three key issues after hearings in the **Waqf case**, reiterating the **presumption of constitutionality** in favor of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.
- A bench comprising **Chief Justice BR Gavai** and **Justice Augustine George Masih** heard arguments from both sides over **three consecutive days**.
- Senior advocates **Kapil Sibal, Rajeev Dhavan, Abhishek Singhvi**, and **Huzefa Ahmadi** represented petitioners challenging the Act, while **Solicitor General Tushar Mehta** defended the Centre.
- One major issue concerns the **power to denotify Waqf properties**, including those declared as Waqf by courts, by user, or by deed, under the new amendment.
- Petitioners also questioned the **composition of State Waqf Boards and the Central Waqf Council**, arguing that **only Muslims (except ex-officio members)** should be allowed to operate them.
- The third contested provision allows a **Collector to declare a Waqf property as non-Waqf** if an inquiry shows it is government land.
- The Centre defended the amendments, asserting that **Waqf is a secular concept and not an essential part of Islam**, thus shielding the Act from being stayed.
- The Court has not yet issued interim orders but will decide based on the submissions and the constitutionality presumption.

## 146.EC ALLOWS SETTING UP OF BOOTHS AT 100 MTRS FROM POLL STATIONS:

- Seeking to rationalise poll day management, the Election Commission (EC) decided to allow parties and candidates to set up booths to distribute unofficial voter identification slips at 100 metres from the polling station entrance.
- Till now, the limit for such booths was 200 metres from the "polling location".
- In another move aimed at helping electors, the EC decided to set up mobile phone deposit counters outside polling stations.
- The EC stated that, as part of improving election day facilitation, it rationalised the permissible norms for

canvassing in line with electoral laws to 100 metres from the entrance of the polling station.

- However, electioneering will not be allowed within a 100-metre radius around the polling station on the day of polling.
- Therefore, booths set up by candidates on poll day for issuing unofficial identity slips to electors, in case they are not carrying their official Voter Information Slips (VIS) issued by the commission, can now be set up just beyond 100 metres of any polling station.



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