

MAY 2025 SNIPPETS

FOR KAS 2024

NAMMAKPSC ACADEMY

www.nammaKPSC.com



Contact:

Hebbal: No 18, 2nd floor, near Hebbal police station, Bellary Main Road, Bangalore.

Vijayanagar: NO-211, 5th Main, Hampinagar, Vijayanagar, Bangalore.

Chandralayout: 38, 3rd Cross, 60 Feet Main Road, Bengaluru.

Ph: 9632757615/9886151564/080-42103963

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KARNATAKA ISSUES

- Since its launch, over 1,000 people have downloaded the 'Sanchari Cauvery' mobile application, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has announced, highlighting the positive response to the program and reaffirming its commitment to providing BIS-certified pure water to Bengaluru residents; additionally, to enhance transparency and distinguishability, BWSSB plans to brand its own 60 tankers as well as 100 private tankers registered with the board in the near future.
- The Africa India Economic Foundation (AIEF) has proposed establishing a Government Tool & Training Centre (GTTC) in Namibia, partnering with Karnataka's GTTC as the knowledge and technology provider. During a recent meeting with Karnataka's Minister for Medical Education and Skill Development, Sharan Prakash Patil, the AIEF highlighted GTTC's potential to serve as a model for Africa's industrial training needs. GTTC, a state-run institution with over five decades of experience, operates more than 20 centres across Karnataka, training thousands in precision tools, mechatronics, and robotics, and boasts a strong alumni network of over five lakh skilled professionals. Its curriculum aligns with industry demands and maintains deep industry linkages, making its operational expertise adaptable to African contexts. Created to foster strategic knowledge, technology, trade, and investment ties between India and 54 African nations, the AIEF's efforts are exemplified by India's long-term educational collaborations, such as the establishment of an IIT offshore campus in Zanzibar in 2023. Namibia's rich natural resources, including uranium, diamonds, gold, and rare earth minerals, further underscore its potential as a valuable partner in this initiative.
- Standing Committee of the State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) approved a proposal to establish Karnataka's first marine wildlife sanctuary in Apsarakonda, Uttara Kannada district, encompassing rocky outcrops over 7.5 km from Manki to Kasarakoda, along with 835.02 hectares of adjoining forests and 5,124.302 hectares of the Arabian Sea, with Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre emphasizing that the sanctuary involves no private lands and will not impact local livelihoods but will enhance conservation efforts for whales, sharks, dolphins, and other marine species; the proposal will be further discussed before the board and possibly submitted to the cabinet, while also approving water supply projects inside Nagarahole Tiger Reserve for seven villages, and infrastructure development for adivasi hamlets in the Malai Mahadeshwara Wildlife division.
- The Karnataka government has officially notified that the Greater Bengaluru Area (GBA) will be limited to the existing Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) jurisdiction, covering 709 sq km. This was confirmed in a notification issued by the Urban Development Department (UDD), coinciding with the enactment of the Greater Bengaluru Governance (GBG) Act, 2024. Although the Act allows for expansion up to 1,000 sq km, the current decision rules out the inclusion of nearby panchayats. The GBG Act introduces a new administrative framework, allowing the creation of up to seven municipal corporations, with an initial plan for three. The Act also mandates the formation of the Greater Bengaluru Authority, which will hold financial and planning powers, and must be established within 120 days. Until then, governance will continue under the BBMP Act, 2020, with current officials maintaining temporary powers.
- Thirteen years after the Supreme Court of India ordered immediate rehabilitation and reclamation (R&R) of mining-affected regions in Ballari, Vijayanagara, Chitradurga, and Tumakuru in Karnataka, little progress has been made. The 2012 directive followed extensive environmental damage due to illegal mining, with the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) setting guidelines that included pollution control, afforestation, soil conservation, and infrastructure development. However, a 2025 CEC report reveals that many Category B (partly illegal) mines have not completed R&R despite recovering guarantee money from 45 out of 64 leaseholders, while 19 leaseholders haven't paid at all. Escalated costs have rendered the guarantees inadequate, prompting the CEC to recommend banning ore sales from non-compliant leases and recovering R&R costs through government-controlled ore sales. Additionally, Category A (legal) mines that haven't resumed operations have also failed to start R&R, and post-auction Category C (illegal) mines continue operations without any rehabilitation. Despite legal attempts by mining companies to sell low- and sub-grade ore, the CEC opposes sales without executing R&R or recovering its cost.

- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has directed the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) to implement a new regulatory framework for brick kilns within one month to tackle pollution and unregulated soil mining. Brick kilns, especially in Karnataka where they are predominantly small-scale and manually operated, are major contributors to air pollution due to the use of traditional fuels like firewood and agricultural residue. The CPCB guidelines require technological upgrades, including the mandatory adoption of zigzag or vertical shaft kiln technologies, which enhance combustion efficiency and reduce fuel use, and promote the use of piped natural gas (PNG). Although the initial compliance deadline is February 2025, recent amendments by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) have extended the deadline for chimneys. Brick kilns must now publicly display critical operational data such as kiln layout, soil mining locations, annual soil use, groundwater permissions, and emission monitoring records. Karnataka has an estimated 6,000–10,000 kilns, primarily located in Kolar, Chikkaballapur, and Bengaluru Rural, with many lacking environmental oversight. KSPCB is required to submit a compliance report within 30 days, as CPCB aims to enhance environmental accountability through this directive.
- A sculptural inscription found near Chandrashekara temple at Guttala in Haveri district records the tragic death of 6,307 people due to a severe drought, marking it as the earliest epigraphic evidence of a humanitarian disaster caused by a natural calamity in India. Dated to Saka 1461, Vikari, Bhadrpada su.5 (August 18, 1539 CE), the inscription is inscribed in Kannada script and language, and it solemnly commemorates the catastrophe, highlighting the large-scale human loss caused by drought. It narrates that the bodies of the deceased were buried by Marulaih Odeya, son of Nanideva Odeya of Guttala, who carried them in baskets for the merit of Timmarasa Svami, the territorial ruler, after paying homage to Lord Basaveshwara, and features a sculpture depicting a figure—likely Marulaih Odeya—carrying a basket of bodies on his head. This rare inscription, described as a landmark by epigraphist K. Munirathnam Reddy of the Archaeological Survey of India, offers invaluable insights into the socio-economic conditions of the period and provides a crucial historical record of natural calamities' human toll, which are often absent in literary sources. Such inscriptions help scholars understand how communities coped with disasters, trace climatic patterns, and study administrative or demographic responses, thereby enriching India's epigraphic and historical heritage. The ASI's epigraphy branch has been actively discovering and copying over 1,000 inscriptions across India, including deep in jungles, with more than 100 inscriptions uncovered in 2024-25 alone, emphasizing the vital role of epigraphy in reconstructing India's history.
- Kannada writer, lawyer, and activist Banu Mushtaq and translator Deepa Bhashti scripted history by winning the International Booker Prize for “Heart Lamp”, the first Kannada title and the first-ever collection of short stories to win the GBP 50,000 prize.
- Dengue control: Health Dept., BBMP launch ‘Check, clean and cover’ campaign
- Renowned cricketer Anil Kumble will soon become the brand ambassador of the Forest Department
- A case of African Swine Flu has been detected at a pig farming centre at Gorabala in Ilkal taluk of the district. After the diagnosis was confirmed, area within a one-km radius of the centre was declared 'containment zone'. African swine fever virus (ASFV) is a large, double-stranded DNA virus in the Asfarviridae family. It is the causative agent of African swine fever (ASF). The virus causes a hemorrhagic fever with high mortality rates in domestic pigs; some isolates can cause death of animals as quickly as a week after infection.
- Bengaluru has cemented its status as one of the top 12 global tech powerhouses, alongside cities like Beijing, Boston, London, New York, and San Francisco, due to its massive and competitive tech talent pool exceeding one million, making it the largest in the Asia-Pacific region and on par with major US clusters in AI expertise. Notably, Bengaluru houses India's highest concentration of AI professionals, with AI development talent primarily concentrated in the US and India, while demand surges in Poland, Germany, and the US. Despite its impressive talent base, software engineers in Bengaluru earn an average annual salary of \$40,967—below \$100,000—making it the most affordable among these markets, where San Francisco leads with \$184,593. The city also demonstrates rapid demographic growth, with 75.5% of its population in the working-age bracket and a 2.4% increase since 2019, positioning it among the fastest-growing globally. However, its educational attainment rate remains modest at 14.2%, well below countries

like Ireland, Switzerland, and Singapore, which boast rates above 45%. Overall, Bengaluru's prominence as a global tech hub is underscored by its extensive talent pool, strategic importance in AI, and rapid demographic growth, placing it among the world's leading markets in the dynamic landscape of global technology talent.

- Karnataka approved 69 projects worth Rs 17,182.77 crore across two meetings. 65th SHLCC meeting approved 6 proposals totaling Rs 15,441.17 crore, creating 5,277 jobs.
- Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTCL) has announced the launch of a new package tour 'Divya Darshana', to promote spiritual tourism within the city.
- The Karnataka government has promulgated the Karnataka Platform Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Ordinance, 2025, aiming to safeguard the rights of platform-based gig workers by establishing a Welfare Board and a dedicated welfare fund. Aggregators are required to contribute 1% to 5% of each transaction made to gig workers into this fund. The Karnataka Platform Based Gig Workers Welfare Board, headquartered in Bengaluru, will implement social security, occupational safety, and transparency-related benefits for gig workers. A payment and welfare fee verification system will be created for transparency in deductions and disbursements. Alongside this, two more ordinances were introduced: one amending the Karnataka Compulsory Service by Medical Graduates Ordinance, mandating a service affidavit for higher studies NOC, and another amending the Karnataka Civil Service Ordinance, ensuring transparent counselling-based transfers for medical officers.
- The Gorkha Battalion of the Amphibious Brigade, under the Bison Division, conducted a multi-agency humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercise in Bengaluru on Friday, focusing on urban flooding preparedness during the monsoon season. The exercise involved collaboration with the 10th Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), State Emergency Services, and local civil authorities. Conducted at two strategic locations, the drills aimed to simulate realistic emergency scenarios and assess the effectiveness of the disaster response ecosystem
- A female sloth bear named Bindhu, who had a GPS collar attached, became the first documented sloth bear to embark on a long-distance journey, known as a long-distance dispersal. Bindhu travelled 223 km from Karnataka to her new home in Andhra Pradesh, the Penukonda Reserve Forest. It took 12 days for Bindhu to undertake this migration and she mostly travelled at night.

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POLITY

- Former Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar is UPSC Chairman
- The Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) has introduced a new system that automatically converts financial cybercrime complaints with a fraud value above ₹10 lakh, and registered on the 1930 helpline or cybercrime.gov.in portal, into first information reports (FIRs). The e-Zero FIR initiative has been launched on a pilot basis first in Delhi
- Seventeen MPs, including Bhartruhari Mahtab and Ravi Kishan, and two Parliamentary Standing Committees, have been selected for the Sansad Ratna Award 2025. The awards, instituted by the Prime Point Foundation, are given to MPs for their contribution to Parliament. The awardees were selected by the Jury Committee, chaired by Hansraj Ahir, Chairman of the National Commission for Backwards Classes. Mr. Mahtab, Supriya Sule (NCP-SP), N.K. Premachandran (RSP) and Shrirang Appa Barne (Shiv Sena) will receive the awards for "outstanding and consistent contribution to parliamentary democracy"
- The position of Deputy Speaker in the Lok Sabha, mandated under Article 93 of the Indian Constitution, remains vacant since June 2019 despite the beginning of Prime Minister Modi's third term, raising concerns about adherence to constitutional and parliamentary norms. Article 178 similarly mandates the election of a Deputy Speaker in State Legislative Assemblies, yet eight states are currently without one. Jharkhand holds the record for the longest vacancy, having last appointed a Deputy Speaker in March 2005. Other states such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir also reflect long-standing lapses. The Deputy Speaker plays a critical role

by presiding over the House in the Speaker's absence, handling no-confidence motions, and ensuring procedural neutrality. The opposition, especially the I.N.D.I.A bloc, has criticized the continued delay, interpreting it as a deliberate move to bypass power-sharing norms, notably raising the issue during the Budget Session and symbolically fielding Congress MP Kodikkunnil Suresh for the Speaker's post.

- The Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) has launched the e-Zero FIR initiative, a pilot program in Delhi designed to automatically convert financial cybercrime complaints involving fraud above ₹10 lakh into First Information Reports (FIRs) when reported through the 1930 helpline or the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP), aiming to expedite investigations into large-scale cyber frauds and address delays faced by victims. This system, aligned with provisions of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), involves the official notification of the e-Crime Police Station in Delhi for e-FIR registration and case transfer, enabling complaints to trigger a Zero FIR at the Delhi e-Crime Police Station, which is then immediately routed to the relevant territorial cybercrime police station based on the complainant's location. Victims are required to visit the police station within three days to convert the Zero FIR into a regular FIR. The process integrates platforms such as NCRP, Delhi Police's e-FIR system, and the NCRB's CCTNS, facilitating real-time processing and nationwide interoperability. A Zero FIR allows registration at any police station regardless of where the crime occurred, ensuring jurisdictional issues do not hinder investigation and providing legal urgency for prompt action, a measure introduced following the Justice Verma Committee's recommendations post the 2012 Nirbhaya case to promote victim-centric policing and swift redressal.
- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, recently launched the revamped Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Portal in New Delhi to enhance user experience and address technological limitations of the original portal developed in 2013. Serving over 5 million OCI cardholders globally and processing approximately 2,000 applications daily through 180+ Indian missions and 12 FRROs, the upgraded portal introduces several user-friendly features including user account creation, auto-fill forms, dashboards, online payments, document categorization, and a built-in image cropping tool. Technical improvements include modernized infrastructure with multiple web servers and RedHat 9 OS, updated frameworks (JDK, Struts 2.5.30, Bootstrap 5.3.0), enhanced security with SSL/TLS encryption, MFA, and regular security audits. It also offers process automation, centralized data management, and a responsive design for all device types. The OCI scheme itself was introduced in 2005 via an amendment to the Citizenship Act of 1955, offering eligibility to persons of Indian origin post-26th January 1950, while excluding individuals associated with Pakistan or Bangladesh through lineage or citizenship.
- A recent meeting of the NITI Aayog Governing Council was held in New Delhi, chaired by the Prime Minister of India, with the theme "Viksit Rajya for Viksit Bharat@2047". Established in January 2015 through a Union Cabinet resolution, NITI Aayog replaced the Planning Commission and functions as the government's premier policy think tank. It is neither a constitutional nor a statutory body, created purely by executive action. The body's twin mandates include overseeing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across India and promoting both competitive and cooperative federalism. Chaired by the Prime Minister, the Governing Council comprises all Chief Ministers, Union Ministers, Lieutenant Governors, and other nominated members. It also forms Regional Councils to address specific regional concerns. The CEO of NITI Aayog, appointed by the Prime Minister, holds the rank of Secretary to the Government of India. NITI Aayog focuses on inclusive development, integrating national security with economic policy, fostering innovation, and enhancing policy coordination across sectors.
- The Supreme Court Collegium recommended for the elevation of Karnataka High Court Chief Justice N V Anjaria, Gauhati High Court Chief Justice Vijay Bishnoi and Bombay High Court judge Justice A S Chandurkar as judges of the top court.

SCHEME

- The Government of India recently expanded the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS), which was launched in 2022 to provide credit guarantees to loans extended by Scheduled Commercial Banks, NBFCs, and SEBI-registered AIFs to eligible startups, as defined in DPIIT notifications. The scheme is implemented by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) and offers guarantees on various debt instruments such as venture debt, working capital, subordinated debt, debentures, and convertible debt, promoting lending to startups. Notably, the guarantee cover is transaction-based, offering individual borrower guarantees, and umbrella-based, covering Venture Debt Funds. The recent enhancements increased the maximum guarantee limit from ₹10 crore to ₹20 crore per borrower, with guarantee coverage now at 85% for loans up to ₹10 crore and 75% for loans above ₹10 crore. Additionally, the Annual Guarantee Fee for startups in 27 Champion Sectors was reduced from 2% to 1% per annum, facilitating easier access to credit for startups across these sectors.
- Bihar secured first position in the country for successfully implementing the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme in the financial year 2024-25, said the industries minister recently.
- Recently, the 38th Meeting of the Central Apprenticeship Council (CAC), chaired by the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), recommended a 36% increase in stipends under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) and the National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS). NAPS, launched on August 19, 2016, by the Government of India, aims to promote apprenticeship training nationwide by providing financial support to establishments undertaking such programs, encouraging industries to enroll apprentices through partial stipend support, especially targeting small enterprises, MSMEs, and underserved areas like aspirational districts and the North-East. The scheme seeks to develop skilled manpower aligned with industry needs, offering candidates opportunities for up-skilling post short-term training, and provides NAPS certificates that enhance employability. Conversely, the National Apprenticeship Training Scheme is a flagship initiative under the Apprentices Act, 1961, amended in 1973, designed to provide practical, on-the-job training in various trades to graduate, diploma, and vocational certificate holders for durations ranging from 6 months to a year. During training, apprentices receive stipends, with 50% reimbursed to employers, and upon completion, are issued Certificates of Proficiency, which serve as recognized employment experience across India; however, employment post-training is not guaranteed.
- With single-use plastic products facing regulatory curbs, those made of an eco-friendly material viz. Poly Lactic Acid (PLA), produced from sugarcane, is finding acceptance as an alternative globally. With a bit of policy support in India, PLA can replace synthetic polymer, the input for single-use plastic. Balrampur Chini Mills Ltd. (BCML), one of India's biggest sugar makers, has taken the lead to tap this opportunity and is popularising PLA under the brand Balrampur Bioyug which will be supplied to small-scale units to make eco-friendly, single-use products.. BCML is setting up a PLA plant with an investment of ₹2,850 crore at its sugar factory in Kumbhi, Uttar Pradesh. This plant would be India's first industrial-scale biopolymer plant and 100% powered by renewable energy

SOCIAL ISSUES

- Telangana Chief Minister has called for a national-level debate on Operation Kagar, a major counterinsurgency operation launched by the Indian government in 2024 with the goal of dismantling the Maoist insurgency, particularly in the "Red Corridor," by March 2026. This operation involves the deployment of approximately 1 lakh paramilitary troops and state police, equipped with advanced technology like drones, AI, and satellite imagery for intelligence gathering. Meaning 'Final Mission', Operation Kagar follows a four-part strategy: establishing forward operating bases in Maoist territory, building fortified police stations in reclaimed areas, utilizing high-tech monitoring for intelligence, and promoting a "generous surrender policy."

- The Raika tribe, also known as Rabaris, is an indigenous pastoralist community primarily inhabiting the arid and semi-arid regions of Rajasthan, particularly around Kumbhalgarh in the Rajsamand district. They have a unique socio-cultural relationship with camels, which are integral to their identity and livelihood. Renowned as the principal breeders of Rajasthan's indigenous camel breeds, especially the Marwari camel celebrated for its strength, endurance, and desert adaptability, the Raikas consider camel herding more than just a profession—it is a vital part of their cultural heritage, reflected in their rituals, oral traditions, and seasonal migrations. They possess traditional knowledge of pasture cycles, animal health, and biodiversity, which has helped sustain the fragile ecology of Rajasthan's desert landscapes. Their age-old migratory grazing routes enable camels to feed on medicinal desert shrubs, thereby enhancing both the health of the animals and maintaining ecological balance in the region.
- The NHRC has sought an Action Taken Report from Odisha's Chief Secretary regarding the dire living conditions and lack of basic amenities faced by over 10,000 Dongria Kondh families, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) inhabiting the Niyamgiri hills of Odisha. The Dongria Kondh, with a rich cultural heritage rooted in animist beliefs, regard the hills and forests as sacred, tracing their ancestry to the mythical Niyam Raja. Their society is organized into clans and villages without a central religious or political leader, and they speak distinct languages, kuyi and kuvi. Dependent on forest resources and traditional horticulture, their livelihood is threatened by environmental and developmental challenges.

ECONOMY

- Tamil Nadu launches Rs 30,000 crore Electronics Scheme to attract global and Indian electronics firms. The scheme aims to generate 60,000 jobs by incentivizing electronics manufacturing investments. Tamil Nadu is the first Indian state to introduce a dedicated electronics manufacturing scheme. The scheme targets sub-segments like display assemblies, camera modules, lithium-ion cells, and more. It mirrors the central government's incentives to reduce reliance on imports, especially from China. Major companies like Foxconn and Tata Electronics are expanding smartphone component manufacturing in Tamil Nadu. Corning opens its first India unit
- Parameswaran Iyer, Executive Director at the World Bank, has been temporarily entrusted with the responsibility of being India's nominee Director on the Board of International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), fell to 3.16% in April 2025, the lowest level in 69 months since July 2019. This marks the sixth straight month of decline, down from 3.34% in March 2025, and significantly lower than the peak of 6.21% in October 2024, the highest in the preceding 14 months. The primary factor behind this easing of inflation is a sharp decline in food prices, particularly in vegetables and pulses. CPI inflation, which tracks changes in retail prices of a fixed basket of goods and services consumed by households, reflects the cost of living, purchasing power, and overall price movement in the economy. Calculated by the National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), CPI data is published monthly for rural, urban, combined, and all-India sectors. The index is not only a key macroeconomic indicator but is also vital for monetary policy decisions, used by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the government for inflation targeting, financial planning, and adjusting wages, pensions, and interest rates.
- Centralised Information Management System (CIMS) is a comprehensive digital platform developed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to centralize and modernize data collection, storage, analysis, and reporting from regulated financial entities (REs). Its primary purpose is to streamline reporting processes—especially for digital lending apps (DLAs)—and improve the efficiency of regulatory data management. CIMS uses state-of-the-art big data technologies for aggregation, mining, and advanced statistical analysis, integrating data from various sectors including financial, corporate, and external markets. The cloud-based system allows secure, electronic submissions, significantly enhancing the RBI's oversight capabilities and decision-making processes. For REs, it simplifies reporting, ensures better

compliance, and strengthens coordination with the RBI. It is now mandatory for all REs to report DLA-related information via the CIMS portal.

- US President Donald Trump administration's proposed 5% tax on outward remittances may result in \$12-18 billion shortfall in dollar inflows to India annually, leading to a depreciation in the value of rupee
- SEBI has issued comprehensive guidelines on internal audit mechanisms for Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) like stock exchanges, clearing corporations, and depositories, aiming to strengthen governance, efficiency, transparency, and compliance. Internal audits must be conducted at least once annually, covering three key verticals: critical operations, regulatory compliance and risk management, and business development. Auditors must be from independent firms, and their appointment requires approval from both the Audit Committee and the Governing Board. Internal auditors will report solely to the Audit Committee, with audit scope approved by the same. Observations must be sent to relevant HoDs for comments and included in final reports regardless of their closure. Internal auditors must brief the Audit Committee biannually without management present. The Audit Committee handles related party transactions, financial scrutiny, and risk evaluations, and must exclude executive directors like the MD. While KMPs and auditors can attend meetings for discussion, they cannot vote. Additionally, SEBI has removed the cooling-off period for Public Interest Directors moving between MIIs, with all changes effective 90 days post-circular issuance.
- India's data centre industry is experiencing rapid expansion, having attracted \$14.7 billion in investments since 2020 and expecting an additional \$20–25 billion in the next 5–6 years, according to a 2025 Colliers report. The current capacity of 1,263 MW is projected to surpass 4,500 MW by 2030, marking a more than fourfold increase over recent years. The real estate footprint has grown threefold, with large data centres (above 50 MW) expected to dominate by 2030. Growth is fueled by rising demand for cloud, AI, IoT services, better internet penetration, global connectivity, and supportive policies. Major markets like Mumbai (41%) and Chennai (23%) lead the share, while tier-II cities are emerging as strong contenders. The industry comprises captive and outsourced segments (like colocation and hosting), supported by essential infrastructure such as servers, storage, and enterprise networking. India, now the world's 13th largest data centre market, saw \$7.44 billion in revenue in 2023 and plans to add 45 new data centres by 2025. Government efforts, including Data Centre Economic Zones and DCFUs, aim to further drive development through favourable policies and infrastructure support.

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ENVIRONMENT

- Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan recently unveiled two new genome-edited rice varieties, 'DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala)' and 'Pusa DST Rice 1', developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), which are designed to combat climate change impacts and increase rice yields by up to 30% through superior drought tolerance and high nitrogen-use efficiency, with DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) maturing significantly earlier than its parent, offering potential for earlier harvests and multiple cropping cycles while saving irrigation, and both varieties are recommended for cultivation in several major rice-growing states, with potential for an additional 4.5 million tonnes of paddy production across 5 million hectares, while the minister also urged ICAR to develop improved pulse and oilseed varieties to reduce import dependence, and the new rice varieties will be made available to farmers through public and private institutions and integrated into the seed chain, marking a historic day for Indian agriculture and highlighting the importance of better seed varieties for climate change adaptation, building on previous genome-edited rice developments in countries like China and Japan, though many have remained in research.
- The Green Hydrogen Certification Scheme of India (GHCI), launched by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) under the National Green Hydrogen Mission, aims to solidify India's position as a global leader in green hydrogen production and export by establishing a transparent and credible certification framework. This scheme defines "green" hydrogen as having non-biogenic greenhouse gas emissions

below 2 kg of CO₂ equivalent per kg of hydrogen, averaged over 12 months, measured across defined production stages. The GHCI outlines a comprehensive certification process for producers, requiring the use of renewable energy and verification by accredited agencies to ensure emissions remain within the threshold. The framework includes clear definitions, stakeholder roles, eligible production pathways (electrolysis and biomass conversion), and emissions quantification methods, with producers required to maintain detailed records for at least five years under a standardized Monitoring, Reporting, Verification (MRV) framework. The scheme offers four certificate types – Concept, Facility-Level, Provisional, and Final – with Final certificates being mandatory for facilities receiving government incentives or selling hydrogen domestically. Aligning with international standards like ISO 19870:2023, the GHCI enhances global comparability and investor confidence, and also allows producers to access carbon credits under the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) with additional compliance. Certificates, issued in multiples of 100 kg of hydrogen with detailed emission intensity data, incur a nominal fee only for the final certificate. To enforce compliance, the MNRE can withdraw certificates if verified emissions exceed the threshold or certification is not completed on time, with repeat non-compliance potentially leading to penalties and ineligibility for future certifications.

- A new mosquito species, provisionally named the "Pwani molecular form", has been discovered in the coastal regions of Tanzania and Kenya.
- Scientists have created the first-ever pangenome of Asian rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) by compiling genetic data from 144 varieties of both wild and cultivated rice strains.
- Indian Grey Wolves, vital apex predators and ecological regulators of grasslands, are experiencing a rapid population decline primarily due to increasing threats from feral (free-ranging) dogs. The Indian Grey Wolf, a subspecies of the Grey Wolf found across the Indian subcontinent and Southwest Asia, prefers habitats such as scrublands, semi-arid grasslands, and pastoral agro-ecosystems. Typically nocturnal, they hunt in small packs and are less vocal than other wolf subspecies. Morphologically, they are intermediate in size between Tibetan and Arabian wolves but lack a thick winter coat, an adaptation to warmer climates. Their distribution ranges from Israel in the west to the Indian subcontinent in the east. Legally, the Indian Grey Wolf is protected under the IUCN Red List as Least Concern, but is considered locally endangered in India due to steep population declines; it is also listed under CITES Appendix I and the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, in Schedule I, granting it the highest level of legal protection. Despite these protections, authorities in Maharashtra, under the Forest Rules of 2014, permit the removal or elimination of trespassing dogs if they threaten wildlife, but officials are often reluctant to cull dogs due to animal rights concerns, favoring vaccination efforts which are logistically challenging. This complex human-animal-domestic dog interface underscores rising zoonotic threats, such as canine distemper, and issues of genetic dilution through hybridization. For instance, in the Kadbanwadi grassland of Maharashtra, covering over 2,000 hectares and home to species like the Bengal fox, striped hyena, Brahminy kite, and Indian grey wolf, traditional pastoral communities have maintained a symbiotic relationship with wolves for generations, highlighting the ecological and cultural significance of these predators amidst ongoing conservation challenges.
- Vizhinjam International Seaport, located in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, is India's first deep-water container transshipment port developed under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, with Adani Ports as the operator and significant investment from the Kerala Government. Inaugurated recently by the Prime Minister, it is India's first semi-automated and dedicated transshipment port, built at a cost of ₹8,867 crore, and features advanced technologies such as AI-powered Vessel Traffic Management and fully automated cranes. Strategically positioned just 10 nautical miles from key international shipping lanes, it can handle Ultra Large Container Vessels (ULCVs), aiming to reduce India's reliance on foreign ports for transshipment. Historically significant since the Chola-Pandya era, Vizhinjam is now projected to become a global maritime hub, already handling over 6 lakh TEUs and notable vessels like MSC Anna and MSC Claude Girardet. The port is integrated into major global shipping routes and has future plans for SEZs, green fuel hubs, and shipbuilding facilities. Despite challenges such as infrastructure gaps and Union-State coordination issues, Vizhinjam is poised to catalyze a port-led economic boom with multi-modal connectivity, industrial zones, and skill development programs including India's first all-women automated crane crew.

- A bench of Chief Justice of India B R Gavai and Justices Augustine George Masih and K Vinod Chandran directed states and Union Territories to hand over the possession of lands, which are recorded as 'forest land' and which are in possession of the revenue department, to the forest department.
- The Chhattisgarh High Court is actively monitoring development initiatives at Madku Dweep, a site of significant local importance. Located on the banks of the Shivrath River in Bilaspur district, Madku Island spans approximately 24 hectares and is renowned for its historical and archaeological significance. The island, named for its frog-like shape, is also called Kedar Tirth and Harihar Kshetra Kedar Dweep. Archaeological excavations have uncovered prehistoric stone tools, epigraphs, coins, and stone inscriptions dating back to the 3rd century BC, written in Brahmi and Shankha scripts. The island houses several ancient idols of Lord Shiva, Ganesha, Shiv-Parvati, Nandi, and other deities, with 19 temples excavated—eighteen facing east and one facing west—exhibiting architectural styles similar to the Kalchuris. Additionally, Madku Dweep hosts the annual Masihi Mela, a prominent Christian fair held every February since 1909, attracting visitors from across Chhattisgarh and beyond.
- A study conducted by scientists and experts on the offshore breakwater system utilizing geotube technology along the Poonthura coastal stretch in Kerala revealed significant and remarkable transformations in the coastal landscape behind the offshore breakwater. Geotubes are large, permeable fabric tubes filled with dredged or hydraulically filled materials, constructed from durable, high-strength polypropylene woven geotextile that allows water to escape while retaining solid particles, making them effective for dewatering and erosion control. These tubes serve as artificial barriers, commonly known as breakwater tubes, creating a synthetic shield against waves and tidal action, thereby reducing shoreline erosion and protecting beaches, dunes, and coastal infrastructure. Installed in various sizes and shapes to suit specific site conditions, geotubes are versatile and adaptable solutions for coastal defense, seawalls, and shoreline stabilization, effectively limiting wave impact and helping to retain sand and shorelines in diverse environments such as waterfronts, contaminated sites, and inland waterways.
- The Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve, notified on May 7, 2025, in the Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh, has been declared India's largest conservation reserve, covering an area of 1,585 sq km. Established under Section 36A(1) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, it is the fifth such reserve in the state. Geographically, it is bordered by the Union Territory of Ladakh to the north, Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary to the east, Kabjima Nala to the south, and Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary to the west, with the confluence of the Unam River and Charap Nala lying within its extent. Ecologically, the reserve is a critical habitat for the elusive snow leopard, often called the "ghost of the mountains," and serves as a key wildlife corridor between Kibber and Chandratal sanctuaries, facilitating species movement and genetic diversity. Located at an altitude of 3,000–5,000 metres, the region also supports other rare fauna such as the Tibetan wolf, Himalayan ibex, Bharal (blue sheep), Tibetan argali, and kiang (Tibetan wild ass), along with notable bird species like the Tibetan raven, rose finch, and yellow-billed chough. The area is also a significant catchment for the Charap Nala, maintaining ecological and hydrological balance. The declaration of the reserve followed a consultative process involving local gram panchayats and scientific surveys. Its management is overseen by a Conservation Reserve Management Committee that includes local representatives, and it promotes eco-tourism, wildlife photography, and trekking to boost community livelihoods.
- The Shirui Lily festival has resumed in Manipur's Ukhrul district after a two-year pause due to the Meitei-Kuki conflict. The festival, which celebrates the blooming of the state's flower, faced controversy when media organizations from the Meitei-dominated valley were allegedly stopped by the army from attending the event. The journalists were asked to remove "Manipur State Transport" signage from their bus, sparking protests and condemnation from journalists' unions. Despite heightened security, participation in the festival was low, with Kukis boycotting the event and only a few Meitei officials attending. The festival showcases Manipur's cultural richness, particularly the heritage of the Tangkhul Naga tribe.
- The population of Asiatic lions in Gujarat has grown significantly, increasing by 32% over five years from 674 in 2020 to 891 in 2025, spreading across 11 districts in Saurashtra from their historical core in Gir Forest. This includes 394 lions in the source population (Gir and Pania) and 497 in satellite populations that have expanded into new areas like Barda and Jetpur, and existing zones such as Girnar and Bhavnagar. Amreli, Gir-Somnath, and Junagadh are the top three districts by lion count. Notably, the adult female

population rose from 260 to 330, reflecting healthy breeding. Their habitat has expanded from 6,600 sq km in the 1990s to 35,000 sq km in 2025. Government-backed Project Lion, endorsed by PM Modi, has driven successful conservation efforts, though all lions remain within Gujarat, raising concerns about geographic concentration. Despite a Supreme Court order, no lions have yet been translocated to a second habitat like Kuno-Palpur, which now hosts African cheetahs instead.

- Rajasthan has taken steps to classify community-protected 'Oran' lands as forests following a Supreme Court directive, aiming to ensure better legal protection and ecological conservation. Orans are traditional sacred groves dedicated to deities by rural communities and play a vital role in both biodiversity and livelihoods. Spread across roughly 6 lakh hectares, Rajasthan hosts around 25,000 Orans, which are used for livestock grazing, forest product collection, and water filtration. These lands contain vital water bodies such as ponds, wells, and streams, particularly valuable in arid regions like the Thar Desert. Additionally, Orans support critical biodiversity, including the habitat of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard, the state bird of Rajasthan. Despite their significance, they were previously only recognized as community land under the 2023 Forest Policy. However, the Supreme Court's December 2024 ruling mandates their classification as forests under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, to prevent further encroachment and degradation.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has introduced the Bharat Forecasting System (BFS), a pioneering weather model with a six-kilometer spatial resolution—the highest globally—enabling village-level weather forecasts in India. Developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and validated over the past two years, BFS surpasses the previous 12 km resolution system, allowing precise predictions for areas as small as 36 sq km. This advancement is expected to significantly improve extreme weather forecasts, such as heavy rainfall and cyclones, with a 30% enhancement in extreme rainfall prediction accuracy and a 64% increase in core zone forecasting. The system will be operational from this monsoon season, marking a major leap in India's weather forecasting capabilities and positioning it ahead of comparable models used by European, British, and US meteorological agencies.
- PKM1, a variety of Moringa oleifera, has had a global impact, especially in countries such as Senegal, Rwanda, and Madagascar on the African continent.
- Ker Sangri, a traditional Rajasthani dish, has recently been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, signifying its unique link to the Thar Desert region. This dish is made using Ker berries from the Ker tree and Sangri pods from the sacred Khejri tree, both native to arid desert climates. The preparation is slow and careful, as Ker berries, initially bitter, are soaked, boiled, and cooked with Sangri, curd, red chillies, and spices to create a tangy, spicy, and earthy-flavoured delicacy. Rich in nutrients, high in fibre, and low in fat, it is typically served with bajra roti and ghee. The Khejri tree is revered by the Bishnoi community and symbolizes ecological preservation. GI tags in India, governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, are granted to products with specific geographic origins and distinct reputations. These tags apply to various goods, including agricultural products and handicrafts, and are valid for 10 years, after which they can be renewed.
- Recently, researchers have discovered a new plant species, *Pedicularis rajeshiana*, in the high-altitude regions of Rohtang Pass in the western Himalayas region.
- Tiny plastic pellets, called nurdles, were found on beaches in Thiruvananthapuram after the sinking of MSC ELSA3. Nurdles are small, uniform plastic pre-forms used as raw materials in manufacturing various plastic products. They are primary microplastics, measuring 1-5 mm, mainly made of polyethene, polypropylene, polystyrene, and PVC. These pellets are melted and molded into packaging, bottles, toys, and textiles. They pose environmental risks, contaminating habitats and breaking down into micro- and nano-plastics. Their presence threatens marine life, ecosystems, and potentially human health.

- In a significant breakthrough, researchers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) have, for the first time, accurately estimated the abundance of helium in the sun's photosphere—a long-standing challenge in solar studies. Traditionally, astronomers relied on indirect methods such as extrapolation from hotter stars, solar wind data, or helioseismology to infer helium levels, since helium does not produce direct spectral lines in the sun's visible surface. However, IIA scientists have developed a novel technique that models spectral lines of neutral magnesium and carbon atoms, along with their hydrogenated molecular forms, enabling them to derive the helium abundance with greater accuracy. This development marks a major advancement in our understanding of the sun's composition and could have significant implications for studying the opacity and structure of the solar photosphere.
- In a significant breakthrough for sustainable technology and plastic waste management, scientists at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, have developed a patented technology called SaLSO that transforms challenging-to-recycle polyurethane (PU) foam, commonly found in mattresses, furniture, and insulation, into high-value materials suitable for 3D printing. PU foams are notorious for their complex chemical composition and additives, making recycling difficult; however, this innovative process selectively cleaves chemical bonds in PU foams, breaking them down into usable components with over 98% efficiency. The method works on both hard and soft PU foams and has also been demonstrated to process other tough plastics like epoxy, unsaturated polyesters, and polyolefins into printable materials, opening new avenues for waste upcycling. Given that nearly 14.4 million tonnes of PU waste were generated globally between 2015 and 2022, much of which ended up incinerated or landfilled, this approach offers a sustainable solution to reduce plastic waste and promote a circular economy, transforming waste into valuable products and addressing a major barrier in plastic waste management. The 3D-printed items made from these recycled materials have shown promising performance, indicating their potential across various industries. As the PU market reaches over 26 million metric tonnes in 2023 and is expected to grow further, technologies like SaLSO could significantly mitigate environmental impact by turning waste into resource and advancing sustainable plastic management.
- The Technology Development Board (TDB) under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) has announced the official theme for National Technology Day 2025 as: "YANTRA – Yugantar for Advancing New Technology, Research & Acceleration."
- Scientists recently developed a way to map how brain cells are connected using light microscopes in a technique called LICONN.
- The MADMAX collaboration has published the first results of its search for dark photons using a prototype detector. MADMAX, which stands for Magnetised Disk and Mirror Axion Experiment, is a research initiative aimed at detecting dark matter components such as axions and dark photons. The detector features a stack of dielectric sapphire disks and a reflective mirror arranged to form a resonator system that enhances the conversion of dark photons—hypothetical particles similar to photons but with mass—into ordinary microwave photons. These dark photons are proposed to be part of galactic dark matter halos, and their conversion depends on their mass. The MADMAX detector operates by boosting this conversion process using a resonator composed of parallel dielectric disks, with the resulting microwave signals focused by a curved mirror into a horn antenna connected to a microwave receiver. Its key features include the ability to tune resonance frequencies by adjusting disk positions to scan different mass ranges and to detect narrow spectral peaks indicative of dark photon signals amid thermal noise. Although the first prototype run did not detect dark photons, it demonstrated successful operation with a sensitivity three orders of magnitude better than previous methods, covering a previously unexplored parameter space in a single experiment.
- On April 2, 2025, NASA announced that asteroid 2024 YR4 has a 3.8% probability of colliding with the Moon on December 22, 2032.
- Taiwan's military recently conducted its first live-fire exercise using the U.S.-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), marking a significant step in strengthening its defence capabilities. HIMARS is a lightweight, multiple rocket launcher system developed by the U.S.-based Lockheed Martin Corporation. It is specifically designed to launch multiple precision-guided rockets and is capable of neutralizing artillery systems, air defence units, trucks, light armoured vehicles, personnel carriers, and

concentrations of troops and supplies. Mounted on a 5-ton Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles (FMTV), HIMARS is air-transportable, allowing for rapid deployment. The system can carry either a pod of six rockets with a range of approximately 70 km or one MGM-140 Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) capable of striking targets up to 322 km away. HIMARS can prepare to fire in under 20 seconds and release a full load in less than 45 seconds. Designed for “shoot-and-scoot” operations, it can swiftly relocate after firing to avoid enemy detection. Additionally, its Increased Crew Protection cabin provides safety for the three-member crew from plume gases, rocket debris, and small arms fire.

- The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed an indigenous high-pressure nanoporous multilayered polymeric membrane for seawater desalination, executed by the Defence Materials Stores Research & Development Establishment (DMSRDE) in Kanpur under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative. This innovative membrane is specifically designed to meet the operational needs of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG), particularly to withstand chloride ion-induced instability in saline water, thereby enabling offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) to have self-reliant onboard freshwater production capabilities, which is of strategic importance for national security and maritime resilience. Desalination technology involves removing dissolved salts and minerals from seawater or brackish water to render it suitable for human consumption or industrial use, primarily through reverse osmosis (RO) or thermal desalination methods. In RO, external pressure is applied to seawater to reverse the natural osmosis process, forcing water molecules through a semi-permeable membrane that allows only water to pass while blocking salts and impurities, reducing the Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) from approximately 35,000 ppm in seawater to 200–500 ppm suitable for drinking. This advancement in membrane technology enhances the efficiency and independence of maritime vessels in freshwater supply, aligning with strategic goals of self-reliance and technological sovereignty.
- Researchers from China have highlighted the complexity of A-to-I mRNA editing in animals, a process where enzymes called ADARs convert adenosine (A) in mRNA into inosine (I), which is read as guanine (G) during translation. This post-transcriptional modification can alter amino acid sequences by changing codons, leading to protein diversity and functional changes in proteins without affecting the underlying DNA. However, it also carries risks, such as the potential to convert stop codons like UAG or UGA into codons for amino acids like tryptophan (UGG), possibly resulting in elongated or malfunctioning proteins. Additionally, the discovery of PSC genes—genes containing premature stop codons in their unedited mRNA—has shown that while these genes are not critical during asexual growth, they are essential during sexual development, underscoring the vital role of A-to-I editing in certain biological processes.
- The GRAIL (Gravity Recovery and Interior Laboratory) mission is a NASA lunar exploration launched in 2011, comprising two robotic spacecraft, Ebb and Flow, which orbited the moon to produce the most detailed gravitational map of its surface to date. By precisely measuring the distance between the two spacecraft as they orbited, the mission gathered data on variations in the moon’s gravitational field, offering critical insights into its internal structure, crust thickness, and geological history. Recent findings from GRAIL have highlighted significant differences between the moon’s nearside and farside, attributing these to tidal deformation caused by Earth’s gravitational pull and asymmetric volcanic activity; the nearside flexes more during its orbit, resulting in a thinner crust and extensive basaltic plains known as “mare,” while the farside remains less volcanically active with a thicker crust. These discoveries have deepened our understanding of the moon’s geological evolution, including the presence of long linear features called “dikes” indicative of early lunar expansion and a long-term thermal imbalance shaped by the uneven distribution of heat-producing elements.
- India has joined over 120 nations in issuing biometric e-passports, offering enhanced security, faster immigration, and global compliance. An e-passport (electronic or biometric passport) is an upgraded version of the traditional passport. It combines a conventional booklet with an embedded Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chip and antenna in the back cover.
- The Axiom-4 Mission, a joint venture between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), is scheduled to launch on June 8, 2025, from NASA’s Kennedy Space Center in Florida. This mission features Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla as India’s astronaut representative and aims to deepen international cooperation in space exploration,

enhance public engagement, and support joint scientific and outreach efforts. Among the planned outreach activities are a joint public downlink event hosted by both space agencies, student interaction sessions in India led by Group Captain Shukla, and an amateur radio contact enabling real-time student communication with the astronaut. On the scientific front, ISRO has selected seven microgravity experiments proposed by Indian researchers from R&D labs and academic institutions, alongside five collaborative human research studies with NASA, in which Group Captain Shukla will also participate.

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, have developed a new, eco-friendly glow-in-the-dark material made entirely from lightweight organic chemicals that glows brightly at room temperature without toxic or heavy metals. This innovative molecule exhibits circularly polarised luminescence (CPL) and long-lasting phosphorescence, enabling applications in secure anti-counterfeiting measures, such as hidden messages in security tags and encrypted labels. Demonstrated by creating an ink that reveals different messages under UV light and in darkness, the material's development involved precise chemical bonding between boron and nitrogen atoms at -78°C in an oxygen-controlled environment. The team aims to further enhance its brightness for potential uses in medical imaging and wearable devices.
- 2025 Breakthrough Prize awarded to CERN's LHC collaborations: ATLAS, CMS, ALICE, LHCb. Indian scientists played key roles in ALICE and CMS experiments. Prizes honor recent achievements in Life Sciences, Physics, and Math. Founded in 2013 by Zuckerberg, Brin, and others to celebrate scientific excellence. Known as "Oscars of Science," prizes aim to inspire and promote science globally. Each award includes \$3 million, higher than Nobel Prize. Winners selected by committees of previous laureates via open nominations. Award ceremony features lectures, discussions, and public recognition
- Ministry of Defence finalising Rs 2,000-3,000 crore deal for 500 Invar anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs). Invar missile launched from T-90 tanks, used by Indian forces for long-range precision strikes. Capable of neutralising tanks with Explosive Reactive Armour. Built by Russia's Rosoboronexport; produced in India by Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL). Features: laser beam riding, jamming immune, tandem warhead, 5 km range, 17.6 sec flight time, high accuracy.
- India's Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme has received execution model approval, marking a major step towards developing the country's first fifth-generation fighter jet. Spearheaded by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) in Bengaluru, the ₹15,000 crore project aims to produce five prototypes with the first flight expected by 2028 and induction by 2034. The execution model allows equal participation of public and private sector players, either as independent entities, joint ventures, or consortia, provided they are Indian companies complying with domestic laws. The fifth-generation AMCA is designed to feature stealth technology, advanced sensors, and super-cruise capability—placing it in league with the U.S. F-22 and F-35, China's J-20, and Russia's Su-57. As China is reportedly fast-tracking stealth jets to Pakistan, India's AMCA serves as a strategic response. Major Indian firms like Tata, L&T, and Adani are expected to bid, potentially ending HAL's monopoly. The first two AMCA squadrons will be powered by U.S.-made GE-414 engines, while a domestically developed engine will follow. The programme aligns with India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat vision, advancing aerospace self-reliance and defence modernisation.
- Four major initiatives focused on Artificial intelligence (AI) and accessibility which aim to harness AI for the creation of inclusive digital ecosystems and offer scalable solutions in assistive technology were launched. At a national conference on AI for Empowering Persons with Disabilities, held in Bengaluru, the four missions [Mission AI accessibility; Mission AI: Implementation of AI in Assistive Technologies and Tools for Empowering People with Disabilities; National Disability Support AI Chatbot, and United Benefits Interface (UBI)] were launched.
- The Uttar Pradesh government, in collaboration with the Commerce Ministry, is working to boost the export of Kalanamak rice to countries with significant Buddhist populations, capitalizing on its historical and cultural significance. Kalanamak rice, a traditional, non-basmati aromatic variety with a black husk and strong fragrance, is believed to be a gift from Lord Buddha to the people of Sravasti. Grown primarily in Siddharthnagar—designated as an ODOP (One District One Product) region—and across 11 districts in the Terai belt of eastern Uttar Pradesh and parts of Nepal, the rice is known for its rich iron and

antioxidant content, low glycemic index, and gluten-free nature, making it ideal for health-conscious consumers and diabetics. Despite its nutritional value, its traditional variety has faced yield challenges due to lodging, a condition where the plant collapses under the weight of ripened grain. Recognized for its unique qualities, Kalanamak rice holds a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, ensuring its authenticity and boosting its export potential.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

- Iran recently unveiled a new solid-fuel ballistic missile named Ghassem Basir.
- INS Sharda, an offshore patrol vessel of the Indian Navy, has arrived at Maafilaafushi Atoll, Maldives, to participate in its first-ever Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise
- India has extended crucial financial assistance to the Maldives by rolling over a \$50 million Treasury Bill under a government-to-government arrangement, initiated at the request of the Maldivian government. Subscribed by the State Bank of India (SBI), this support has been annually rolled over since 2019 and serves as a unique emergency funding mechanism. The Indian High Commission in Malé confirmed the extension, and Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Khaleel publicly thanked Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, highlighting its importance to Maldives' fiscal reform efforts and India–Maldives friendship. Meanwhile, the Maldivian economy is witnessing a tourism-driven boost in 2024, with 2.05 million tourist arrivals—a record high and an 8.9% increase over the previous year. A new rule mandates resorts to convert \$500 per tourist monthly into local currency, resulting in \$214 million being added to foreign reserves. In addition, India has provided broader financial assistance including a \$400 million currency swap and ₹30 billion support through the Reserve Bank of India in 2023. Treasury Bills (T-Bills), which form the basis of this support, are short-term debt instruments issued by the Government of India with maturities of 91, 182, or 364 days. They are zero-coupon securities, sold at a discount and redeemed at face value, with no interest payments. Mostly purchased by financial institutions, they are also used in repo transactions and help banks meet Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) norms. Their returns vary based on market liquidity conditions.
- Colombia has officially joined China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) following a high-level summit of Latin American leaders in Beijing. This marks a strategic move to deepen its global partnerships, especially in infrastructure and trade. Geopolitically, Colombia is known as the "Gateway of South America" due to its location connecting South, Central, and North America, and it shares land borders with Venezuela, Brazil, Panama, Peru, and Ecuador, along with maritime access to both the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean. With vast natural resources like petroleum, coal, and gold, and ecological diversity across the Andes and tropical lowlands, Colombia is well-positioned for foreign investment. The country joined the OECD in 2020, aligning with global development standards. India and Colombia have also signed an Audio-visual Co-production Agreement, boosting cultural cooperation. The BRI, launched by China in 2013, aims to enhance infrastructure, trade, and connectivity across continents through the Silk Road Economic Belt (land) and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (sea). With over 140 participating countries, the initiative seeks to reduce trade barriers, promote economic growth, and expand China's global influence. While it offers major benefits like job creation and improved market access, challenges such as debt risks, governance issues, and environmental concerns persist. Nonetheless, projections indicate a 4.1% increase in trade flows, up to 3.9% GDP growth in East Asia-Pacific, and a global GDP boost of \$7.1 trillion annually by 2040.
- Ukraine's military intelligence agency recently said Russia planned to conduct a "training and combat" launch of the RS-24 intercontinental ballistic missile from the Yars complex to intimidate Ukraine and the West.
- In a landmark development poised to transform the global standing of traditional medicine systems, an agreement was signed between the Ministry of Ayush and the World Health Organization (WHO) on May

24, 2025. The agreement marks the beginning of work on a dedicated Traditional Medicine module under the International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI).

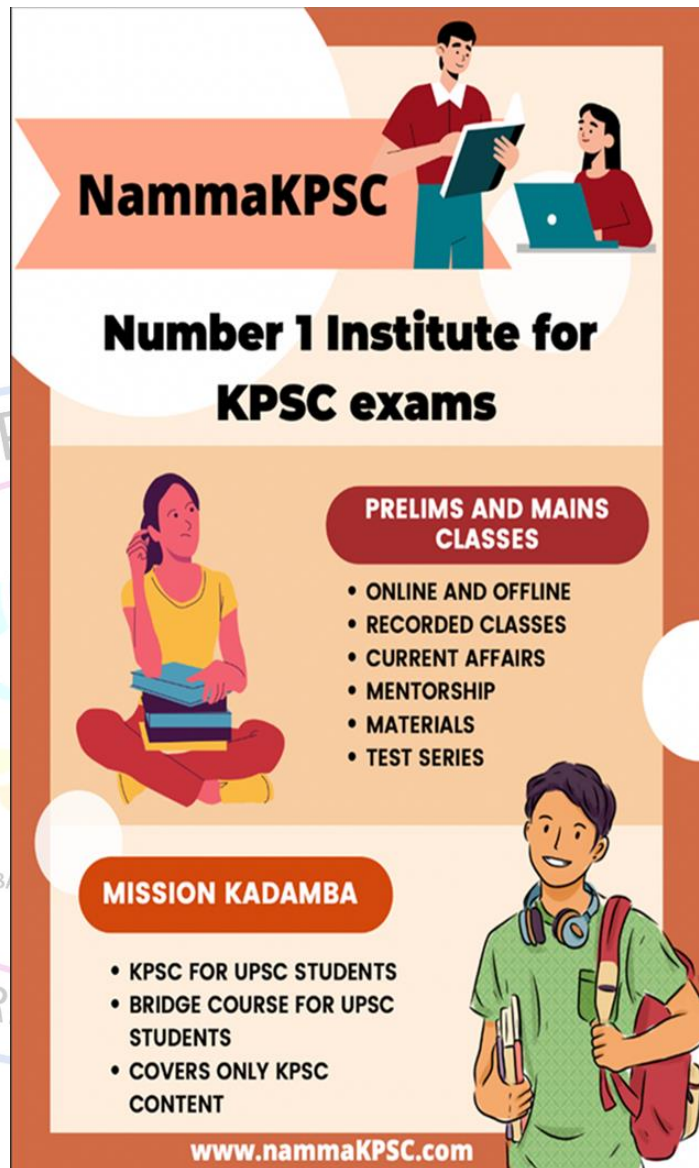
- South Korea has officially expressed concern to China regarding a recently declared “No-Sail Zone” in the Yellow Sea, a sensitive maritime area where Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of both countries overlap.
- Shangri-La Dialogue: It is Asia’s premier defence and security summit that brings together Defence Ministers, Military Chiefs, policymakers and strategic experts across the globe.

MISCELLENEOUS

- Padma Shri awardee, spiritual guru and yoga practitioner Baba Sivanand, passed away in Varanasi night due to health complications.
- World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka overcame a second-set fightback by fourth seed Coco Gauff to secure a 6-3, 7-6(3) win and clinch her third Madrid Open
- Parv Chaudhary earned a bronze medal for India in the World youth weightlifting championships in Lima, Peru.
- India’s Parth Salunkhe and Deepika Kumari won bronze in the Archery World Cup Stage 2 in Shanghai
- Indians win 19 medals at Fazza Para Badminton
- In a landmark decision aimed at enhancing global visibility and consistency in observance, the Government of India has designated 23rd September as the date for celebrating Ayurveda Day each year. This change marks a significant shift from the earlier practice of observing Ayurveda Day on Dhanteras, which follows a variable lunar calendar. Ayurveda Day has been commemorated annually to promote Ayurveda as a scientific, evidence-based, and holistic system of medicine that plays a pivotal role in preventive healthcare and wellness. Until now, Ayurveda Day coincided with Dhanteras, a festival observed in the Hindu month of Kartik (usually October or November). However, as the date of Dhanteras fluctuates each year, the observance of Ayurveda Day lacked a fixed annual date.
- Brazilian microbiologist Mariangela Hungria, whose research has helped farmers in the country sharply boost grain production, has been named the 2025 World Food Prize Laureate
- Two-time Olympic medallist and World javelin champion Neeraj Chopra has been conferred honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Army.
- The Government of India has declared that Ayurveda Day will now be observed annually on 23rd September, starting from 2025.
- Former Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar took charge as Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)
- Recently, Cambodia and China have launched their largest-ever Golden Dragon joint military exercise involving land, sea, and air operations.
- Brazilian scientist Mariangela Hungria was awarded the 2025 World Food Prize for her pioneering work in reducing the use of chemical fertilizers and developing biological seed and soil treatments that enhance crop yields and nutrition. The World Food Prize, often called the Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture, recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to improving global food quality, quantity, or accessibility across fields such as science, technology, economics, and social sciences. Established in 1986 by Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, the award is presented annually in mid-October during the Borlaug Dialogue in Des Moines, Iowa, with a prize of \$500,000. Notably, S. Swaminathan was the first laureate in 1987 for introducing high-yielding wheat and rice varieties in India. Hungria’s research focuses on harnessing soil bacteria to optimize nutrient uptake by crops, thereby increasing yields and decreasing dependence on synthetic fertilizers, which marks a significant advancement in sustainable agriculture.
- The Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) 2025 reveals that acute hunger has reached a new record high worldwide, with 295.3 million people in 53 countries experiencing acute food insecurity in 2024—an increase from 281.6 million in 2023—marking the sixth consecutive annual rise and the highest level since

reporting began; nearly a quarter of the population in these countries suffered from hunger, including 1.9 million people facing famine conditions, more than double the previous year, while humanitarian funding shortages threaten to cut aid by up to 45% in 2025, jeopardizing nutrition services for at least 14 million children and disrupting relief efforts in major crisis zones, with over 37 million children under five suffering from malnutrition, including more than 10.2 million severely acutely malnourished, highlighting the urgent need for increased global intervention.

- In a historic move to strengthen global cooperation and ensure a more equitable response to future pandemics, WHO member states unanimously adopted the world's first Pandemic Agreement, concluding over three years of negotiations initiated in response to the Covid-19 crisis. The agreement was adopted during a plenary session of the World Health Assembly, the organization's highest decision-making body, following the prior approval by a vote of 124 in favor, with no objections and 11 abstentions in Committee.
- India bagged a silver and bronze in the 10M air rifle mixed team event at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup in Suhl, Germany
- India's top track athlete this season, Gulveer Singh, continued his impressive form by winning the country's first gold at the Asian Athletics Championships, triumphing in the 10,000m in Gumi, South Korea
- Hyderabad teenager Vishwanath Karthikey Padakanti recently became the youngest Indian and the second youngest person in the world to complete the legendary 7 Summits challenge
- Two Indian peacekeepers who lost their lives while serving under the U.N. flag last year will be honoured posthumously with the Dag Hammarskjold Medal by the United Nations as it commemorates International Day of U.N. Peacekeepers on May 29.



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