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Registered/ Corporate Office

DELHI

+91- 8920-180-477
F – 92, 2nd Floor, Hanuman Mandir Market
Near Royal Bakery (Metro Gate No. – 3)
Munrika, New Delhi – 110067

MUMBAI

+91-7900-005-077
401 & 2, Fourth Floor, Krishna Plaza, Above
Krishna Sweets, Jan Kalyan Bank, Next to
Ganesh Tower, Shivaji Path Opposite Thane
Railway Station (W) - 400601

CONTENT

National.....	3
International.....	9
Defence.....	17
Appointments or Resign/Retired.....	19
Honours/ Awards.....	26
Sports.....	35
Obituary.....	42
Important Days with theme.....	43

National

Indian-origin Tushar Mehta joins Blue Origin crew on 10th space tourism mission

Indian-origin **Tushar Mehta** was among the **six** crew members to be included in the **10th** space tourism mission of billionaire Jeff Bezos' space company **Blue Origin Enterprises, L.P**, Washington(USA).

- Tushar Mehta is a partner and the co-head of **research** at a quantitative **hedge fund** in New York, United States of America (USA).
- He has become the second Indian-origin person after Gopi Thotakura to take a Blue Origin flight of NS-25 Mission.

i.The suborbital New Shepard(NS) vehicle of Blue Origin was launched from the West Texas facility on **25th February 2025**.

ii.The flight was titled **NS-30** by Blue Origin, as it was the New Shepard's 30th overall flight.

- Its six crew members, including Lane Bess, Jesús Calleja, Elaine Chia Hyde, Dr. Richard Scott, Tushar Shah, and an undisclosed sixth crew member.
- The NS-30 mission was **Lane Bess' second** flight with Blue Origin.

iii.This mission was also called **Perfect 10** as it was the **10th** flight of the vehicle's **crewed mission**.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Kailash Satyarthi's Autobiography titled 'Diyasalai' Explored at IGCNA

Nobel laureate and social reformer **Kailash Satyarthi** launched his autobiography '**Diyasalaai**' during the Jaipur Literature Festival in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

- The book was published by **Rajkamal Prakashan** and launched by former President of India **Ram Nath Kovind**, who attended the event as Chief Guest.

i.Satyarthi mentioned that he wrote a poem at the age of 15 which inspired him to become a **matchstick** which is the literal meaning of '**Diyasalai**', as he desired to kindle a spark of change and create awareness against child labour.

ii.The book comprises **24 chapters** which narrates his journey, from being born into the family with humble background in Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh (MP) to his lifelong struggle for liberation of children from exploitation, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.

India's First World Peace Center Inaugurated in Gurugram, Haryana

India's first **World Peace Center** was established under the leadership of Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti founder, Jain Acharya Lokesh Muni and the efforts of Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti and inaugurated in Gurugram, Haryana.

- The event was graced by Ram Nath Kovind, the former President of India, along with dignitaries including Gulab Chand Kataria, Governor of Punjab, Arif Mohammad Khan, Governor of Bihar, Nayab Singh Saini, Chief Minister (CM) of Haryana, Rekha Gupta, CM of Delhi.

- i. Acharya Lokesh emphasized that the World Peace Centre will serve as an inspiration of spirituality and social togetherness, providing a platform for peace education, environmental preservation, equality, and institutional peace-building processes
- ii. The World Peace Centre will play an important role in raising awareness, encouraging social responsibility, and promoting sustainable development, as well as establishing institutional networks for peace and harmony.

PM Modi Released India's 1st ever Riverine Dolphin Estimation Report: 6,327 dolphins, Highest in UP

Prime Minister (PM) **Narendra Modi** released India's **1st ever riverine dolphin estimation report** during his visit to Gir National Park (NP) in Gujarat, where he chaired the 7th meeting of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL). The report was released on the eve of World Wildlife Day (**WWD**) observed annually on March 3 worldwide.



- As per the report, India has **6,327 riverine dolphins** across 28 rivers in 8 states. **6,324** dolphins found across the Ganga and Brahmaputra river basins and remaining 3 Indus river dolphins in the Beas river basin in Punjab.
 - Assam, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Punjab, and Lakshadweep are identified as the key dolphin hotspot states.
- i. The survey was conducted between **2021 and 2023** by Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in partnership with state forest departments of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh (UP), Bihar, Assam, Jharkhand, Rajasthan; and Non-profit organisations including Aaranyak, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Turtle Survival Alliance and Wildlife Trust of India.
- ii. UP with **2,397 dolphins**, has topped among the 8 states with highest number of dolphins in the country, followed by Bihar (2,220); WB (815) and Assam (635).

About National Board for Wildlife (NBWL):

It is a statutory body established under sub-section (1) of section 5A of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. It advises the government on wildlife conservation and comprises of 47 members.

Chairperson- Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Vice-Chairperson- Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana: Ensuring Financial Security for India's Unorganised Workforce

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (**PM-SYM**) **Yojana**, a landmark initiative led by Government of India (GoI) which aimed to provide financial security to millions of unorganized workers in India. It is a part of the GoI's wider **social security initiatives** and aligns with the vision of universal pension coverage for workers in the unorganised sector.

- The scheme is specially designed for workers in the unorganised sectors who contribute **50%** of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- i. It is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme, aimed to provide social security to unorganized workers.
- ii. The scheme ensures a minimum pension of **Rs 3,000 per month** after the age of 60 for

workers who are employed in the unorganised sector and have a monthly income of **up to Rs 15,000**.

iii. The scheme is monitored by the Ministry of Labour and Employment (**MoL&E**) in partnership with Life Insurance Corporation of India (**LIC**) and Common Services Centres e-Governance Services India Limited (**CSC SPV**) for smooth implementation.

iv. As on December 31 2024, more than **30.51 crore** unorganised workers were registered on the **e-shram portal**.

Madhav National Park in MP Becomes India's 58th Tiger Reserve

Union Minister Bhupender Yadav, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) announced the **Madhav National Park** in Madhya Pradesh (MP) as **58th** Tiger Reserve (TR) of India and marking it as the ninth TR in MP.

- The other TRs of MP are Bandhavgarh TR, Kanha TR, Panna TR, Sanjay TR, Satpura TR, Pench TR, Veerangana Durgavati TR, Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary.

Note: Tiger Reserves are notified by the State Governments as per provisions of Section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 on advice of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

About Madhav Tiger Reserve:

i. The Madhav Tiger Reserve is located in Shivpuri district within the Gwalior-Chambal region.

ii. The TR will span 1,751 square kilometres (sq km) featuring a **core area** of 375 sq km and a **buffer area** of 1,276 sq km.

iii. As of March 2025, there are five tigers in the Madhav TR, including the two cubs that were born recently. Two more tigers could be released into the TR.

iv. As part of the MP's tiger reintroduction project, three tigers, including two females, were introduced to the Madhav National Park in 2023.

Note: India is home to over 70% of the world's wild tiger population, with approximately 3,682 tigers.

About Madhya Pradesh (MP):

Chief Minister (CM) – Mohan Yadav

Governor – Mangubhai C. Patel

Capital – Bhopal

Wildlife Sanctuaries – Phen Wildlife Sanctuary, Ralamandal Wildlife Sanctuary



Jio & Airtel Partners with SpaceX's Starlink to Enhance Internet Services in India

Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra) based **Jio** Platforms Limited (JPL), subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), and New Delhi (Delhi) based Bharti Airtel Limited (**Airtel**) entered into a partnership with **Elon Musk's** United States of America (USA) based Space Exploration Technologies Corp. (**SpaceX**) to introduce **Starlink's satellite internet services** across India.

This collaboration aims to enhance the existing network and extend coverage to remote regions and bolster internet connectivity, in remote and rural regions across India.

Note: Starlink, a satellite internet constellation operated by Starlink Services, LLC, a subsidiary of SpaceX, provides global broadband coverage through a network of LEO satellites. As of September 2024, Starlink serves over 4 million subscribers worldwide.

i. The alliance seeks to combine Jio's extensive mobile network with Starlink's Low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite technology to provide high-speed internet services nationwide.

ii. Jio will offer Starlink user terminals through its extensive retail network, enabling customers to access satellite-based internet services.

About Jio Platforms Limited (JPL):

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)- Kiran Thomas

Headquarters- Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra

Established-

2019

BWSSB Becomes India's First Water Board to Receive BIS Certification

Bengaluru (Karnataka) based Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) achieved a significant milestone by becoming the **first water board in India** to receive certification from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (MoCAF&PD) for its **pipelined drinking water supply management system**.

- This certification highlights BWSSB's adherence to international water quality standards and commitment to safe and sustainable drinking water.

i. The certification was awarded after a rigorous six-month evaluation by BIS.

ii. This certification is valid for **three years**, from March 6, 2025, to March 5, 2028. During this period, BWSSB will undergo regular surveillance audits by BIS officials, with the next evaluations scheduled for December 2025 and September 2026, followed by a renewal audit in November 2027.

iii. BWSSB met stringent criteria for efficient, safe, and sustainable water management practices, covering all aspects of water supply, including intake, treatment, distribution, and quality assurance.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS):

Director General (DG) – Pramod Kumar Tiwari

Headquarters – New Delhi (Delhi)

Founded – 1986

CSK Launches its Book "Leo — The Untold Story"

A new book titled "**Leo — The Untold Story**", written by senior advocate and former Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) vice-president **P.S. Raman** was officially unveiled in **Chennai (Tamil Nadu)** by the former Indian Test Cricketer **Chingleput Doraikannu "C.D." Gopinath** at a star-studded event, with former Chennai Super Kings (CSK) captain Mahendra Singh (**M.S.**) **Dhoni** graced the occasion.

- Musician **Anirudh Ravichander** was presented with the first copy of the book during the launch event.
- The book offers a deep and unique insight into the life, career, and lasting impact of M.S. Dhoni, highlighting his journey on and off the field, his contribution to Indian cricket, and his leadership of the CSK franchise.

NASA Astronauts Sunita Williams, Butch Wilmore Return to Earth After 9 Months in Space

Indian-American astronaut **Sunita Lyn Williams** and an

American astronaut **Barry Butch E. Wilmore** from National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) successfully returned to the Earth after spending an extended period (9months) aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

- As part of NASA's Crew-9 rotation mission, the 4-person crew, along with American Astronaut **Nick Hague** and Russian cosmonaut **Aleksandr Gorbunov**, concluded their journey with a safe splashdown off the coast of Tallahassee in the Florida Panhandle, the United States of America (USA).
- Their return was facilitated by the **SpaceX Crew Dragon** capsule, following the arrival of Crew-10, which was launched on March 14, 2025, to relieve Crew-9.

Mission Background:

i. ISS was initially launched on June 5, 2024, aboard Boeing's CST-100 Starliner spacecraft, as part of its first crewed test flight with Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore. The mission was intended to last just **eight days**.

ii. However, technical issues with the Starliner, including helium leaks and thruster malfunctions, led to an extended stay of **286 days** aboard the ISS.

About the Astronauts:

i. **Sunita Williams**, a distinguished NASA astronaut and a retired USA Navy Captain was selected by NASA in **1998**.

ii. She has completed **3 space** missions; Expeditions 14/15, 32/33, and 71/72 accumulating a total of 608 days in space. During Expedition 14, she set a then-record for female spacewalks, totaling **29 hours and 17 minutes**.

iii. She has accumulated a total of **608 days and 20 minutes** in space across 3 missions, the 2nd most for any USA astronaut after Peggy Whitson's 675 days.

iv. **Barry E. Wilmore**, a retired USA Navy Captain, joined NASA in 2000 and has completed 3 spaceflights, accumulating **464 days** in space.

v. He served as Flight Engineer during Expedition 41 and Commander of Expedition 42, logging 167 days aboard the ISS. His spacewalks total **31 hours and 60 minutes**.

Union MoS Jitendra Singh, Announces North India's First Nuclear Power Plant in Gorakhpur, Haryana

Union Minister of State (MoS), Independent Charge(I/C), **Jitendra Singh**, Ministry for Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) announced that **North India's first nuclear power plant** is being established in **Gorakhpur, Haryana**. This initiative aligns with India's strategy to expand nuclear energy production while cutting down carbon emissions. The Union Minister also reaffirmed commitment to the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP) in Maharashtra, which is set to become the largest nuclear power plant in India.

- The project has experienced delays due to shifts in agreements with French stakeholders and procedural issues related to environmental clearance, which expired in December 2022.

About Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP):

i. The JNPP will consist of **six reactors**, each having a capacity of **1,730 megawatts (MW)**. This will result in a total power generation of **10,380 MW**.

- The plant is expected to play a significant role in India's energy goals by contributing around 10% to India's target of achieving 100 gigawatts (GW) of nuclear energy by the year 2047.

ii. Nuclear Liability Framework: India's Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (CLND) framework ensures that operators bear primary responsibility in case of any incident. A dedicated insurance pool worth Rs 1,500 crore has been created to handle liability concerns.

Kerala Establishes India's First Senior Citizens Commission

Kerala became the **first state** in India to pass a dedicated legislation the 'Kerala State Senior Citizens Commission Bill, 2025', after approval by the Kerala Legislative Assembly, for establishing a **Senior Citizens Commission** to ensure the protection of rights, welfare, and rehabilitation of the senior citizens in the state.

- The commission will be responsible for collaborating with different state departments to safeguard and promote the well-being of the elderly population.

About Senior Citizens Commission

i. Purpose : The newly formed commission will work to address problems faced by senior citizens, such as neglect, abuse, and loneliness, by giving advice and suggesting policies to improve their well-being.

- Additionally, the commission aims to utilize the skills and experiences of senior citizens for the benefit of society, promoting their active participation in the state's development.

ii. Composition: The commission will have a Chairperson and at least four senior citizen members, including at least one woman and one person from the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes, all appointed by the government through an official notice.

- The commission will be based in **Thiruvananthapuram** (Kerala). It will receive administrative support from a government officer holding the rank of Additional Secretary or higher, who will serve as its secretary. The registrar will be a Joint Secretary-level officer from the Law Department, while financial matters will be managed by a Deputy Secretary-level officer from the Finance Department.

Note: According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)'s India's Ageing Report, 2023, those aged 60 years and above are projected to make up 22.8 % of the total population in Kerala by 2036.

About Kerala:

Chief Minister (CM) – Pinarayi Vijayan

Governor – Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar

Wildlife Sanctuaries – Kottiyoor Wildlife Sanctuary

National Park (NP) – Silent Valley NP

International

16th CoP to the Convention on Biological Diversity Resumed in Rome, Italy

The 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) resumed from February 25 to February 27, 2025 at the headquarters of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome, Italy.



- Earlier, the COP 16 held in Cali, Columbia in October 2024, which was paused due to lack of quorum required for biodiversity finance related agreements.
 - Later, it was resumed virtually in December 2024 but again it was ended abruptly.
- i. During the conference, member countries adopted landmark biodiversity funding agreement, aimed at establishing a long-term financial mechanism to protect biodiversity and ensure the success of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).
- The agreement focuses on two primary objectives such as: **bridging the biodiversity finance gap** and **implementing article 21 of the CBD**.
- ii. A new international fund, 'Cali Fund' was launched which aimed to help protect biodiversity as well as boost the biodiversity funds.
- It is designed for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of Digital Sequence Information (DSI) on genetic resources.
- iii. The FAO urged for bold action to transform the Agrifood Systems (AFS) in support of global biodiversity targets during the COP16.2 of CBD which saw the participation of representatives from more than 150 countries.
- While addressing the conference, Qu Dongyu, Director-General (DG) of FAO emphasized on adopting integrated approach across government sectors, to ensure **4 betters**: better production, better nutrition, better environment, and a better life-leaving no one behind.

About Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO):

It is one of the specialized agencies of United Nations (UN), to make international efforts to combat hunger and to achieve food security for all.

Director-General (DG)- Qu Dongyu

Headquarters- Rome, Italy

Forbes' The Highest-Paid Actors of 2024: American Actor Dwayne Johnson Tops, 3 Actress Make the Top 20 List

Forbes released its annual list of 'The highest-paid actors of 2024', showcasing the immense earnings of Hollywood's top stars across various platforms.

i. American actor and professional wrestler **Dwayne Douglas Johnson**, also known as "The Rock," has secured the **top position** globally with astounding earnings of **USD 88 million** (approximately 73.58 crore), primarily from his roles in blockbuster films such as Red One and voicing Maui in Moana 2.

ii. Canadian-American actor and film producer **Ryan Rodney Reynolds** ranks 2nd, with an

impressive **USD 85 million** (approximately 70.98 crore), for his contributions as the lead producer, co-writer, and star of 'Deadpool & Wolverine'.

iii. American comedian and actor **Kevin Darnell Hart** (USA) secured **3rd** place, earning **USD 81 million** (approximately 67.73 crore), for his expansive entertainment ventures with numerous films, Television (TV) series, stand-up comedy, and podcasting.

iv. American Actress **Nicole Mary Kidman** was the highest-paid actress 2024, ranking **8th** overall with USD 31 million.

About Forbes:

Chief Content Officer (CCO)- Randall Lane

Headquarters- United States of America (USA)

Established– 1917

Brand Finance IT Services 25, 2025: USA's Accenture Tops, India's TCS & Infosys in Top 3, Hexaware Enters Top 25



Brand Finance released its annual IT Services 25 2025 rankings, highlighting the most valuable Information Technology (IT) services brands worldwide based on their financial performance, market position, and brand perception.

- American multinational **Accenture PLC** (Public Limited Company) has secured the **top position** globally, with a brand value of USD 41.50 billion.
- Indian IT firms Tata Consultancy Services (**TCS**) Limited and **Infosys Limited** ranked **2nd** and **3rd**, respectively, reflecting India's strong presence in the industry.
- For the first time, India's **Hexaware Technologies Limited** has entered the Brand Finance IT Services rankings 2025 at Rank **24th**, showcasing its growing influence and market presence.

Brand Finance 2025 Methodology:

i. The ranking is based on brand value, market strength, and financial performance and the report evaluates brand perception, investment, and business performance in the IT services sector.

ii. The collective brand value of the top 25 IT Services brands stands at USD 163 billion in 2025. The top five brands have a combined brand value of over **USD 99.32 billion**, emphasizing the importance of IT services in the global economy.

About Brand Finance:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – David Haigh

Headquarters – London, United Kingdom (UK)

Established

–1996

NASA & Nokia Launch the First Mobile Network on Moon

Washington, D.C., (United States of America, USA) based National Aeronautics and Space Administration (**NASA**) and Espoo (Finland) based **Nokia** are set to use the first mobile network on the **Moon** as part of the Intuitive Machines' (**IM**)-2 mission.

- The project is part of NASA's **Artemis program**, aiming to return humans to the lunar surface by 2027.
- i. As part of the IM-2 mission, the **Athena** lander will launch to deploy Nokia's Lunar Surface Communication System (LSCS), which will use Earth-based cellular technology to establish

connectivity on the Moon.

ii. The network is based on 4G Long-Term Evolution (LTE) technology, ensuring reliable and high-speed connectivity for future lunar missions.

iii. This mobile network will support communication between astronauts, lunar vehicles, and mission control. It aims to enhance real-time data transmission, video calls, and remote operations on the Moon.

The Wealth Report 2025: India Ranked 4th Globally with 85,698 HNWI's; behind US, China and Japan

London (the United Kingdom, UK)-based global property consultant firm **Knight Frank** released the **19th** edition of 'The Wealth Report 2025'. As per the report, India ranked at **4th** position globally with estimated **85,698** High Net-Worth Individuals (HNWIs) in 2024, marking an increase of **6%** compared to 80,686 HNWIs in 2023.

- With this, India is home to 3.7% of the wealthy individuals globally.
- The United States of America (USA) with **905,413 HNWI's**, again emerged as the world's primary wealth creator in 2024, with approximately 40% of global HNWI's residing in the country. It is followed by China (471,634 HNWI's), and Japan (122,119 HNWI's).

i. The report has projected that the population of India's HNWI's will increase by **9.4%** i.e. to 93,753 HNWI's by **2028**.

ii. **India ranked at 3rd position** globally with **191** Indian billionaires in 2024, of which 26 joined the list of billionaires last year (up from just 7 in 2019).

- The report highlighted that the country's billionaire population witnessed 12% Year-on-Year (Y-o-Y) growth in 2024 compared to previous year.
- Also, the cumulative wealth of these Indian billionaires is estimated at USD 950 billion, ranked third globally, behind the USA (USD5.7 trillion) and Mainland China (USD1.34 trillion).

About Knight Frank:

Senior Partner & Group Chair– William Beardmore Gray
Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), India- Shishir Baijal
Headquarters- London, the United Kingdom (UK)
Established- 1896

Mobile World Congress 2025 held in Barcelona, Spain

The Mobile World Congress (MWC) **2025**, a major global event, is being held from March 3 to 6, 2025, at Fira Gran Via in **Barcelona, Spain**, bringing together over 101,000 attendees, more than 2,700 exhibitors, and representatives from over 200 countries to showcase advancements in technology. Union Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia**, Ministry of Communication (MoC) represented India at the event.

- The **theme** of the event was "Converge. Connect. Create." The key areas of discussion include 5G Inside (Fifth Generation Inside), AI+ (Artificial Intelligence Plus), Connect X, Enterprise Re-invented, Game Changers, and Digital DNA.

Note: MWC 2026, will be held from March 2 to 5, 2026, at Fira Gran Via, Barcelona, Spain.
i. Union Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia** officially inaugurated the **Bharat Pavilion** at the MWC 2025 in Spain. He announced that the **9th** edition of the India Mobile Congress (**IMC**), Asia's largest digital technology forum is set to take place in New Delhi(Delhi) from 8th – 11th October 2025.

ii. **Google**, a subsidiary of Alphabet Inc., headquartered in California, United States of America (USA), received two GLOMO Awards .

- Several Chinese companies, including Huawei, China Mobile, ZTE, and Xiaomi, won awards in different categories at MWC 2025.

Glass-Ceiling Index: Top 10 Best Countries for Working Women in 2025

London (the United Kingdom, UK)-based **The Economist Group**, a media company released its annual edition of '**Glass-Ceiling Index (GCI)**' on the occasion of International Women's Day (**IWD**) which is celebrated annually on March 8 worldwide. As per the index, **Sweden** secured **1st** position globally, and has replaced **Iceland** which topped the index for the last two consecutive years.

- Now, **Iceland** witnessed dropped in its ranking by one place i.e. from 1st spot (in 2024) to **2nd spot (in 2025)**.
- Among top 10 best countries for working women in 2025, **5** are Nordic countries: Sweden, Iceland, Finland (3rd), Norway (4th) and Denmark (9th).

i. The index evaluated the working conditions for women across the **29** countries that are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**).

ii. **New Zealand** emerged as the improved country on the index, moving up by 8 places to 6th spot.

iii. **Bottom 3 countries on the index are:** Japan (27th), South Korea (28th) and Turkey (29th).

- The report cited these 3 countries are influenced by deep-rooted societal norms and wage gap, which are the main factors for under-representation of women in leadership roles.

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

Secretary-General- Mathias Cormann

Headquarters- Paris, France

Established- 1961

SIPRI Report 2024: Ukraine Tops as World's Largest Arms Importer; India Ranks

2nd According to the report titled 'Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2024' released by Swedish think tank, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (**SIPRI**), **Ukraine** emerged as the top world's leading importer of major arms between **2020 and 2024**, with its imports skyrocketing nearly 100-fold compared to the 2015–19 period.

- **India** ranked the world's **2nd-largest arms importer** during 2020–2024, with a 9.3% decline in imports compared to 2015–2019, driven by increased domestic production and diversified sourcing. Qatar and Saudi Arabia ranked 3rd and 4th respectively.
- The United States of America (USA), France, and Russia were the **top 3 global arms exporters** during this period.

India's Main Arms Suppliers:

i. Russia remains India's top arms supplier, accounting for 36% of its total arms imports. However, this figure has significantly reduced from 55% in 2015–19 to 36% in 2020–24 due to India's increasing domestic defence production and sourcing from other countries.

ii. France emerged as the 2nd-largest supplier to India, accounting for 33% of total imports, mainly through the supply of Rafale jets and other military equipment. **Israel** followed, providing 13% of India's total imports.

India Chairs 68th Session of UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs For the 1st Time

India has been elected to chair the 68th session of the United Nations (UN) Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). **Ambassador Shambhu S. Kumaran**, India's Permanent Representative to the UN in Vienna, assumes the Chairmanship at the United Nations Office in Vienna, Austria from March 10 to 14, 2025.

- This marks the **first time** India holds this position, underscoring its commitment to global leadership in addressing international drug policy issues.

Participants:

- The session has drawn around **2,000 delegates** from over 150 countries,
- **Notable participants:** Vice President of Bolivia, Foreign Ministers from Ecuador, Colombia, Turkmenistan, and senior officials from the Philippines, Italy, Uruguay, and Malta.
- India was represented by a **10-member** inter-ministerial delegation comprising officials from the Department of Revenue (DoR), Ministry of Finance (MoF); Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB); Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE); Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN); Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

Exhibition & Side Events

The event features a comprehensive program of side events and exhibitions, such as the **i. European Union's (EU)** side event on "Shaping the future: preparedness for a changing drug landscape."

ii. India's Opium and Alkaloid Factories are featured in a special exhibition, highlighting India's commitment to the responsible use of medicinal opiates.

iii. Additionally, India is hosting 2 side events:



- First on March 11, 2025 focusing on the ‘**Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan**’ campaign against substance abuse;
- Second on March 12, 2025 in collaboration with the UNODC, discussing innovative digital technologies in drug law enforcement.

IQAir World Air Quality Report 2024: Chad Tops, India Ranks 5th Globally

Switzerland based air quality technology company **IQAir** released its **7th** edition of “World Air Quality Report 2024”, a comprehensive global survey of air quality, **Chad** tops the list in the most polluted countries with an average concentration of 91.8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (micrograms per cubic meter). **India** ranks **5th** after Chad, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Congo.



- In 2024, India registered an average Particulate Matter (**PM**) **2.5** concentration of (50.6 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), a (7% decline) from (54.4 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) in 2023. Despite this marginal improvement in the national average, **6** of the world’s ten most polluted cities are located in India.

Highlights:

i. According to the 2024 World Air Quality Report, only 7 out of 138 countries analyzed met the WHO annual PM2.5 guideline of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, while more than **90%** of the nations recorded unsafe levels.

- The **7 countries** that met the WHO annual PM2.5 guideline of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ are Australia (4.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), New Zealand (4.4 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), Estonia (4.6 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), Iceland (4.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), Barbados (3.1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), Grenada (3.2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and The Bahamas (2.3 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$).

ii. **Byrnihat** situated on the border of Assam and Meghalaya in **India** leads the ranking in the most polluted cities with a staggering annual average PM2.5 concentration of 128.2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, far exceeding the WHO guideline.

6 Indian Sites Included in Tentative List of UNESCO’s World Heritage Sites 2025

Six Indian sites were added to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (**UNESCO**) Tentative List of World Heritage Sites. This inclusion is a prerequisite for potential nomination to the World Heritage List. With these additions, India now has 62 sites on the Tentative List.

- The 6 Indian sites are: **Kanger Valley National Park** (Chhattisgarh); **Mudumal Megalithic Menhirs** (Telangana); **Ashokan Edict Sites** along the Mauryan Routes (Multiple States); **Chausath Yogini Temples** (Multiple States); **Gupta Temples** in North India (Multiple States) and **Palace-Fortresses of the Bundelas** in Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Uttar Pradesh (UP).

About the Tentative List:

i. The Tentative List is an inventory of properties that a country considers for nomination to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Inclusion in this list is a mandatory step before a site can

be officially nominated.

ii. The Tentative list consists of sites that can be either **cultural** or **natural** areas or objects for having outstanding universal value.

iii. This process ensures that heritage sites in the Tentative List meet the necessary criteria, allowing for proper evaluation and preparation before being considered for **nomination** to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

RBI's Survey: US, UK and Singapore Overtake GCC Nations as India's Top Remittance Hubs in FY24

Mumbai

(Maharashtra)-based Reserve Bank of India (RBI) published a paper titled '**Changing Dynamics of India's Remittances: Insights from the Sixth Round of India's Remittances Survey**' in its monthly bulletin. As per the results from the 6th round of India's remittance survey, there has been gradual shift in India's inward remittance patterns as advanced economies (AEs) have replaced the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations as the dominant source of remittances to India.

- As per RBI's survey, AEs such as: the United States of America (USA); Singapore; Canada and Australia together accounted **over 50%** of India's remittances in Financial Year 2023-24 (FY24). This reflects a shift in migration patterns towards a skilled Indian diaspora.

i. The combined share of GCC countries such as: UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain stood at 38% in FY24, compared to 47% recorded in FY17.

ii. **USA** emerged as the largest source of remittances, accounting **27.7%** of total inward remittances to India in FY24, increase from 23.4% in FY21.

iii. **State-wise distribution of remittances:** Among all Indian states, **Maharashtra** received the largest share of remittances, accounting 20.5% in FY24; followed by Kerala (19.7%), Tamil Nadu (TN) (10.4%), Telangana (8.1%); and Karnataka (7.7%).

iv. **Increase in India's share to international migrants:** India's share of international migrants has tripled from 6.6 million (in 1990) to **18.5 million (in 2024)**, with this, its share in international migrants has increased from 4.3% to more than 6% during the same period.

World's First 'Supersolid' Created from Light

An international team of scientists led by researchers at the Institute of Nanotechnology of the National Research Council (**CNR Nanotec**) in Lecce, Italy has transformed light into a "**Supersolid**" for the **1st time** globally. A supersolid is a rare and counterintuitive phase of matter that uniquely combines the rigidity of a crystal with the frictionless flow of a superfluid.

- The emergence of a supersolid phase of matter in a photonic crystal polariton condensate is published in the 'Nature' journal (published on 5 March 2025).
- Unlike traditional atomic Bose-Einstein Condensates (BECs), this research provides the **first experimental evidence** of a **supersolid** phase in a driven-dissipative, non-equilibrium system.
- Researchers created the supersolid state by condensing polaritons in a bound-in-the-continuum state within a photonic crystal waveguide.

JSW Steel becomes world's most valuable steelmaker with USD 30.3 bn market cap

Sajjan Jindal-led **JSW Steel Limited** has become the **world's most valuable steel company** by market capitalization, reaching **USD 30.3 billion**. This milestone places JSW Steel ahead of industry giants like the United States of America(USA) based Nucor Corporation(USD 29.4 billion) and Luxembourg based ArcelorMittal S.A(USD 27.1 billion).

- This milestone reflects its strategic growth, operational efficiency, and alignment with India's National Steel Policy, 2017.

i. Other prominent steel producers, including Japan's Nippon Steel Corp, and China's Baoshan Iron & Steel Company Limited, maintain market capitalisations between USD 21 billion and USD 27 billion.

ii. JSW Steel holds a stronger valuation compared to its Indian peers. Mumbai(Maharashtra) based Tata Steel Limited, India's second most valuable steel company, has a market capitalization of around USD 23 billion, while New Delhi(Delhi) based Jindal Steel and Power Limited is valued at USD 10.81 billion, and the state-owned SAIL stands at USD 5.5 billion.

iii. India's steel production rose by 3.5% to 37.38 million tonnes(MT) in the 3rd Quarter of the Financial Year 2024-25(Q3 FY25), while steel consumption grew by 6.8% to 38.46 MT.
Note: Founded in 1982, JSW Steel is the flagship company of the JSW Group. Headquartered in Mumbai, it operates an integrated steel plant in Toranagallu, Karnataka, and has expanded its footprint both across India and globally.

Indonesia Joins BRICS-Backed NDB as Its 11th Member

Indonesia officially became the **11th member** of the Shanghai (China) based New Development Bank (**NDB**), formerly known as the BRICS Development Bank. This strategic move aims to enhance Indonesia's access to funding for infrastructure projects and national development programs.

- The decision was approved following a meeting between **Dilma Vana Rousseff**, President of NDB, and **Prabowo Subianto Djojohadikusumo**, President of Indonesia, at the State Palace in Jakarta, Indonesia.
- The other **10 members of NDB** are Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Russia, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Uruguay.

Note: In January 2025, **Indonesia** officially joined **BRICS** as the **10th member**.

About New Development Bank (NDB):

i. The NDB, established in **2015** by BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

ii. It finances sustainable development and infrastructure projects in Emerging Market Economies and Developing Countries (EMDCs)

iii. The NDB has an initial authorized capital of **USD 100 billion**, divided into one million shares valued at USD 100,000 each.

iv. The **first president** of NDB was **K.V. Kamath** from India, who served from 2015 to 2020.

Defence

IAF Conducted Exercise 'Desert Hunt 2025' in Rajasthan

The Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted the integrated **Tri-Service** Special Forces exercise named **Exercise 'Desert Hunt 2025'** at Air Force Station Jodhpur, Rajasthan from 24 to 28 February 2025.

- The exercise brought together elite Special Forces units from the Indian Army (IA), the Indian Navy (IN), and the IAF to practice interoperability, coordination, and combat efficiency in simulated real-world scenarios.



About Exercise Desert Hunt 2025:

i. During the exercise, **Para** (Special Forces) of IA, **Marine Commandos** (MARCOS) of IN, and **Garud** (Special Forces) of IAF, participated together in a simulated combat environment

ii. This high-intensity exercise was aimed to improve interoperability, coordination, and synergy among the three Special Forces units to respond quickly and effectively to emergent security challenges.

iii. The exercise comprised airborne insertion, precise strikes, hostage rescue, counter-terrorism operations, combat free falls, and urban warfare scenarios that assessed the combat readiness of the forces under realistic situations.

iv. Senior military officials supervised the exercise that validated joint doctrines. It also provided a platform to encourage the commitment of IAF for strengthening national security through seamless inter-service cooperation.

Tejas Fighter Jet Successfully Test Fires Air-to-Air Astra Missile in Odisha

India's indigenously developed Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas **AF MK1** successfully test-fired the Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (**BVRAAM**) Astra off the coast of Chandipur, Odisha.

- The test was conducted by the Bengaluru (Karnataka) based Aeronautical Development Agency (**ADA**), demonstrating the missile's ability to achieve a direct hit on a flying target, validating its precision and operational readiness.

Key Details of the Test:

i. **Missile Specifications:** The Astra missile, designed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), is capable of engaging aerial targets at distances exceeding 100 kilometers (km) and features advanced guidance systems for high accuracy.

ii. **Aircraft Used:** The test utilized the LCA Tejas AF MK1 prototype, a 4.5-generation multirole fighter jet developed indigenously.

- Bengaluru (Karnataka) based Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) was the manufacturer of the Tejas aircraft.

iii. **Outcome:** All subsystems performed optimally, meeting mission objectives. The missile's success paves the way for its integration into the upgraded Tejas AF MK1A variant.

23rd Edition of India-France Bilateral Naval Exercise 'Varuna' Commences

The **23rd** edition of the bilateral naval exercise '**VARUNA**' between Indian Navy(IN) and France Navy commenced on March 19, 2025, in the Arabian Sea, India and will conclude on March 22, 2025. The exercise is being conducted in two phases: the **Harbour Phase** (March 19-20) and the **Sea Phase** (March 21-22).

- VARUNA 2025 will feature a dynamic range of maritime operations across sub-surface, surface, and air domains.
- The exercise enhances interoperability between the two navies, promotes best practices in maritime security operations, and reinforces stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Background:

i. The naval exercise VARUNA, initiated in 1993 and formally named '**VARUNA**' in 2001, has become a crucial element of Indo-French maritime cooperation.

ii. The exercise is held **annually**, rotating between the coasts of India and France, with occasional sessions taking place in international waters.

iii. The 22nd edition of Varuna Exercise held in the Mediterranean Sea from September 2 to 4, 2024.

About VARUNA 2025:**Participating Units:**

i. **India:** Aircraft carrier Indian Naval Ship (INS) Vikrant, MiG-29K fighter aircraft (a naval variant of the MiG-29 fighter jet), destroyers, frigates, and a Scorpene-class (Kalvari) submarine.

ii. **France:** Nuclear powered Aircraft carrier 'Charles de Gaulle', Rafale-M fighter aircraft, destroyers, and frigates.

14th Edition of India-Russia Naval Exercise 'INDRA' Commences Off Chennai

The **14th edition** of the bilateral naval exercise '**INDRA**' between **India and Russia** commenced off the coast of Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN). This six-day exercise, running until April 2, 2025, underscores the enduring maritime partnership and strategic cooperation between the two nations.

Background:

i. Launched in **2003**, Exercise 'INDRA' represents the enduring strategic partnership between the Indian Navy (IN) and the Russian Navy.

ii. Over the years, it has evolved into a symbol of maritime cooperation, showcasing both countries' commitment to enhancing naval interoperability and operational synergy.

Note: India hosted the **13th edition** of Exercise INDRA in the **Bay of Bengal** in November 2023.

Phases and Activities:

The exercise is being conducted in two phases:

i. **Harbour phase** is being organised from March 28 to 30, 2025 at **Chennai**. It includes opening ceremony, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs), reciprocal ship visits and sports fixtures, and pre-sail briefings for participating personnel.

ii. **Sea phase** will be conducted from March 31 to April 2, 2025 in the **Bay of Bengal**. It will feature advanced drills, including tactical maneuvers, live weapon firings, anti-air operations, underway replenishment, helicopter cross-deck landings, and the exchange of sea-riders.

Appointments or Resign/Retired

Tuhin Kanta Pandey Appointed as 11th Chairman of SEBI

Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Finance Secretary and Secretary of Department of Revenue(DoR), Ministry of Finance (MoF), was appointed as the **11th Chairman** of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).



- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved his appointment for an initial term of three years from the date he assumes charge or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- He will replace **Madhabi Puri Buch**, SEBI's first woman chairperson, whose term ends on 1 March 2025.

About Tuhin Kanta Pandey:

i. Tuhin Kanta Pandey, a 1987-batch Indian Administration Service (IAS) officer from the Odisha cadre.

- He has worked in both state and central governments, handling key responsibilities across various departments.

ii. He was the **longest-serving secretary** in the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), MoF. He also held charge of the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), MoF, as well as the Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions(MoPP&P).

iii. He also worked at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's (UNIDO) Regional Office for a while.

iv. He drafted the Union Budget 2025-26, which included **Rs 1 lakh crore** in tax reliefs for the middle class.

- He was involved in drafting the new Income Tax Bill, which aimed at replacing the Income Tax Act of 1961, which was 64 years old.

About Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI):

The SEBI was established as a non-statutory body on April 12, **1988**. It became a statutory body on January 30, **1992**, when the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992 came into force.

Headquarters – Mumbai, Maharashtra

Dr. Mayank Sharma Officially Took Charge as CGDA

Dr. Mayank Sharma officially took charge as the Controller General of Defence Accounts(**CGDA**), who is responsible for monitoring the Defence Accounts Departments (DAD) under the Ministry of Defence(MoD), which manages the financial aspects of the Indian Armed Forces and other defense related organisations.

- Dr. Sharma is a **1989-batch** Indian Defence Accounts Service (**IDAS**) officer, who has an extensive experience of more than 30 years in government service.
- Earlier, he served in various capacities within the Government of India (GoI), including the DAD, under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

i. Dr. Sharma held major positions in the cabinet secretariat and represented India as the Alternate Permanent Representative at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (UN-CCPCJ), and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

ii. He has also represented India at Laxenburg (Vienna)-based International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) and the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna.

- During his tenure as the head of the Consular Division at the Indian Embassy in Vienna, he was responsible for all consular affairs and handled high-level Indian delegations at UNODC.

Shubman Gill Becomes Brand Ambassador of MRF

In March 2025, Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN) based **MRF (Madras Rubber Factory) Limited**, India's largest tyre manufacturer, announced the appointment of **Shubman Gill**, the Indian cricketer and vice-captain of Team India for the 2025 International Cricket Council (ICC) Champions Trophy, as its new **brand ambassador**.

- This new deal marks the end of Shubman Gill's long-standing association with **CEAT Limited**, a tyre manufacturing company based in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

i. Shubman Gill, who was recently ranked as the No. 1 One Day International (ODI) batter in the ICC Men's Player Rankings 2025.

ii. This partnership will span all of his future cricket tournaments. This comes alongside their ongoing relationship with India's star batsman, **Virat Kohli**.

iii. With this, Shubman Gill joins an exclusive group of cricket legends, including Sachin Tendulkar, Virat Kohli, and Brian Lara, who have all graced the iconic MRF bat.

BCCI Appoints Rajeev Shukla and Ashish Shelar for ACC Leadership Roles

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, has appointed its vice-president **Rajeev Shukla** as India's representative on the Board of Directors (BoD) of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC). Former BCCI treasurer **Ashish Shelar** will serve as an Executive Board Member of the ACC.

i. Rajeev Shukla will represent BCCI as an Executive Board Member, while Ashish Shelar will take on the role of Ex-Officio Board Member.

ii. With BCCI secretary **Jay Shah** taking over as the **Chair** of the International Cricket Council (ICC), his position on the ACC Board became vacant, as he previously served as the ACC President.

iii. **Mohsin Naqvi** (Pakistani Politician) is set to lead the ACC in the next term.

Note: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) was established in 1928, and serves as the principal governing body for cricket in India.

Mark Joseph Carney Sworn in as 24th PM of Canada

Mark Joseph Carney, a former central banker and Canadian politician, was appointed as the **24th** Prime Minister (PM) of Canada. He secured the 'Liberal Party' leadership with **85.9%** of the vote, succeeding Incumbent PM **Justin Pierre James Trudeau**, after his 9 years tenure as PM.

- The swearing-in ceremony was held at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, Canada. He is the first Canadian PM to reach this position without having been elected to a political position.
- Prior to his appointment, he served as the Governor of both the Bank of Canada (Canada) and the Bank of England (the United Kingdom, UK).

Cabinet Appointments:

His cabinet comprises 24 members, reduced from 37 under Trudeau's administration. Key appointments include:

- **François-Philippe Champagne** as Finance Minister, **Mélanie Joly** as Foreign Minister, **Dominic LeBlanc**, transitioned from Finance to International Trade and **Chrystia Freeland**, former Deputy PM, now serving as Transport Minister.

About Mark Joseph Carney:

i. Mark Joseph Carney is an economist with a distinguished career in central banking and crisis management.

- He played a significant role in South Africa's post-apartheid reentry into international bond markets and was involved in addressing the 1998 Russian financial crisis.

ii. He served as the 8th **Governor of the Bank of Canada** (2008-2013) and **120th** Governor of Bank of England (2013-2020) managing the global financial crisis and Brexit's economic fallout.

Awards and Honors:

i. Officer of the Order of Canada (2014): Awarded for his leadership in financial policy development both nationally and globally.

ii. Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012): Presented in recognition of his significant contributions to public service in Canada.

iii. Euromoney's Central Bank Governor of the Year (2012): Bestowed for his exceptional leadership during his tenure at the Bank of Canada.

Kirsty Coventry Elected as 10th President of the IOC

Olympic Champion **Kirsty Leigh Coventry Seward**, a 41-year-old from Zimbabwe, has been elected as the **10th President** of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland for an **eight-year tenure**. She secured the position through a secret ballot among seven candidates during the **144th IOC Session** in Costa Navarino, Greece. She will succeed Thomas Bach.

- She will be the **first woman** and the first African to serve as the President of the IOC.
- As IOC President, Coventry will oversee major global sporting events, including the 2026 Olympic Winter Games in Milano Cortina, Italy.

About Kirsty Leigh Coventry Seward:

i. Born on **September 16, 1983**, Kirsty Coventry is a Zimbabwean athlete, political figure, and sports administrator known for her achievements in swimming.

ii. She **won multiple medals**, including gold, silver, and bronze, making her one of the most

decorated female swimmers in Olympic history.

Achievements :

Olympics

- In **2004 Summer Olympics in Athens(Greece)**, she won **three medals**, including a gold in the women's 200meter(m) backstroke, a silver in the 100m backstroke, and a bronze in the 200m medley.
- In **2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing(China)**, She won the gold medal in the 200m backstroke, defending her title from Athens 2004. She also won silver medals in the 200m individual medley, the 400m freestyle relay, and the 400m medley relay.

Records:

In 2008, Coventry broke her first world record in the 200 m backstroke at the Missouri (United States) Grand Prix. She bettered the mark set by Krisztina Egerszegi (Hungary) in August 1991, the second oldest swimming world record. Her new record was 2:06:39.

Career:

- i. Her fifth and final Olympic appearance was at the **2016 Rio Olympics**, after which she retired from competitive swimming. At the time of her retirement, she was tied with Hungary's Krisztina Egerszegi for winning the most individual Olympic medals in women's swimming.
- ii. In 2018, was elected as the **Chairperson of the IOC Athletes' Commission**, representing Olympic athletes worldwide.
- iii. In 2023, she was inducted into the **International Swimming Hall of Fame** for her contributions to the sport.

Bollywood Actor Ayushmann Khurrana Becomes 'Fit India' icon

Bollywood Actor **Ayushmann Khurrana** was named the official '**Fit India Icon**' by Union Minister Mansukh Laxmanbhai Mandaviya, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) during the inaugural ceremony of the first-of-its-kind **Fit India Carnival** event, a 3-day event emphasized the importance of fitness, held in New Delhi, Delhi.

- With this, Ayushmann has joined Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's **Fit India Movement**, launched in 2019 to inspire people to focus on their fitness and wellbeing.
- ii. The Fit India Movement highlights various physical activities to spread fitness awareness and promotes fitness as a core aspect of daily life in India.
- ii. The event also witnessed a launch of the book, "**Benefits of Cycling**", curated by the experts from the Sports Authority of India's (SAI) National Centre of Sports Sciences and Research (NCSSR) team.
- iii. In 2019, Ayushmann Khurrana was awarded the National Award for Best Actor of the Year for the movie Andhadhun. He shared the award with Bollywood actor Vicky Kaushal for the movie URI: The Surgical Strike.

MoL&J appoints Justice Harish Tandon as CJ of Orissa High Court

The Ministry of Law and Justice (MoL&J) has notified the appointment of **Justice Harish Tandon** as the Chief Justice (CJ) of the **Orissa High Court (HC)**. The appointment was made under Article 217(1) of the Constitution of India by Smt. Droupadi Murmu, President of India.

- The position of CJ of the Orissa HC remained vacant after the retirement of **Justice Chakradhari Sharan Singh** on January 19, 2025.
 - Justice Arindam Sinha has been serving as the Acting CJ during the interim period.
- i. Justice Tandon has been serving as a judge in the Calcutta High Court since his appointment on April 13, 2010.
- ii. He is currently **ranked** 7th in the All-India Seniority List of HC judges and is a senior puisne judge in the Calcutta HC.

Dilma Vana Rousseff Re-elected as President of NDB

Dilma Vana Rousseff, the former President of Brazil, was re-elected as the President of the New Development Bank (NDB) (formerly known as BRICS Development Bank) for a term extending until **2030**, following unanimous approval by the NDB board.

- This decision came after Russia proposed the extension during the 2024 BRICS summit in Kazan (Russia).
- Her tenure is set to conclude in **July 2025**. With her reappointment for another term, She will focus on enhancing financial independence for BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries, promoting sustainable development projects, and advancing efforts towards de-dollarization.

About Dilma Vana Rousseff:

- i. Dilma Vana Rousseff is a Brazilian economist and politician. She began her political career in the 1970s as an active member of left-wing and Marxist urban guerrilla groups opposing Brazil's military dictatorship.
- ii. In 2001, She joined the Workers' Party (PT), and in 2003, she was appointed Minister of Mines and Energy under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

- She then became the Chief of Staff, making her the first woman to hold this position in Brazil.

iii. She served as the **36th President of Brazil** from 2011 until she was impeached and removed from office on August 31, 2016. She was the only woman to hold the Brazilian presidency.

iv. She became the Chair of the NDB in March 2023, taking over from **Marcos Troyjo**.

About New Development Bank:

The New Development Bank (NDB), previously known as the BRICS Development Bank, is a global development bank formed by the BRICS countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

Headquarters – Shanghai, China

Established – 2012

Indian-origin Jay Bhattacharya Appointed as 18th Director of NIH

In March 2025, **Dr. Jay Bhattacharya**, an Indian-origin professor at Stanford School of Medicine, was confirmed as the **18th Director** of Maryland (the United States of America, USA) based National Institutes of Health (NIH) by the United States (US) Senate.

- The appointment followed a 53-47 roll-call vote during the first session of the 119th Congress. He succeeded **Dr. Monica M. Bertagnolli**, whose tenure concluded on 17 January 2025.

i. Dr. Bhattacharya serves as a professor of health policy at Stanford University and holds multiple affiliations, including research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) and senior fellow at Stanford's Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR), Freeman Spogli Institute, and the Hoover Institution.

ii. Notably, Dr. Bhattacharya co-authored the '**Great Barrington Declaration**' in October 2020, advocating for targeted protections as an alternative to widespread lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sanjay Kumar Mishra appointed full-time EAC-PM member

In March 2025, **Sanjay Kumar Mishra**, former Director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), was appointed as a **full-time member** of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM).

- This appointment fills the vacancy created after the demise of former chairman **Bibek Debroy** in November 2024.

i. A 1984-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer from Uttar Pradesh (UP), Sanjay Kumar Mishra started his career as an assistant director in the Income Tax department in Gorakhpur, UP.

ii. He served as **ED Director** from 19 November 2018 to 18 November 2023, with multiple extensions.

iii. During his tenure, he intensified the scrutiny of several former ministers and influential leaders, with the probe agency registering approximately 4,000 cases and carrying out over 3,000 searches.

iii. The **EAC-PM**, an independent advisory body, addresses critical economic issues and advises the Prime Minister (PM).

- The council is chaired by **Suman Berry**, with Sanjeev Sanyal and Dr. Shamika Ravi as full-time members. Part-time members include Rakesh Mohan, Dr. Sajjid Chinoy, Dr. Neelkanth Mishra, Nilesh Shah, Prof. TT Ram Mohan, and Dr. Poonam Gupta.

Rajiv Gauba appointed as 5th full-time member of NITI Aayog

In March 2025, the Government of India (GoI) appointed **Rajiv Gauba**, the former Cabinet Secretary (CS) of India, as the **5th full-time member** of the New Delhi (Delhi) based National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) with immediate effect.

- His inclusion in NITI Aayog is expected to strengthen the institution's strategic planning and policy formulation efforts, contributing to India's long-term development goals.

i. Rajiv Gauba, a 1982-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, has played a crucial role in shaping key government policies and reforms.

ii. He served as Cabinet Secretary for a record five years (2019–2024), making him the longest-serving in the role, surpassing Pradeep Kumar Sinha's tenure.

iii. He played a key role in major governance reforms, including the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, during his tenure as Union Home Secretary.

SBI Chairman Challa Sreenivasulu Setty Elected as Chairman of IBA

The managing committee of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has elected **Challa Sreenivasulu(C.S) Setty**, Chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI), as **Chairman** of the IBA for the next fiscal 2025-26.

He will serve in this role until the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the IBA.

- He was elected during the 77th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the IBA held in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- He succeeded **Matam Venkata Rao**, Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Central Bank of India (CBoI), who was appointed as Chairman of IBA in 2024.

Other Appointments:

i. The managing committee has also elected **3 Deputy Chairmen** from leading banks:

- **A. Manimekhalai**, Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Union Bank of India (UBI), Mumbai .
- **Swarup Kumar Saha**, MD and CEO of Punjab & Sind Bank (PSB), New Delhi (Delhi).
- **Madhav Nair**, Country Head & CEO of Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait (BBK) headquartered in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

About C.S Setty:

i. Challa Sreenivasulu Setty started his career in SBI in 1988 as a Probationary Officer (PO).

ii. He joined the Board of SBI as MD in January 2020 and headed Retail & Digital Banking (RDB) vertical from 2020 till 2022.

About the Indian Banks' Association (IBA):

IBA is an industry body that represents both Public sector banks (PSBs) and Private sector banks (PVBs). It is not a Statutory Body and is the premier service organisation and an association of Indian banks and financial institutions.

Honours/ Awards

97th Academy Awards – Oscars 2025: ‘Anora’ Won 5 awards, ‘The Brutalist’ won 3 awards

The **97th Edition of Academy Awards – Oscars 2025** was held on March 2, 2025 at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California, United States of America (USA). The Academy Awards annually hosted by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).



- **Anora** emerged as the biggest winner, securing 5 Oscars, including Best Picture, Best Director (Sean Baker), Best Actress (Mikey Madison), Best Film Editing, and Best Writing (Original Screenplay).
- **The Brutalist** won 3 awards, including Best Actor (Adrien Brody), Best Cinematography (Dávid Jancsó), and Best Original Score (Daniel Blumberg).
- **Emilia Pérez**, a French musical crime comedy, earned 2 awards, including Best Supporting Actress (Zoe Saldaña) and Best Original Song (“El Mal”).
- American Actor, **Adrien Brody** Won Best Actor for “The Brutalist,” marking his second Oscar win following his first for ‘The Pianist’ in 2003.

Nominations of 97th Academy Awards:

i. The 97th Academy Awards recognized outstanding achievements in **23 categories**, honoring films that were released in **2024**. Comedian **Conan O’Brien** hosted the ceremony, marking his first time in this role.

ii. The nominations of the 97th Academy Awards were announced by American Actress, **Rachel Sennott** and American actor, **Bowen Yang** on January 23, 2025 at the Samuel Goldwyn Theater in Beverly Hills (USA).

iv. The only **Indian film** to make it to the Oscars shortlist was ‘**Anuja**’, which was nominated for Best Live Action Short Film but lost to I’m Not Robot.

About Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS):

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Bill Kramer (William Samuel Kramer II)

Headquarters- Beverly Hills, California, USA

Established-1927

Chinese Architect Liu Jiakun wins ‘Pritzker Architecture Prize’ 2025

Chinese architect **Liu Jiakun** was named as the ‘**2025 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate**’, the highest accolade in the field of Architecture. He will be honoured at a celebration in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) in May 2025.



- Liu Jiakun, becomes the **54th laureate** and the **2nd Chinese architect** to receive this distinction, following Wang Shu in 2012.
- The Pritzker Prize was awarded for his reverence for culture, history, and nature, highlighting his ability to imagine and construct new worlds, free from any aesthetic or stylistic constraint.

About the Pritzker Architecture Prize:

i. The Pritzker Architecture Prize was established in 1979 by entrepreneur **Jay A. Pritzker** and

his wife, Cindy through their Hyatt Foundation, Chicago, the United States of America (USA).

ii. It is an international award presented annually to honor a living architect whose work demonstrates consistent excellence in the field of architecture.

iii. It is often referred to as “architecture’s Nobel” and “the profession’s highest honor.” The prize includes a **USD 100,000** grant and a **bronze medallion**.

iv. In 2024, Japanese architect **Riken Yamamoto** was awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize.

Note: Indian Architect Balkrishna Vithaldas (**BV**) **Doshi** was the first Indian to win the Pritzker Prize in 2018 for his outstanding lifelong contribution to architecture.

About Liu Jiakun:

i. In 1999, **Liu Jiakun** founded ‘**Jiakun Architects**’ in Chengdu (China) and over 4 decades, he has completed over **30 projects** across China, encompassing academic, cultural, civic, commercial, and urban-planning initiatives.

Nithin Kamath of Zerodha Named EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2024

Nithin Kamath, Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Bengaluru (Karnataka) based Zerodha, was named the Ernst and Young (**EY**) **Entrepreneur Of The Year (EOY) 2024**.

- Union Minister **Bhupender Yadav**, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) felicitated awards to EOY 2024 winners at an event held in New Delhi, Delhi.

i. Nithin Kamath is a self-made entrepreneur, who turned Zerodha into a billion-dollar company. He was recognized for his innovative low-margin, high-volume brokerage model that reshaped the industry.

ii. He will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur Of The Year (WEOY) Awards in Monte Carlo, Monaco in June 2025.

iii. **Other Awards:** **K.V. Kamath**, Chairman of Jio Financial Services Limited (JFSL), received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to India’s financial sector and **S. Somanath**, former Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), was honored with the Special Jury Award for his instrumental role in advancing India’s space missions.

PM Narendra Modi Conferred ‘Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados’

Prime Minister (PM) **Narendra Modi** conferred the prestigious ‘**Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados**’, one of the highest national honors awarded by the Government of Barbados. Union Minister of State (MoS) **Pabitra Margherita**, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) received the prestigious award on behalf of PM Modi.

- The award was presented by Barbados President **Dame Sandra Mason** in recognition of PM Modi’s strategic leadership and critical assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados is given to non-citizens who have made outstanding contributions to Barbados or humanity in areas such as leadership, international relations, culture, or social development.

Key People:

The ceremony, held at the Government House in Bridgetown, Barbados, was attended by

Barbadian PM Mia Amor Mottley, Foreign Minister Kerrie Symmonds, and other dignitaries.

Key Points:

i. On 20 November 2024, Barbadian PM Mia Amor Mottley announced an award recognizing PM Modi's significant role in strengthening global cooperation, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The announcement was made during a meeting between the two leaders on the sidelines of the 2nd **India-CARICOM** (Caribbean Community) Leaders' Summit in Georgetown, Guyana.

YouGov India Value Rankings 2025: Amazon, Flipkart, and Amul Rank as India's Top Brands

London, the United Kingdom(UK) based YouGov, an international online research data and analytics technology group released the 'India Value Rankings 2025'. **Amazon** based in Washington, United States of America (USA), **Flipkart** Private Limited based in Bengaluru, Karnataka and Anand Milk Union Limited(**Amul**) based in Anand, Gujarat are the top three most valued brands in India.

- Amul (Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation), India's largest milk cooperative, is the only Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) brand to secure a position in the top three.

i. The YouGov India Value Rankings 2025 provide insights into the most valued brands based on **consumer preferences**. The rankings cover **six** key sectors, including airlines, consumer electronics, automobiles, general insurance, travel booking platforms, and electronic (e)-commerce.

ii. **Men prefer** brands like Tata Motors and Air India, highlighting their interest in automobiles and national airlines, while **women favor** Swiggy and Malabar Gold & Diamonds, showing a preference for convenience services and jewellery.

About Anand Milk Union Limited(AMUL):

Managing Director(MD) – Jayen Mehta

Brand Finance Insurance 100 – 2025: LIC Ranks 3rd Among World's Strongest Insurance Brands

According to the Brand Finance Insurance 100 – 2025 report, the Life Insurance Corporation of India (**LIC**), headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, has been ranked **third** among the **world's strongest insurance brands**, achieving a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 88 out of 100. In terms of overall brand value, LIC holds the **12th position** globally among the **most valuable insurance brands**.



- Poland-based PZU, has secured the **top position** among the world's strongest insurance brands with a BSI score of 94.4 with AAA+ brand rating. It is followed

by China Life Insurance (AAA+ brand rating) which holds the **second position** with a BSI score of 93.5.

- The report highlights that the **top 100 insurance brands** have witnessed a **9% increase** in brand value in 2025, driven by factors such as better underwriting performance, higher investment income, rising interest rates (IR), and improved profitability.

Note: Brand Finance releases the Insurance 100 report annually, ranking the world's most valuable and strongest insurance brands based on their market performance and brand strength.

Most valuable insurance brands:

i. Ping An Insurance has retained its position as the most valuable insurance brand for the ninth consecutive year, maintaining a brand value of USD 33.6 billion.

ii. Allianz has seen a 9% increase in its brand value, reaching USD 26.7 billion.

iii. Nissay/Nippon Life Insurance has experienced the fastest growth, with its brand value rising by 94% to USD 9.2 billion.

About Brand Finance:

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)- David Haigh

Headquarters– London, United Kingdom (UK)

Established– 1996

Dr. Jayashree Vencatesan Becomes 1st Indian to Receive 'Ramsar Award' for Wetland Conservation

Dr. Jayashree Vencatesan, the Co-founder of Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN) based Care Earth Trust, has become the **first Indian** to receive the '**Ramsar Women Change Makers in the World Wetlands Award 2025**' in the '**Wise Use of Wetland**' category for Wetland Conservation. The award recognises her efforts in protecting India's wetlands, particularly the famous **Pallikaranai Marsh** in Chennai.



- On the eve of International Women's Day (IWD on 8th March 2025), the Ramsar Secretariat based in Gland, Switzerland announced her name as one of **12 women** recognized in the **2nd** edition of 'Women changemakers in the world of wetlands'.

About Jayashree Vencatesan:

i. Dr. Jayashree Vencatesan is renowned for her decades-long commitment to preserving India's wetlands, especially the Pallikaranai Marsh in Chennai, starting with just **USD 350** to protect these vital ecosystems.

ii. Her documentation of Pallikaranai Marsh highlighted its crucial role in flood mitigation and as a habitat for **337 species**.

iii. A social scientist with expertise in conservation and ecological restoration, she has received prestigious fellowships, published **30** scientific papers, and authored a book.

iv. She is the 1st Indian grantee of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (**STRI**) – Center for Tropical Studies (**CTS**) short-term research fellowship based in Panama, Central America.

v. Her organisation Care Earth Trust was awarded the Indira Gandhi 'Paryavaran Puraskar' in

2009 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change(MoEFCC) for its work on conserving the Pallikaranai Marsh and the Nanmangalam Forest.

About the Women changemakers in the world of wetlands:

- i. The Award, launched in 2024 to honour women across the world for conserving and protecting wetlands.
- ii. Categories include ‘Wise Use of Wetlands’, ‘Wetland Innovation’, and ‘Ramsar Wetland Conservation’ Awards recognizing efforts in sustainable management, innovative techniques, and youth-driven conservation initiatives.

ASQ Award 2024 : CSMIA Bags Best Airport in Asia-Pacific for 8th consecutive year

The Airports Council International (ACI) in partnership with Madrid(Spain) based travel technology company Amadeus, presented Mumbai(Maharashtra) based Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) with the 2024 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Award for Best Airport over 40 Million Passengers in the Asia-Pacific region, marking its eighth consecutive win.

- i. In the 2024 ASQ Awards, 35 out of 95 airports worldwide were honored, with 68 awards being claimed by airports in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East regions.



- The top performers were Indonesia, which won 10 airport awards, China with 8, and India with 7.
- ii. A total of **28 airports** in the **Asia-Pacific region** were honored, including Beijing Daxing International Airport (China), Qingdao International Airport (China), Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport (China), and Seoul Incheon International Airport (South Korea), among others.
- iii. ASQ awards, launched in 2006, are based on real-time passenger feedback collected through live surveys, evaluating over **30** key performance indicators across the entire airport journey. It recognizes airports that excel in service innovation, smart technology, and passenger-centric design.

About Airports Council International (ACI):

Director General (DG) – Justin Erbacchi

Headquarters – Montreal, Canada

Founded – 1991

Hockey India 7th Annual Awards: Harmanpreet Singh & Savita Punia Won Hockey India Player of the Year Award

In Indian Men's hockey team captain, **Harmanpreet Singh** was honoured with the prestigious Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of the Year 2024 in the men's category, at the **Hockey India 7th Annual Awards 2024** held at Le Meridien, Connaught Palace in New Delhi, Delhi. This marked his **2nd** Hockey India Player of the Year award (2021).

- While, former hockey women's team goalkeeper, **Savita Punia** was honoured with the Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of the Year 2024 in the women's category. This marked her **3rd** Hockey India Player of the Year award (2022 and

2023). The recipients of Balbir Singh Sr. Award received a monetary prize of **Rs 25 lakh**.

i. This year Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award was bestowed upon winning team of **1975 Men's World Cup**, along with monetary prize of **Rs 50 lakh**.

- The Indian Men's Hockey team under the captaincy of **Ajit Pal Singh** defeated Pakistan's team in the finals of Hockey World Cup held in 1975 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

ii. Savita Punia was also named **Hockey India Baljit Singh Goalkeeper of the Year award for 2024** and received cash prize of Rs 5 lakh.

iv. **Prasar Bharati**, the official broadcaster of the Hero Hockey India League 2024-25, was conferred with the Hockey India Jaman Lal Sharma Award for invaluable contribution 2024, in recognition of its role in expanding league's reach across the country as well as international-level.

Veteran Indian Actor and Padma Awardee Chiranjeevi Honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award at UK Parliament

Veteran Indian Actor and Padma awardee, **Konidela (K) Chiranjeevi** conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Public Service through Cultural Leadership from Bridge India during a ceremony held at the United Kingdom (UK)'s Parliament known as House of the Commons, in London, the UK.

- The event was organised by British-Indian Member of Parliament (MP), Navendu Mishra.

About K. Chiranjeevi:

i. K. Chiranjeevi has an extensive experience of over 40 years in Indian cinema and had worked in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Hindi films.

- Some of his notable works include: 'Rudra Veena', 'Indra', 'Tagore', 'Swayam Krushi', among others.

ii. He was honoured with **Padma Bhushan**, India's **3rd** highest civilian award in the category of 'Arts' in **2006**.

- In May 2024, he was bestowed with **Padma Vibhushan**, India's 2nd highest civilian award, in the field of Arts for his contributions in Indian cinema.

iii. He started his political career in 2008, with the launch of Praja Rajyam Party (**PRP**) and later, merged PRP with Indian National Congress (INC) in February 2011.

- He has served as MP to Rajya Sabha (Upper House of the Parliament) from 2012 to 2018.

iv. He has also served as Union Minister of State (MoS) for Tourism with independent charge (IC) from 2012 to 2014.

Austrian Hydrologist Günter Blöschl Won 2025 Stockholm Water Prize

Renowned Austrian hydrologist, **Günter Blöschl** has been named as the recipient of **Stockholm Water Prize for year 2025** by the Prize Committee. He won this award in

recognition of his world-renowned work on flood risk reduction, water resource management, flood scaling, and regional process hydrology.

- He will officially receive this prize by His Majesty (HM) **King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden**, during World Water Week (WWW) observed annually in the month of August at Stockholm City Hall in Sweden.

About

Günter

Blöschl:

i. He is a professor at the Vienna University of Technology (UT) in Vienna, Austria.

ii. At present, he is serving as the head of the Institute of Hydraulic Engineering and Water Resources Management as well as the Director of the Doctoral Programme of Water Resources Systems at Vienna TU, that he founded over 15 years ago.

- He is also working as a part-time professor at the University of Bologna, Italy.

iii. He has received various awards for his notable water-related work like: ERC Advanced Grant from the European Research Council and Robert E. Horton Medal from American Geophysical Union.

iv. He is a full member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, a member of the United States of America (USA)-based National Academy of Engineering (NAE).

About Stockholm Water Prize:

i. The award is considered as the **‘Nobel Prize of Water’**, established in **1991** by the Stockholm Water Foundation.

ii. The award is presented annually by Stockholm (Sweden)-based Stockholm Water Foundation (**SWF**) in cooperation with the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (**RSAS**), to an individual, organisation, or institution for exceptional water-related achievements.

- The award is also supported by: London (the United Kingdom, UK)-based International Water Association (IWA); (United States of America, USA)-based Water Environment Federation (WEF); and The City of Stockholm in Sweden.

ii. The recipient will be awarded a **USD 150,000** cash prize along with an Orrefors crystal sculpture.

iii. Japanese professor Taikan Oki won the Stockholm Water Prize for year 2024.

Córdoba, Fortaleza & Greater Manchester Honored at 2025 Partnership for Healthy Cities Summit in France

The three cities **Córdoba** (Argentina), **Fortaleza** (Brazil), and **Greater Manchester** (the United Kingdom, UK) were honoured at the **2025 Partnership for Healthy Cities Summit** held in Paris, France for their significant efforts in preventing Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and injuries.

- The awards recognised measurable improvements made by the three cities in tackling NCDs such as **heart diseases, cancer, diabetes**, and injuries which cause over 80% of global deaths, as per the the World Health Organization (WHO).

About The Partnership for Healthy Cities Summit 2025:

i. The Partnership for Healthy Cities Summit is an annual event that brings together global leaders to discuss and promote effective strategies for preventing NCDs and injuries in urban settings.

ii. The 2025 summit was held in Paris from March 18 to 21, 2025. The summit was co-hosted by **Bloomberg Philanthropies**, the **WHO**, **Vital Strategies**, and the **City of Paris**.

iii. The summit hosted mayors and officials from 61 cities, including leaders from Bogotá (Colombia), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Guadalajara (Mexico), Kampala (Uganda), Montevideo (Uruguay), Quito (Ecuador), and Santiago (Chile).

iv. The Partnership for Healthy Cities, launched in **2017**, is a global network of 74 cities aimed at reducing NCDs and injuries. The network impacts over 300 million people globally and provides policy training through its Policy Accelerator initiative.

Achievements of the Cities:

i. **Córdoba, Argentina:** Implemented a healthy school food policy, eliminating sugary drinks and ultra-processed foods in all schools by 2026. So far, 26 schools and 15,000 students (out of 138,000) have benefited from this initiative.

ii. **Fortaleza, Brazil:** Established the city's first legal framework for air quality surveillance in 2023. The decree ensures continuous monitoring of air pollutants and installed low-cost sensors to guide evidence-based policymaking.

Eminent Hindi Writer Vinod Kumar Shukla selected for 59th Jnanpith Award

Renowned Hindi poet and novelist **Vinod Kumar Shukla** has been selected for the **59th Jnanpith Award (2024)** for his remarkable contribution to Hindi literature. The announcement was made by a distinguished selection committee, chaired by **Pratibha Rai**, a previous Jnanpith awardee.

- With this award, he becomes the **first writer from Chhattisgarh** and the **12th Hindi author** to receive this honor.

About Jnanpith Award:

i. The Jnanpith Award, established in **1961**, is India's highest literary honor, presented annually by the **Bharatiya Jnanpith** to recognize outstanding contributions to literature.

- The award is presented to authors who have made outstanding contributions to literature in any of the 22 officially recognized languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

ii. The recipient is awarded **Rs 11 lakh**, a bronze statue of Goddess Vagdevi, and a citation.

iii. The first-ever award was presented in **1965** to Malayalam writer G. Sankara Kurup.

- The 58th Jnanpith Award was conferred upon Sampooran Singh Kalra (known as Gulzar) and Jagadguru Rambhadracharya.

About Vinod Kumar Shukla:

i. Vinod Kumar Shukla's literary career took off with the publication of his first poetry collection, *Lagbhag Jai Hind*, in 1971.

- His major novels include 'Naukar Ki Kameez', 'Deewar Mein Ek Khidki Rahti Thi' and 'Khilega To Dekhenge',

Violinist R K Shriramkumar Receives 2025 Sangita Kalanidhi Award of The Music Academy

In Eminent Carnatic violinist **R K Shriramkumar** has been conferred with the **Sangita Kalanidhi award** for 2025 by Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN) based **The Music Academy, Madras** to recognize his exceptional contributions to Carnatic music.

- His selection aligns with the 250th birth anniversary of Muthuswami Dikshitar in 2025.
- In addition to the Sangita Kalanidhi award, The Music Academy has announced other honors for 2025. The awards will be presented at The Music Academy's events, including the 99th Annual Conference and Concerts, and the 19th Annual Dance Festival scheduled from December 15, 2025, to January 1, 2026.

i. The Sangita Kala Acharya award was presented to a distinguished Carnatic singer and former A-Top graded artist at All India Radio (AIR) **Shyamala Venkateswaran** and a leading Taval artist **R Govindarajan**,

ii. The Musicologist Award was given to **Professor C.A. Sridhara** and the Nritya Kalanidhi Award was conferred to **Urmila Satyanarayana**,

Rana Dasgupta won Yale's 2025 Windham Campbell Prize for Non-fiction

Rana Dasgupta, renowned British author of Indian origin has been named the winner of **2025 Windham Campbell Prize** in the '**non-fiction category**' by (United States of America, USA)-based Yale University.

- He received this award in recognition of his insightful critique of global hypercapitalism, industrialization, politics, and class, as demonstrated in his book '**Capital: A Portrait of Twenty-First Century Delhi**', which was shortlisted for both the Orwell Prize and the Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize.

Other Winners:

i. This year total **8 authors** (including Rana Dasgupta) have been selected as winners of 2025 Windham Campbell Prizes in recognition of their literary work.

ii. Name of other recipients in different categories are: **Fiction Category:** Sigrid Nunez (United States of America, USA) and Anne Enright (Ireland)

- **Non-Fiction category:** Patricia J Williams (USA);
- **Drama category:** Roy Williams (United Kingdom, UK) and Matilda Feyisayo Ibini (United Kingdom, UK).

About Windham Campbell Prizes:

i. The awards were established in **2013** by writer Donald Windham in memory of Sandy Campbell.

ii. The awards are administered by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, part of Yale University Library.

iii. These awards are presented annually to authors working in '**English**' language from anywhere in the world across **4** main categories: fiction, non-fiction, drama and poetry.

Sports

IOC Grants Provisional Recognition to World Boxing

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) Executive Board (EB) granted provisional recognition to World Boxing (WB) as the International Federation (IF) governing global boxing within the Olympic Movement.

- This decision marks a significant step toward boxing's inclusion in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

i. World Boxing was founded in **April 2023** and currently has 78 member associations across 5 continents and has established 4 continental federations.

- Over half of the boxers and medalists at the 2024 Paris Olympics are affiliated with WB.

ii. On May 7, 2024, World Boxing is scheduled to have its **first official meeting** with the IOC to begin planning for boxing's Olympic future.

Note: Boxing has been part of the Olympic Games since 1904, but in 2019, the IOC suspended recognition of the International Boxing Association (IBA) due to various problems. After the IOC de-recognized the IBA in June 2023, boxing was not included in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

2024-25 Ranji Trophy: Vidarbha defeated Kerala to Clinch 3rd Title

The Vidarbha cricket team won the 2024-25 Ranji Trophy by defeating Kerala cricket team based on a first-innings lead in the final at the Vidarbha Cricket Association(VCA) Stadium in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

- The Vidarbha cricket team was led by Akshay Wadkar and the Kerala cricket team was led by Sachin Baby.
- This victory marks Vidarbha's **3rd Ranji Trophy title**, having previously won in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 seasons.
- The 2024-25 Ranji Trophy saw a record number of 32 teams participating, making it one of the most competitive editions of India's premier domestic cricket tournament. The teams were divided into 4 groups, each consisting of 8 teams.

Prize Money:

The champions Vidarbha received **Rs.5 crore**, while the runners-up, Kerala awarded Rs.3 crore.

Key Points:

i. Vidarbha's impressive form was evident throughout the season. They topped their group in the league stage, winning six out of seven matches and accumulating 40 points.

ii. Alongside their Ranji win, Vidarbha also finished as the runner-up in the 50-overs **Vijay Hazare Trophy**, demonstrating their strength across both formats.

Awards:

- Man of the Match: Danish Malewar(Vidarbha)
- Player of the Tournament: Harsh Dubey of (Vidarbha:476 runs and 69 wickets)

About the Ranji Trophy:

- i.The Ranji Trophy is the premier first-class cricket tournament in India. It is named after the famous cricketer Ranjitsinhji, who was one of the first Indian cricketers to play for England in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- ii.The tournament, which began in 1934, is organized by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- iii.It is played in a round-robin league format, followed by knockout rounds leading to the final.
- iv. Mumbai (previously known as Bombay) is the most successful team in the Ranji Trophy history, having won the title a record 42 times.

Australian Cricketer & Former Captain Steve Smith Announces Retirement from ODI Cricket

Steven Peter Devereux Smith, the stand-in captain of Australia, announced his retirement from One Day International (ODI) cricket following the team's semi-final loss to India in the 'International Cricket Council (ICC) Champions Trophy 2025' in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

- His retirement marks the end of a 15-year career in the 50-over format that included **170** ODI matches, **5,800** runs at an average of 43.28, **12** centuries, and **35** half-centuries and taking 28 wickets.
- However he will continue to play Test and Twenty20 International (T20I) cricket.

Note: ICC Champions Trophy 2025 hosted by Pakistan across three venues in Pakistan and one in the United Arab Emirates (Dubai).

Career Highlights and Achievements:

- i.**Steve Smith** made his ODI debut in 2010 against the West Indies as a spin-bowling all-rounder, and over time, he evolved into one of Australia's most prolific ODI batsmen, ranking 12th among Australia's all-time run-scorers in the format.
- ii.He served as Australia's full-time ODI captain from 2015 to 2018 and led the team in 64 matches, securing 32 wins and a 50% win rate.
- iii.He played pivotal roles in Australia's 2015 and 2023 ICC Cricket World Cup victories and was the first player to record 5 consecutive 50-plus scores in a World Cup.

- **2015 World Cup:** Scored 402 runs, including a century (105) in the semi-final against India and an unbeaten 56 in the final against New Zealand.
- **2023 World Cup:** Played a key role in Australia's record-extending 6th title, contributing crucial knocks in the knockout stages.

Awards and Honors:

- i.**ICC Cricket World Cup Player of the Tournament** (2015) : Named for his contributions to Australia's World Cup victory, including scoring 402 runs, with a memorable century in the semi-final.
- ii.**Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year** (2015): A recognition



of his overall excellence across all formats during 2015. And also ICC Test Player of the Year (2015)

iii. Recipient of the Allan Border Medal (2015, 2018, 2021): Given to Australia's best player in all formats across the year.

vi. Australian Men's ODI Player of the Year (2015, 2021)- Awarded for his outstanding performances in ODIs.

FIFA Banned Russia, Congo from 2026 World Cup

Zurich(Switzerland)-based international governing body of football International Federation of Association Football (**FIFA**) has banned **Russia** and **Congo** from **2026 FIFA World Cup** which is set to be hosted jointly by the United States of America (USA), Canada and Mexico.

- The 23rd edition of FIFA World Cup will feature 104 matches being played across 16 cities in the 3 countries from June 11 to July 19, 2026.

Key Points:

i. Russian Football Union (**RFU**) has been banned from FIFA and Union of European Football Associations(UEFA) competitions, ever since Russia invaded Ukraine since 2022.

ii. While, Congo has been excluded from the tournament due to unlawful 3rd-party interference in management of the Congolese Football Federation (**FECOFoot**).

iii. Earlier, it had banned Pakistan from participating in the tournament along with them. Later, FIFA lifted the suspension on Pakistan's apex football body following the necessary changes were made to ensure smooth governance of the sport in the country.

- With this, Pakistan will now able to participate in 2027 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup qualifiers.

iv. Due to exclusion of these countries, FIFA has redistributed the available spots in the expanded 48-team format i.e. number of teams from Europe has increased from 13 to 16; Africa has secured 10 additional slots while, Asia region secured 9 qualification spots.

Note: Since 1950, FIFA has banned **17 countries** including Germany, Japan, South Africa, Mexico and Chile, for violating its regulations.

ICC Champions Trophy 2025: India beat New Zealand by 4 wickets, Claims 3rd Champions Trophy title

India won the **9th Edition** of the International Cricket Council (**ICC**) Champions Trophy title by defeating **New Zealand** with 4 wickets in the final held at Dubai International Cricket Stadium, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). This victory marks India's **3rd win** in the history of the tournament, having previously won in 2002 and 2013.

- India successfully chased the target of 252 runs, scoring 254/6 in 49 overs. **Rohit Sharma**, the captain top-scored with 76 runs, and Shreyas Iyer added 48 runs to the total.
- **New Zealand** posted a total of 251/7 in their 50 overs. Daryl Mitchell contributed 63 runs, while Michael Bracewell remained not out on 53 runs.

Note: Since 2023 India won 23 matches out of 24 played across the last 3 Men's ICC events .

Highlights:

i. **Rachin Ravindra** (New Zealand) emerged as a standout performer in the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, earning both the '**Golden Bat**' and '**Player of the Tournament**' honors for his exceptional all-round contributions.

ii. **Ravindra Jadeja** (India) earned the '**Fielder of the Match**' award for his exceptional fielding in the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy.

iii. The 2025 ICC Champions Trophy was held from February 19 to March 9, 2025. **Pakistan** served as the primary host, with matches also played in Dubai, UAE.

iv. The tournament featured the **top 8 Men's National Teams**, including Afghanistan (debut appearance), Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, and South Africa.

v. **Shikhar Dhawan**, India's highest run-scorer in Champions Trophy history with 701 runs across two editions, has been appointed as one of the four Event Ambassadors for the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, alongside former Pakistani cricketer **Sarfraz Ahmed**, an Australian all-rounder, **Shane Watson**, and New Zealand cricketer, **Tim Southee**.

Lando Norris wins F1's season-opening Australian Grand Prix 2025

British Formula one (F1) driver **Lando Norris** of **McLaren** claimed victory at the 2025 season opener **Australian Grand Prix**, held at the Albert Park Circuit in Melbourne, Australia.

- Red Bull Racing's Max Verstappen. George Russell of Mercedes secured second and third place respectively

Race Highlights:

i. Norris started from pole position and led the race despite intense pressure from teammate Oscar Piastri and Verstappen.

ii. Norris's victory earned him 25 points, placing him at the top of the 2025 Formula 1 (F1) Drivers' Championship standings. The race highlighted the challenges of wet-weather racing and strategic tire management.

iii. British driver Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari) finished 10th in a disappointing debut for the team.

Key Performances:



Rank	Name	Country
1	Lando Norris (McLaren)	United Kingdom
2	Max Verstappen (Red Bull Racing)	Dutch-Belgian
3	George Russell (Mercedes)	United Kingdom

India Masters clinch Inaugural IML 2025 Title, beat West Indies Masters by 6 wickets

India Masters Cricket Team clinched the inaugural International Masters League (IML) 2025 by defeating West Indies Masters Cricket Team by **6 wickets** in the final at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. This victory marked India Masters' **first title** in the tournament, successfully chasing down a target of **149 runs** with 17 balls to spare.

- India Masters was led by Captain **Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar** and the West Indies Masters was led by Captain **Brian Charles Lara**.
- The tournament was held from February 22 to March 16, 2025, with matches played in Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra), Raipur (Chhattisgarh), and Vadodara (Gujarat).

Prize Money:

The Winners, India Masters, were awarded **Rs.1,00,00,000** (1 crore rupees) and the Runners-up, West Indies Masters, received **Rs.50,00,000** (50 lakh rupees).

About International Masters League (IML) 2025:

- i. The International Masters League (IML) is a Twenty20 Internationals (T20I) cricket tournament featuring former international cricketers.
- ii. The inaugural season took place in **2025**, with 6 teams participating: Australia Masters, England Masters, India Masters, South Africa Masters, Sri Lanka Masters and West Indies Masters.
- iii. IML 2025 featured a tournament structure comprising a round-robin group stage, followed by knockout semifinals and a final.

World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2025: India Tops Medal Tally with 134 Medals

India concluded the 2025 World Para Athletics Grand Prix held at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi (Delhi), securing the top spot on the medal table with **134 medals**, including 45 Gold, 40 Silver, and 49 Bronze.

- The **Neutral Para Athletes** contingent finished **2nd** with 26 medals, comprising 13 gold, 9 silver, and 4 bronze.
- **Uzbekistan** claimed **3rd** place with 4 gold, 4 silver, and 4 bronze medals.

About the 2025 World Para Athletics Grand Prix:

- i. The **12th** edition of the World Para Athletics Grand Prix made history as India hosted its **first-ever** international para-athletics event.
- ii. The competition, held from **11 to 13 March 2025**, featured 150 Indian athletes competing across 90 events, with participation of 283 athletes representing 20 countries.
- iii. Top nations, including Germany, Japan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.

Note: The World Para Athletics Grand Prix will be an annual event in India until **2028**, as confirmed by the World Para Athletics Federation.

About World Para Athletics Federation:

The World Para Athletics Federation is the global governing body for the sport of para-athletics established in **1989** as part of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)- Paul Fitzgerald

Headquarters– Bonn, Germany

Mumbai Indians Clinch 'WPL Title 2025' for the 2nd Time by Defeating Delhi Capitals

Mumbai Indians Women cricket team (MI-W) clinched their Women's Premier League (WPL) title 2025 by defeating Delhi Capitals Women cricket team (DC-W) by **8 runs** in the final held at Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai (Maharashtra). This victory marks Mumbai Indians (MI) to become the first team in WPL history to clinch the title twice, following their debut win in 2023.



- Mumbai Indians (MI) were captained by **Harmanpreet Kaur**, while Delhi Capitals (DC) were led by Captain **Meghann Moira Lanning**.
- The winners 'MI-W' received a cash prize of **Rs 6 crore**, while the runner-up 'DC-W' received **Rs 3 crore**.

i. The 3rd edition of the tournament was held from **14 February** to **15 March 2025** with matches played in Vadodara (Gujarat), Bengaluru (Karnataka), Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh, UP) and Mumbai (Maharashtra).

ii. WPL 2025, branded as TATA WPL 2025 featured **5 teams**: Gujarat Giants -Women cricket team (GG-W), Royal Challengers Bengaluru -Women cricket team (RCB-W), Mumbai Indians -Women cricket team (MI-W), Delhi Capitals -Women cricket team (DC-W) and UP Warriorz -Women cricket team (UPW-W).

iii. During the final, MI-W batter Natalie Ruth Sciver-Brunt became the **first** player to score **1000 runs** in WPL history.

McLaren's Oscar Piastri Claims First F1 Chinese Grand Prix Win

Australia's **Oscar Jack Piastri**, a Formula One (F1) driver for **McLaren**, claimed his **first** Chinese Grand Prix (GP) 2025 victory at the Shanghai International Circuit in Shanghai, China, by leading the race from pole position to the finish.

British racing driver **Lando Norris (McLaren)** claimed **second** place, making it a strong one-two result for McLaren. It also marks 50th such achievement for the team in F1 history.

Key Points:

i. British racing driver **George Russell (Mercedes)** finished **third**, earning Mercedes their 300th podium in F1.

ii. Dutch and Belgian racing driver Max Verstappen (Red Bull) managed to finish fourth in the race.

Rank	Name	Country	Brand
1	Oscar Jack Piastri	Australia	McLaren

2	Lando Norris	United Kingdom	McLaren
3	George Russell	United Kingdom	Mercedes

iii. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc (Monaco), Lewis Hamilton (British), and Alpine's Pierre Gasly (French) were **disqualified** after their cars were found below the minimum weight limit. Additionally, Hamilton, who won the Sprint Race on March 22, 2025 was penalized due to the skid block thickness on his car being below the permitted limit.

Kabaddi World Cup 2025: India Clinches both Men's and Women's title in UK

India emerged victorious in both the **Men's and Women's Kabaddi World Cup (KWC) 2025**, held in Wolverhampton, the United Kingdom (UK).

- The Indian Men's team clinched the title in a closely contested final, defeating England **44-41**, while the Indian Women's team delivered a dominant performance, securing a **57-34** victory over the same opponent.
- Captain **Ritu Negi** led the Indian women's squad. Captain **Pawan Sehrawat** led the Men's team.

About Kabaddi World Cup (KWC) 2025:

i. The 2nd edition of Kabaddi World Cup (KWC), featured over 60 matches, was held from March 17 to 23, 2025.

ii. For the first time, this tournament was hosted outside Asia, with matches played across Birmingham, Coventry, Walsall, and Wolverhampton in the UK's West Midlands region.

iii. The 2025 event was **supported by** the West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA) Commonwealth Games Major Events Legacy Fund.

- It was sponsored by Paddy Power, an Irish gambling company and received an additional **GBP 500,000** from the WMCA along with backing from the University of Wolverhampton (England).

iv. The 1st edition of KWC organized by the World Kabaddi Federation (WKF) in Malaysia in 2019, where India had also secured both the men's and women's titles by defeating Iraq and Chinese Taipei, respectively.

About International Kabaddi Federation (IKF):

The IKF, formerly World Kabaddi Federation (WKF), is an officially recognized governing body for kabaddi, representing 56 national federations worldwide and overseeing five continental governing bodies.

President- Vinod Kumar Tiwari (India)

Headquarters-

Jaipur, Rajasthan

Established- 2004

Obituary

Member of Erstwhile Royal Family of Mewar & Chairman of HRH Group of Hotels Arvind Singh Mewar Passed Away

Arvind Singh Mewar, a member of the erstwhile royal family of Mewar and a descendant of the **Rajput king Maharana Pratap**, died at the City Palace in **Udaipur**, Rajasthan at 81. He was born on 13 December 1944, in Udaipur. He was the **Chairman** of the Historic Resort Hotels (**HRH**) **group of hotels** in Udaipur and the Chairman and Managing Trustee of the Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation (**MMCF**), Udaipur.



- He remained an active cricketer through the 1960s and 1970s and made his debut in the Ranji Trophy tournament (Rajasthan) in December 1961.
- He was the 2nd son of the late Bhagwat Singh Mewar and was the 76th Custodian of the House of Mewar. He was Popularly known as Shriji.
- Under his leadership, '**The Cricket Institute, Udaipur**' was established. It is a unique body and the only institute of its kind in Rajasthan, promoting the sport and sportsmen.

Awards:

- i. 'Lifetime Achievement Award (2021) from Hotelier India.
- ii. VIII Annual Gala WT Institution Award (2012) for his 'Contribution to Universal Culture' at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, the United States of America (USA).
- iii. 'Agastya Award' by the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) for 2001.

Former Union Minister Debendra Pradhan Passed Away

Former Union Minister **Debendra Pradhan**, Father of Union Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) passed away at the age of 84 in New Delhi (Delhi)

- He was born on 16 July 1941 in Nalam, Dhenkanal district, Orissa Province, British India (present day Odisha, India)

About Debendra Pradhan:

- i. **Dr. Debendra Pradhan** was a prominent Indian politician and a founding member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Odisha.
- ii. He started his career as a medical officer from Talcher, Odisha. He Joined the BJP in 1980 and served as the Odisha BJP state president and also served as a national executive member of the BJP.
- iii. He served as a Member of Parliament (MoP) for 2 consecutive terms from 1998 to 2004, representing the Deogarh constituency in Odisha.
- iv. During his tenure, he held the position of Minister of State (MoS) for Surface Transport from 1998 to 1999, and subsequently, MoS for Agriculture from 1999 to 2001.
- v. He also served as the National Vice President of the BJP between 2001 and 2002.

Important Days with theme

National Science Day 2025 – February 28

National Science Day (NSD) is observed annually on February 28 across India to honor the groundbreaking discovery of the '**Raman Effect**' by Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman (CV Raman), a pioneering Indian physicist, in 1928. This day serves to highlight the importance of science in everyday life and acknowledges the invaluable contributions of scientists in shaping the progress of India.



- 28th February 2025 marks the observance of the **39th NSD**.
- The theme of NSD 2025, “**Empowering Indian Youth for Global Leadership in Science and Innovation for Viksit Bharat,**” highlights the role of young minds in advancing India’s scientific and technological growth, in line with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, which aims for a developed and self-reliant India.

Background:

- i. In 1986, the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC) recommended to the Government of India (GoI) that February 28 be designated as NSD.
- ii. The **first-ever** NSD was observed on February 28, 1987.

World Wildlife Day 2025 – March 3

The United Nations (UN’s) World Wildlife Day (WWD) is observed annually on **3rd March** across the globe to honor and raise awareness about the diverse array of the world’s wild (animals) and flora (plants). This day emphasizes the importance of conserving wildlife and the critical role that conservation plays in preserving our ecosystems.



- WWD also draws attention to the ongoing threats posed by wildlife crime and human activities that contribute to the decline of species, urging accelerated efforts to protect and sustain biodiversity.
- i. The theme for World Wildlife Day 2025, “**Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet,**” focuses on the importance of improving and making current financial efforts more effective and sustainable.
 - ii. It highlights the need for collective action to create a resilient future by ensuring that investments in wildlife conservation benefit both people and the planet.
 - iii. Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the **7th meeting of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)** in Junagadh, Gujarat. Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) Bhupender Yadav, along with other board members, also attended the meeting.
- On WWD Day, Prime Minister went on a lion safari at the **Gir Wildlife Sanctuary** in Junagadh district, Gujarat during his state visit.

Background:

- i. March 3rd was chosen to commemorate the adoption of the Convention on International

Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973.

ii. On December 20, 2013, during its 68th session, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed March 3rd as WWD through resolution UN 68/205. The first-ever WWD was observed on **3 March 2014**.

About Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES):

Secretary-General (SG)– Ivonne Higuero

Headquarters– Geneva, Switzerland

Established-

1973

Parties- 185 Parties including 184 countries and the European Union (EU).

About National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)

NBWL is a statutory body that advises the government on wildlife conservation and consists of 47 members.

- The Prime Minister serves as the ex-officio chairperson, while the Union Minister of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change acts as the vice-chairperson.

National Safety Day 2025 – March 4

National Safety Day (NSD) is observed annually on **4 March** across India to emphasize the importance of safety measures in preventing workplace accidents. The day also promotes a culture of safety in workplaces, encouraging strict adherence to safety guidelines.

- 4 March also marks the commencement of the 'National Safety Week Campaign', which is annually observed across India from **4-10 March**.
- **4 March 2025** marks the observance of the **54th** National Safety Day/National Safety Week Campaign.
- The theme for NSD 2025 is **"Safety & Well-being Crucial for Viksit Bharat,"** aligns with the vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047' underscoring the role of safety in India's developmental goals.



Background:

i. The origins of NSD trace back to 1966, when the National Safety Council (NSC) of India was established under the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoL&E).

ii. In 1972, the NSC designated 4th March as National Safety Day, initiating a nationwide campaign to raise awareness about safety standards and practices.

- The **first-ever** National Safety Day was observed in 1972.

About National Safety Council (NSC):

Director-General (DG)– Dr. Lalit R Gabhane

Headquarters– Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra

Established– 1966

International Women's Day 2025 – March 8

The United Nations (UN's) **International Women's Day (IWD)** is annually observed across the globe on **8 March** to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. IWD aims to recognise women for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic, or political.

- 8 March 2025 marks **50 years** of the **UN's official commemoration of IWD**.

Theme:

i. The 2025 theme of the IWD is **“For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment”**.

- The theme is fully aligned with the UN 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (**CSW69**) “Accelerating Gender Equality: Empowering Women and Girls Beyond Beijing+30”.

ii. The **campaign** theme of IWD 2025 is **‘Accelerate Action’**, emphasising the significance of taking rapid and resolute steps to achieve gender equality.

Background:

i. The UN started celebrating International Women's Day in **1975**, which was declared “International Women's Year”.

ii. In December **1977**, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution proclaiming March 8th of every year as the UN Day for Women's Rights and International Peace.

Key Points:

1. The UN launched **2 reports** on 6th March 2025 for the occasion of IWD 2025 namely Women's Rights in Review 30 Years After Beijing and GIRL GOALS: What has changed for girls? Adolescent girls' rights over 30 years.

- According to the Report “Women's Rights in Review 30 Years After Beijing”, nearly a quarter (25%) of governments worldwide reported a decline in women's rights in 2024.

2. Various launches, releases, and honours were held in India to mark the IWD 2025 including:

i. A Cyber Security Handbook for Mahila Suraksha by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) empowering cyber hygiene practices for women.

ii. The Legislative Department, Ministry of Law & Justice (MoL&J), formally released “The Life and Contributions of the Women Members of the Constituent Assembly” a book to pay tribute to 15 remarkable women, who played a crucial role in drafting the Indian Constitution.

iii. The Kochi (Kerala)-based Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) was honoured 2 women entrepreneurs, Akhilamol M A, and Sangeetha Sunil for their achievements in the fisheries sector

iv. Tracxn Technologies Limited released the Women-led Startups in India Report 2025, revealing that the technology (**tech**) **startups co-led by women** secured only **USD 1 billion in funding in 2024**, reflecting a **25% Year-on-Year (Y-o-Y)** decline.

About the United Nations (UN):

Secretary-General (SG)- António Guterres

Headquarters- New York, the United States of America (USA).

Established- 1945

World Kidney Day 2025 – March 13

World Kidney Day (WKD) is a global campaign observed annually across the globe on the **2nd Thursday of March** to highlight the critical role of kidneys in overall health and to advocate for equal access to healthcare and medication worldwide. The day aims to raise awareness about kidney disease, its impact, and the associated health challenges.



- WKD 2025 is observed on **13 March 2025**.
- WKD 2024 was observed on 14 March 2024; WKD 2026 will be observed on 12 March 2026.
- The 2025 WKD campaign theme is, “**Are Your Kidneys OK? Detect Early, Protect Kidney Health**,” emphasizing the importance of early detection and intervention in preventing and managing kidney disease.

Background:

The concept of WKD was introduced by the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF).

- The inaugural WKD was launched on **March 9, 2006** (Thursday), and fully inaugurated on **March 8, 2007** (Thursday).

About International Society of Nephrology (ISN):

President– Marcello Tonelli (Canada)

Headquarters- Brussels, Belgium

Established– 1960

International Day of Mathematics 2025 – March 14

International Day of Mathematics (IDM) is observed annually on 14th March across the globe to highlight the significance of mathematics in various fields, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), climate change, energy, and sustainable development. This date was chosen as it aligns with Pi Day, representing the mathematical constant π (pi) approximately equal to 3.14.



- 14th March 2025 marks the observance of the **6th IDM**.
- The theme of IDM 2025, “**Mathematics, Art, and Creativity**” celebrates the intersection of mathematical discovery and artistic expression, showcasing how mathematics inspires and enhances creative endeavors.

Background:

The 40th General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), held in November 2019, officially proclaimed March 14 as the IDM.

- The **first-ever** IDM was observed on **March 14, 2020**

About International Mathematical Union (IMU):

President – Hiraku Nakajima (Japan)

Headquarters – Berlin, Germany

Established– 1920

World Consumers Rights Day 2025 – March 15

World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) is observed annually across the globe on **March 15** to raise global awareness about consumer rights, protection, and empowerment. Consumers are the economy's backbone; safeguarding their rights ensures ethical practices and empowers informed choices.

- The theme for WCRD 2025 is “**A Just Transition to Sustainable Lifestyles**” .

Background:

i. World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) was inspired by a special message sent by **John F. Kennedy**, the former President of the United States of America (USA), to the USA Congress on March 15, 1962.

- He became the first world leader to formally recognize the importance of consumer rights on a global stage.

ii. The **first-ever** WCRD was observed on March 15, 1983,

About Consumers International(CI):

Director General (**DG**)– Helena Leurent

Headquarters– London, the United Kingdom (UK)

Established– 1960

International Day of Happiness 2025 – March 20

The United Nations (UN's) International Day of Happiness is observed annually on **20 March** across the globe to highlight the importance of well-being and happiness in people's lives. The day advocates for inclusive, equitable, and balanced economic growth, while also promoting sustainable development and poverty eradication.

- The theme of International Day of Happiness 2025 is “**Caring and Sharing**”.

Background:

i. In 2012, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution A/RES/66/281, officially designating March 20th as the International Day of Happiness each year.

- The resolution was proposed by Bhutan, that prioritized national happiness over national income since the early 1970s

ii. The **first-ever** International Day of Happiness was observed on 20 March 2013.

World Happiness Report (WHR) 2025:

i. According to the World Happiness Report (WHR) 2025, **Finland** remains the happiest country in the world for the 8th consecutive time followed by its Nordic neighbours **Denmark, Iceland** and **Sweden**.

ii. India has improved its ranking to **118th** (up from **126th** in 2024) in the World Happiness Report 2025, though it still reflects **low levels of happiness**.

World Sparrow Day 2025 – March 20

World Sparrow Day (WSD) is celebrated every year on **March 20** to raise awareness about the declining population of **house sparrows** (*Passer domesticus*) and the urgent need for their conservation. The event is now observed in over 50 countries.

- The day emphasizes the importance of these small birds in maintaining ecological balance and highlights the challenges they face in urban and rural environments.
- The theme for WSD 2025 is “**A Tribute to Nature’s Tiny Messengers**”.

Background:

i. WSD was Initiated by the Nature Forever Society (NFS) of India, founded by Indian conservationist Mohammed Dilawar; Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France); and other national and international entities.

ii. The **first WSD** was celebrated on **March 20, 2010**.

Note: In 2012, the house sparrow was officially declared the State Bird of Delhi (India) by the then Chief Minister (CM) Sheila Dikshit.

International Day of Forests 2025 – March 21

The United Nations (UN’s) International Day of Forests (**IDF**) is observed annually across the globe on **March 21** to celebrate all kinds of forests, emphasize the significance of trees and forests, and encourage efforts to safeguard them.

- The **theme** for IDF 2025 is “**Forest and Foods**,” highlighting the essential role forests play in food security, nutrition, and livelihoods.
- The theme for each IDF is selected by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

Background:

i. On December 21, **2012**, the UN General Assembly (**UNGA**) adopted resolution A/RES/67/200, proclaiming March 21 as the International Day of Forests.

ii. The first IDF was celebrated on March 21, **2013**.

iii. IDF is organized annually by the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in collaboration with other partners.

About Transforming Forest Finance Report:

i. According to report, an estimated **USD 460 billion annually** is required to stop deforestation, but current funding falls short. Developing countries are facing a massive debt burden, which totals USD 11 trillion.

ii. In 2023, private financial institutions directed USD 6.1 trillion into sectors connected to deforestation, while governments contributed USD 500 billion through subsidies that had negative environmental impacts.

UN’s firstever World Glacier Day – March 21 2025

The first World Glacier Day was celebrated on March 21, 2025, and it will be observed annually on the same date to raise awareness about glacier protection. It was established by the United Nations (UN) to highlight the immediate need to protect glaciers and address climate change. This day highlights the critical role glaciers play in sustaining ecosystems, freshwater supplies, and global climate stability.

- According to reports “**State of the Global Climate 2024**”, published by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) with the support of the World Glacier Monitoring Service (WGMS), the years 2022 to 2024 saw the biggest loss of glacier ice ever recorded over a three-year period. During this time, all 19 glacier regions around the world lost ice.
- South Cascade Glacier in Washington, United States (US) honored as “glacier of the year”
- This initiative urges global action to **safeguard the critical role of glaciers** in sustaining freshwater resources, climate regulation, and life on Earth for future generations.

Background

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), through its resolution A/RES/77/158 in 2022, has declared March 21 as the World Day for Glaciers.
- The UNGA proclaimed 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation, aimed at raising global awareness about the alarming retreat of glaciers due to climate change. The observance is supported by UNESCO, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and the Government of Tajikistan.

About World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Headquarters – Geneva, Switzerland

Secretary-General – Prof. Celeste Saulo

WMO Established: 1950

UN Specialized Agency Since: 1951

World Water Day 2025 – March 22

The United Nations (UN) **World Water Day** is observed annually across the globe on **22 March** to highlight the importance of freshwater and address the global water crisis.

- The **theme** for World Water Day 2025 is ‘**Glacier Preservation**’.

Background:

i. Proposed during the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

ii. Officially adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) via Resolution A/RES/47/193 in December 1992.

- The day was **first** observed on **22 March 1993**.

Keypoints:

- The 2025 World Water Development Report (WWDR), titled ‘Water Towers: Mountains and Glaciers’, is published by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) under UN-Water.
- On World Water Day 2025, the Ministry of Jal Shakti (**MoJS**), in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (**MoEFCC**) and

the Government of **Haryana**, launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain (JSA:CTR) – 2025 in Panchkula, **Haryana**.

Shaheed Diwas or Martyrs' Day 2025 – March 23

Shaheed Diwas or Martyrs' Day is observed annually across India on **23rd March** to commemorate the martyrdom of three iconic revolutionaries : **Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar**, who were executed by the British government in 1931 for their pivotal role in India's freedom struggle.

- The day serves as a tribute to their **courage, patriotism, and sacrifice**, symbolizing the spirit of resistance against injustice.

Note: The Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports(MYAS), organizes nationwide events on Shaheed Diwas to educate youth about their legacy.

Background:

- i.Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar, all members of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA), were dedicated to India's fight for freedom.
- ii.They were arrested for their role in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, which involved the assassination of British police officer John Saunders in 1928.
- iii. On 23rd March 1931, the British government executed them by hanging at Lahore Central Jail (now located in Pakistan).
- iv.Their martyrdom became a significant turning point in India's freedom movement, inspiring countless others to join the fight for independence.

Other Noted Martyrs' Days Observed in India:

- i.30th January – **Death Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (1948):**This day marks the tragic assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, who was killed by Nathuram Godse in 1948.
- ii.19th May – **Language Martyrs' Day or Bhasha Shahid Divas:** This day commemorates the Bengali Language Movement, which took place between 1912 and 1956.
- iii. 17th November – **Death Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai (1928):** Lala Lajpat Rai, a prominent leader in the Indian freedom struggle, succumbed to injuries inflicted by the police while protesting against the Simon Commission.
- iv.19th November – **Birth Anniversary of Rani Lakshmibai** Rani Lakshmibai, the Queen of Jhansi, is remembered for her bravery and leadership during the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

World Meteorological Day 2025 – March 23

The United Nations (UN's) World Meteorological Day (WMD) is annually observed on **23 March** worldwide to raise awareness about the significance of understanding weather and climate patterns in tackling global challenges like climate change and extreme weather.

- Every 23 March, the WMD commemorates the coming into force of the Convention establishing the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on **23 March 1950**.
- The theme for World Meteorological Day 2025 is “**Closing the Early Warning Gap Together**”.

Background:

- i.The WMO during its 12th session of the Executive Committee (EC-XII) held from 27 June to 15 July **1960**, adopted Resolution 6 (EC-XII) – Annual World Meteorological Day, proclaiming 23 March of every year as World Meteorological Day.

ii. The first-ever WMD was observed on 23 March 1961.

2025 Events:

i. On 24 March 2025, the official ceremony of WMD was held at WMO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

ii. The India Meteorological Department (IMD), under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), celebrated WMD 2025 on March 22, 2025, at Mahika Hall, Prithvi Bhawan, New Delhi, Delhi.

About the World Meteorological Organization (WMO):

Secretary-General– Celeste Saulo

Headquarters– Geneva, Switzerland

Established– 1950

World Theatre Day 2025 – March 27

World Theatre Day is observed annually across the globe on 27th March to honor theatre's cultural significance and its role in fostering global unity.

- **March 27, 2025**, marks the **63rd World Theatre Day**.

Note: The day has been celebrated each year by the International Theatre Institute (ITI) Centres and the international theatre community.

Background:

i. World Theatre Day was initiated in **1961** by the International Theatre Institute ITI, the World Organization for the Performing Arts, which was founded in 1948 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council for Theatre.

ii. The **1st** World Theatre Day was observed on **27 March 1962**, coinciding with the date of the opening of the "Theatre of Nations" season in Paris, France.

iii. The 2025 World Theatre Day message is authored by **Theodoros Terzopoulos (Greece)**, a renowned theatre director, educator, and Chairman of the International Committee of Theatre Olympics in Lausanne (Switzerland).