

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

> 13 - 14 JULY 2025

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia Inaugurates VTU-VRIF-TCOE Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru.



In July 2025, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Madhavrao (M.) Scindia, holding portfolios for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), officially inaugurated the VTU-VRIF-TCOE Hub & Spoke Centre of Excellence (CoE) at Visvesvaraya Technological University's (VTU) regional campus in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

- The CoE is a strategic tripartite collaboration between VTU, the Visvesvaraya Research & Innovation Foundation (VRIF), and Telecom Centres of Excellence (TCOE) India aimed at fostering innovation in frontier technologies. Spanning over 100,000 sq ft and connecting 218 institutions under VTU with a network of over 400,000 students and 20,000+ PhD researchers, it focuses on areas such as 5G/6G communications, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), augmented/virtual reality (AR/VR), quantum computing, healthcare tech, and advanced manufacturing.

- During the inauguration on 10 July 2025, Minister Scindia highlighted Bengaluru's transformation into a global deep-tech hub,

stating that India's broadband users have surged from 250 million to over 974 million, and that the Centre will serve as "a generation of thinkers, builders, and leaders" driving India's shift from service-based to product innovation.

- The hub supports 20+ startups, 30+ academic partners, and industry leaders like Keysight Technologies, QpiAI, and Televerge, with skill-building led by the Telecom Sector Skill Council (TSSC).

Key Points:-

(i) Alongside the inauguration, Jyotiraditya Madhavrao (M.) Scindia oversaw a progress review of the Bharat 6G Alliance (B6GA) with Dr. Neeraj Mittal, Secretary of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). The Alliance, which now includes 80 member organisations—over 30 startups, academia, public institutions, and global partners—shared updates on key R&D fronts like indigenous Radio Access Networks (RAN), rural connectivity, AI-integrated networks, and smart cross-sector 6G applications in domains like agriculture and healthcare.

(ii) Scindia reaffirmed India's ambitious target of securing 10 % of global 6G patents by 2030, calling for robust policy support, research funding, timely spectrum allocation, and frequent monitoring of Alliance working groups.

(iii) These initiatives are powered by the Bharat 6G Vision Document (released March 2023) and funded in part by the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF), which has supported over 120 R&D proposals with ₹500 crore, including 100 for 6G, with ₹180 crore already disbursed. This reflects a growing synergy between India's academic institutions, startups, and public-

private partners to build a resilient and indigenous telecom ecosystem.

2. India's Maratha Military Forts Added to UNESCO World Heritage List.



India has recently achieved a significant cultural milestone as UNESCO inscribed the “Maratha Military Landscapes of India” on the World Heritage List during the 47th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in Paris on July 11–12, 2025.

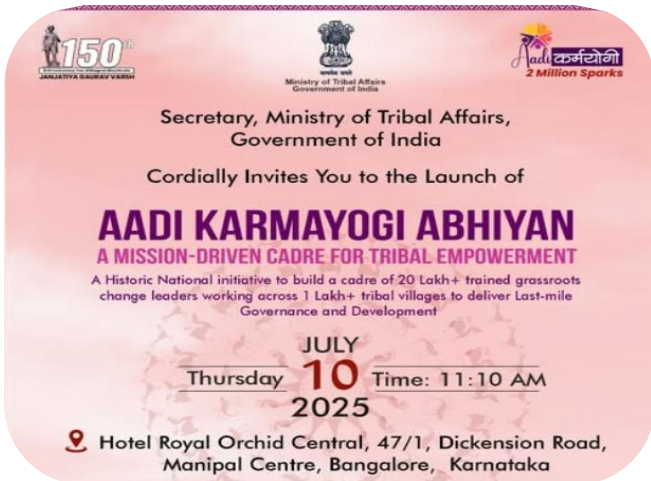
- This marks India's 44th site to be included in the prestigious list and reflects global recognition of Maratha military strategy and architectural excellence.
- The inscription includes a network of 12 forts representing the military vision of the Maratha Empire, primarily during the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. These include Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Shivneri, Salher, Lohagad, Panhala, Sindhudurg, Vijaydurg, Suvarnadurg, Khanderi (all in Maharashtra), and Gingee Fort in Tamil Nadu. These forts were strategically located across hilltops, coastal zones, and forested areas to resist Mughal expansion and later British influence.

- The Maratha forts were selected based on UNESCO Criteria (iv) for their unique architecture and Criteria (vi) for their link to Maratha history and culture. These forts were first added to the UNESCO Tentative List in 2021. Later, India officially submitted the nomination in January 2024. After that, a team from ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) inspected the forts in October 2024 and recommended their inclusion. Finally, UNESCO approved the list in July 2025.

Key Points:-

- (i) The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis welcomed the recognition, calling it a matter of national and regional pride. The UNESCO recognition is expected to boost tourism, create jobs, and increase conservation funding across the 12 sites.
- (ii) The Government of Maharashtra has announced buffer zone conservation plans, especially around the Salher Fort, with a 10-year infrastructure and heritage management blueprint.
- (iii) UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) currently lists India among the top 6 countries globally and 2nd in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of the number of World Heritage Sites. With this recognition, India continues to highlight its diverse and layered historical identity, strengthening its case for future cultural nominations under UNESCO's global heritage framework.

3. MoTA Launches First Regional Process Lab under Aadi Karmayogi Abhiyan in Bengaluru.



The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) has recently launched India's first Regional Process Lab (RPL) under the Aadi Karmayogi Abhiyan in Bengaluru, Karnataka, as part of the National Mission for Responsive Governance. This initiative, launched in July 2025, aims to create a transformative grassroots ecosystem through tribal leadership, training, and bottom-up governance in tribal regions.

- The Regional Process Lab (RPL) in Bengaluru has been developed as a capacity-building centre to train State Master Trainers (SMTs) from five states: Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. These SMTs will help establish State Process Labs (SPLs) and further train District Master Trainers (DMTs). The initiative also includes active participation from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to promote real-time community engagement, local problem-solving, and responsive governance in tribal areas.

- The Aadi Karmayogi Abhiyan, launched in June 2025, is a flagship tribal leadership programme of the Government of India that aims to reform tribal welfare schemes through the development of a new cadre of motivated and citizen-focused tribal officials. The programme focuses on bottom-up governance, real-time

grievance redressal, and localized service delivery to empower tribal communities at the grassroots level.

- This mission promotes convergence across key ministries including the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). It supports a governance model based on visioning, collaboration, and people-first outcomes, aligning with the broader goals of inclusive and responsive tribal development.

Key Points:-

(i) This programme aligns with broader tribal upliftment schemes like Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) and DAGUJA (Dhartiya Adivasi Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan). PM-JANMAN, launched in November 2023, targets the development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) by providing direct economic and social support.

(ii) DAGUJA (Dhartiya Adivasi Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan), launched in October 2024, focuses on bridging critical gaps in health, education, livelihood, and infrastructure for nearly 63,000 tribal villages, with a total scheme allocation of ₹79,156 crore.

(iii) With the first Regional Process Lab now operational, MoTA aims to build a vibrant network of 20 lakh tribal grassroots functionaries and change leaders, enabling last-mile service delivery, inclusive development, and localized policy feedback to ensure tribal empowerment in every region of India.

4. Operation SHIVA 2025: Indian Army Launches Robust Security for Amarnath Yatra.



In July 2025, the Indian Army initiated “Operation SHIVA 2025”, a large-scale, multi-layered security operation to safeguard the 38-day Amarnath Yatra (July 3 – August 9, 2025) in Jammu & Kashmir, following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that resulted in 26 fatalities.

- Over 8,500 Indian Army personnel are stationed along the Nunwan–Pahalgam and Baltal routes. Additionally, approximately 42,000–50,000 personnel from Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) — including CRPF, BSF, SSB, ITBP, and CISF — as well as J&K Police are deployed.
- The operation integrates 50+ counter-unmanned aerial systems (C-UAS), drone surveillance, jammers, high-resolution cameras, bomb detection squads, sniffer dogs, and anti-sabotage units to counter drone and IED threats.
- Enhancing infrastructure includes bridge-laying, track enhancement, emergency medical support (150+ doctors, nine aid posts, a 100-bed hospital, 26 oxygen booths, and 2 lakh litres of oxygen), tent cities, water points, quick reaction teams, and Army helicopters on standby.

Key Points:-

(i) Coordination with CAPFs, Jammu & Kashmir Police, and the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board ensures a three-tier protective grid. Pilgrim safety measures include RFID tracking cards, body scanners, CCTV monitoring, convoy escorts, facial recognition, and x-ray checks. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has urged maximum vigilance during the Yatra.

(ii) Operation SHIVA 2025 represents the most fortified Amarnath Yatra security deployment to date. It employs state-of-the-art surveillance technologies, intelligence-driven threat mitigation, extensive infrastructure readiness, and a tight-knit security collaboration among military, paramilitary, and civil authorities. The mission aims to ensure pilgrims undertake a secure, uninterrupted, and spiritually enriching journey amid heightened threats in the region.

5. Arthunkal Police Station Becomes First in India to Get ISO 9001 2015 Certification from BIS.



On July 10, 2025, the Arthunkal Police Station in Alappuzha district, Kerala, achieved a major milestone by becoming the first police station in India to receive the ISO

9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS) certification.

- The certification was awarded by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), recognizing the station's adherence to quality policing, professional service delivery, and effective public grievance mechanisms.
- The certification process was conducted through a structured two-phase audit that examined multiple quality indicators, including risk mitigation, citizen complaint protocols, infrastructure adequacy, and staff professionalism.
- It validated the station's commitment to international service benchmarks under the guidelines of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Key Points:-

- (i) The ISO 9001:2015 certificate also acknowledges the Arthunkal Police Station's performance across key operational areas such as crime control, emergency response, traffic regulation, law enforcement, and judicial coordination. These functions were evaluated with special emphasis on law and order management and transparent grievance redressal mechanisms.
- (ii) The implementation of these reforms was aligned with the national and state legal frameworks, focusing on improving efficiency, transparency, and citizen-centric service delivery. The Arthunkal station's approach demonstrated its alignment with updated government policing directives and quality standards.
- (iii) This achievement falls under the larger initiative of the Modernised Cherthala Police Programme, which aims to reform and digitize police functioning in the Alappuzha

region. The project is led by Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Harish Jain, who has introduced modern policing protocols with a focus on structural reforms, citizen satisfaction, and law enforcement modernization.

INTERNATIONAL

1. India Ranks 8th in WTTC Global Tourism Economy List 2024 25 USA Tops the Chart.



The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) released its 2024 Economic Impact Research (EIR) in April 2025 in collaboration with Oxford Economics, ranking 184 countries by travel and tourism's share of GDP. India climbed to 8th position, contributing US \$231.6 billion, while the United States continued to lead with US \$2.36 trillion, underscoring America's dominant role in global tourism.

- Despite its solid global ranking, India's domestic tourism remains its strength: in 2024, domestic visitor spending reached a record ₹15.5 trillion (US \$185.6 billion), 22 % higher than in 2019, while international visitor spending hit ₹3.1 trillion (US \$36.8 billion), exceeding pre-pandemic levels by 9 %. A total of 20 million international tourists visited India — 2.3 million more than in 2019.

Key Points:-

(i) Overall, India's Travel & Tourism sector contributed approximately ₹20.9 trillion (US \$249 billion) to the national GDP in 2024, supporting 46.5 million jobs, or 9.1 % of total employment. The WTTC forecasts this will rise to ₹22.5 trillion (US \$268.7 billion) and 48 million jobs in 2025.

(ii) By 2035, the sector is expected to nearly double, reaching ₹41.9 trillion (US \$501 billion) and supporting 63.9 million jobs, driven largely by domestic spending growth.

(iii) Looking forward, the WTTC projects international visitor spending in India will grow to ₹3.2 trillion in 2025, and domestic spending to ₹16 trillion, with a further surge expected by 2035 (₹32.7 trillion domestic and ₹4.6 trillion international). Given these trends, India is forecast to rise to the 4th spot globally by 2035. WTTC emphasises the need for continued investment in tourism infrastructure, streamlined e-visa systems, and sustained overseas marketing support to fully leverage this growth potential.

2. Forbes Ranks India First in America's Richest Immigrants 2025 and Jay Chaudhry Among Top Ten Billionaires.



In July 2025, Forbes released its "America's Richest Immigrants 2025" report, revealing that India leads the world with 12 Indian-born billionaires residing in the United States. This achievement marks India as the top source of immigrant wealth in the U.S., surpassing previous leader Israel.

- Jay Chaudhry, founder and CEO of Zscaler, is the standout Indian on the list—ranking 8th among all immigrant billionaires with a net worth of US \$17.9 billion. Born in a remote Himachal Pradesh village without electricity, Chaudhry earned degrees from IIT (BHU) Varanasi, the University of Cincinnati, and Harvard Business School before founding Zscaler in 2007.

- Jay Chaudhry has also emerged as a notable philanthropist: in 2022, he donated US \$1 million to his alma mater IIT (BHU) Varanasi to establish an Entrepreneurship Centre and a Software Innovation Centre, followed by another US \$1 million gift in 2023 to the Sankara Eye Foundation, supporting efforts to eliminate curable blindness in India.

- This highlights not only his business acumen but also his commitment to giving back to education and healthcare in his native country.

Key Points:-

(i) The Forbes list includes a total of 125 foreign-born billionaires from 43 countries, collectively holding about US \$1.3 trillion, which represents 18 % of U.S. billionaire wealth. Technology and finance sectors dominate, accounting for 42 % and 22 % respectively of these immigrant billionaires.

(ii) Alongside Jay Chaudhry are notable Indian-origin figures like Vinod Khosla (US \$9.2 B), Rakesh Gangwal (US \$6.6 B), Romesh Wadhvani (US \$5 B), Nikesh Arora (US \$1.4 B), Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella (each US \$1.1 B), highlighting the depth of Indian entrepreneurial success—primarily in technology, cybersecurity, aviation, and finance.

(iii) The report reaffirms that immigrant entrepreneurs significantly contribute to American prosperity, with Indian-origin individuals now leading immigrant wealth creation in the U.S. Their rise underscores broader trends—such as global migration of top talent, innovation in cyberspace, and the economic impact of diverse professional communities.

Kotak Mahindra Bank and IndiGo Airlines relaunched their co-branded credit cards, now powered by the freshly launched IndiGo BluChip loyalty programme. This revamped offering includes a base variant and a premium variant, designed to convert everyday spending into travel rewards tailored for both casual spenders and frequent flyers.

- Both cards offer accelerated earning on flight, dining, entertainment, and general expenses. The premium card, with an annual fee of ₹3,000 + GST, delivers up to 21 BluChips per ₹100 on IndiGo bookings, 3 BluChips on dining and entertainment, 2 BluChips on other spends, plus milestone bonuses and lounge access.

- The base card, priced at ₹1,500 + GST, earns a slightly lower 19/₹100 on flights and requires fewer spends to hit milestone rewards.

Key Points:-

(i) Launched on 10 July 2025, the relaunch aligns with IndiGo's broader mission to build BluChip as a global travel loyalty engine, which already boasts 3.5 million members within its first year. The programme allows members to redeem points seamlessly on domestic and international IndiGo flights with no blackout dates, maximizing flexibility and value.

(ii) Senior leaders from both companies emphasized the strategic vision: Ashok Vaswani, MD & CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank, highlighted the synergy of rewarding everyday banking while enabling memorable travel. Pieter Elbers, CEO of IndiGo, underlined BluChip's role in enhancing customer loyalty across its expanding global network.

BANKING & FINANCE

1. Kotak Mahindra Bank & IndiGo Relaunch Co-Branded Credit Cards with BluChip Rewards.



2. AIIB Commits USD 100 Million to IIFL Home Finance for Affordable and Green Housing in India.



The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has recently committed a USD 100 million (approx. ₹835 crore) loan to IIFL Home Finance Limited (IIFLHF) to support affordable and sustainable housing projects in India. The funding aims to expand access to home loans for low-income families while promoting green-certified housing aligned with India's climate goals.

- This investment is primarily focused on enabling home loan access for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Low-Income Groups (LIG) residing in urban and semi-urban areas. These funds will be used by IIFLHF to finance both individual borrowers constructing or purchasing homes and small developers creating cost-effective housing projects that meet affordability criteria.

- The collaboration also strongly emphasizes the adoption of green housing standards, with IIFLHF aiming to increase its portfolio of homes certified under IGBC (Indian Green Building Council) and GRIHA (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment). This will support India's transition towards low-carbon housing and

reduce long-term energy consumption across urban dwellings.

Key Points:-

(i) This initiative is well-aligned with the objectives of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and central schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U). By targeting underbanked and credit-limited communities, it aims to bridge the financial gap in India's affordable housing sector while strengthening the ecosystem for sustainable urban development.

(ii) According to Monu Ratra, Executive Director & CEO of IIFL Home Finance, this partnership with AIIB reflects their long-term commitment to responsible lending and inclusive housing.

(iii) AIIB's Director General, Gregory Liu, also remarked that this initiative exemplifies AIIB's core mission of investing in infrastructure that is both inclusive and environmentally sustainable for developing member countries like India.

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1. Government Extends Tax Exemption for SWFs and Pension Funds Until March 2030.



The Indian government has recently extended a five-year tax exemption for Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs) and Pension Funds (PFs) investing in infrastructure until March 31, 2030, under Section 10(23FE) of the Income-tax Act. This strategic move aims to attract stable, long-term foreign capital into India's key economic sectors.

- The extended tax benefit—applicable to dividends, interest, and long-term capital gains (LTCG)—was formalized in July 2025 by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) via Notification No. 113/2025. It now ensures that even LTCG from unlisted debt, reclassified as short-term under Section 50AA, remains tax-exempt.

Key Points:-

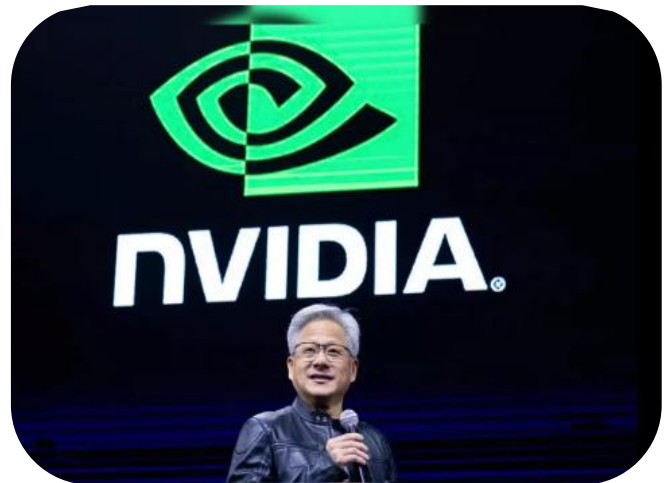
(i) Introduced in 2020, the exemption was initially set to expire in March 2024, but has been extended twice—first to March 2025 and now to March 2030. Over 35 funds including global investors like Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF), Singapore's GIC, Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), and Norway's Sovereign Pension Fund, are notified beneficiaries.

(ii) This policy aligns with India's broader strategy to support flagship projects like roads, ports, railways, renewable energy, and digital infrastructure. In 2022, SWF and PF investments in India rose to approximately US \$6.7 billion, up from US \$3.8 billion in 2021—showing strong investor response to tax stability.

(iii) Financial analysts view this extension as a clear signal of India's investment-friendly stance, creating a stable, predictable tax environment for large institutional investors. It not only bolsters confidence in long-term

infrastructure financing but also supports India's ambition to transition into a \$5 trillion economy by fostering sustainable growth.

2. Nvidia Becomes First Public Company to Reach USD 4 Trillion Market Capitalisation Globally.



In July 2025, Nvidia Corporation, a United States (USA)-based global leader in artificial intelligence (AI) and accelerated computing, made history by becoming the first publicly listed company in the world to achieve a market capitalisation of USD 4 trillion. This unprecedented milestone confirms Nvidia's dominant position amid the global AI hardware revolution.

- Nvidia's historic growth reflects the surging global demand for AI chips. Its market cap rose from USD 1 trillion in June 2023 to USD 2 trillion by February 2024, and further jumped to USD 3 trillion in June 2024—reaching USD 4 trillion in just over a year. This rapid ascent highlights Nvidia's leadership in AI innovation and computing infrastructure.

- With this feat, Nvidia overtook Microsoft Corporation, which currently holds the second-highest valuation of USD 3.75 trillion, while Apple Inc. is ranked third with USD 3.17 trillion.

The rise of Nvidia showcases a shift in global tech priorities toward AI hardware over traditional software and device giants.

Key Points:-

- (i) Nvidia supplies approximately 90% of the global advanced AI semiconductors used by large data centers powering LLMs (Large Language Models) such as ChatGPT.
- (ii) Its Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) are essential to tech ecosystems like Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud Platform (GCP), operated by Alphabet Inc.
- (iii) In March 2025, Nvidia introduced its powerful Blackwell Ultra AI chips, built to accelerate real-time reasoning, enhance high-performance computing, and improve AI inference accuracy. These chips further cement Nvidia's role as the core engine behind the ongoing AI revolution in the global tech economy.

MOUs and Agreement

1. MeitY and BITS Pilani Signed MoU to Launch Cybersecurity Professional Development Programme for Government and Industry Professionals.



The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)—through its national cyber-defence agency CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team)—has signed a MoU with Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS), Pilani Group, to launch an eight-week Professional Development Program in Cybersecurity for professionals across government, public sector undertakings (PSUs), and private industry.

- The program, set to begin on 19 July 2025, will be hosted at the Centre for Research Excellence in National Security (CRENS) on the BITS Pilani Hyderabad Campus, with support from technology partner Rapifuzz and guided by CERT-In. It is uniquely open to professionals without prior coding experience, reflecting an inclusive, capacity-building design.

- Participants will develop expertise in cyber threats and vulnerabilities, network security (firewalls, intrusion detection/prevention systems, VPNs), secure communications and cryptography, incident management and forensics, along with advanced modules on cloud security, mobile threats, and advanced persistent threats (APTs). Graduates will earn a co-branded Professional Development Certificate in Cybersecurity jointly issued by CERT-In and BITS Pilani, combining academic rigor with national credibility.

Key Points:-

- (i) This initiative marks the first time CERT-In—the national nodal agency designated under Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000—has formally partnered with a premier academic institution to deliver cybersecurity training at scale.

(ii) CERT-In DG Dr Sanjay Bahl described the program as a key step in building “a vibrant, highly skilled talent pool...poised to meet evolving digital and quantum-era challenges,” while Dr V. Ramgopal Rao, Group Vice-Chancellor of BITS Pilani, noted it exemplifies the strength of the academia-industry-government collaboration.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

1. Varsha Deshpande Wins 2025 UN Population Award for Championing Gender Equality.



Varsha Deshpande, a women’s rights activist from Satara, Maharashtra, and Secretary of Dalit Mahila Vikas Mandal, was recently honored with the United Nations Population Award 2025 in the individual category.

- This prestigious accolade, awarded during the fortieth edition on 11 July 2025 at the UN headquarters in New York, acknowledges her 35 years of grassroots activism against gender-based violence and for reproductive rights .
- Her organization, founded in 1990, has pioneered initiatives targeting child marriage, gender-biased sex selective practices, and women’s financial inclusion. Through sting operations against sex-selective abortion clinics,

vocational-skills training, and promotion of joint property rights, her work empowers marginalized Dalit women in rural India.

Key Points:-

(i) Varsha has also been instrumental in shaping public policy. As a member of statutory bodies under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, she helped enforce laws preventing sex-selection, and advised on legislation aimed at gender-biased practices.

(ii) At the award ceremony, UN Secretary-General António Guterres—via UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem—commemorated her as “a force for change,” highlighting her contributions in preventing hundreds of child marriages, providing legal aid to over 10,000 women, and promoting the “Lek Ladki Abhiyan” (cherish the girl child) movement.

(iii) Varsha Deshpande joins a rare group of Indian individuals—Indira Gandhi (1983) and JRD Tata (1992)—to receive this award, while the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) won the institutional honour this year.

2. Kumar Mangalam Birla Joins USISPF Board of Directors and Executive Committee to Strengthen India-US Business Ties.



In July 2025, renowned Indian industrialist Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group, was appointed to the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of the United States–India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF). His induction aims to deepen bilateral trust and economic cooperation between India and the United States of America (USA).

- **Kumar Mangalam Birla's appointment aligns with USISPF's mission to strengthen India-US strategic and commercial relationships through high-level industry participation.**
- **His leadership is expected to contribute significantly to policy-level engagement and international business collaboration between the two nations.**
- **Birla has been the Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group since 1995 and currently serves as Chancellor of the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani. He has also served as former Chairman of IIM Ahmedabad and IIT Delhi, and as a Director on the Board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) from 2006 to 2013. He also chaired the SEBI Committee on Corporate Governance.**

Key Points:-

(i) Kumar Mangalam Birla has received

several national and international recognitions, including the Padma Bhushan (2023), India's third-highest civilian award, for his distinguished service in trade and industry.

(ii) Other accolades include the Asian Business Leadership Forum (ABLF) Global Asian Award (2019), TiE Global Entrepreneurship Award (2021), and the ICAI Hall of Fame Award (2024) by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).

(iii) The USISPF (United States–India Strategic Partnership Forum), established in 2017, plays a key role in advancing commercial diplomacy and private sector engagement. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., its mission is to foster strong, strategic bilateral ties between the two largest democracies through business, technology, education, and innovation.

SPORTS

1. Harikrishnan A Ra Becomes India's 87th Chess Grandmaster.



In July 2025, Harikrishnan A Ra, a 23-year-old chess maestro from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, achieved a major milestone by becoming India's 87th Grandmaster (GM).

He secured his third and final GM norm at the prestigious La Plagne International Chess Festival in France, fulfilling a promise to his coach, GM Shyam Sundar Mohanraj.

- Harikrishnan had previously earned two GM norms: the first at the Biel International Chess Festival in Switzerland (2023), and the second at the Lince Andújar Chess Open in Spain (June 2025). Coming close multiple times, he finally realized his goal in France.

Key Points:-

(i) Graduating from International Master (IM) in 2018, Harikrishnan's journey spanned seven years. He crossed the required 2500 Elo rating threshold with his final norm, finishing with 5.5/9 points in the tournament, and earning 16 Elo points.

(ii) Trained at Chess Thulir academy in Chennai under the mentorship of GM Shyam Sundar, Harikrishnan showcased exceptional determination. Known for participating in nine consecutive European tournaments, he continues to aim for a 2600+ Elo rating and plans to pursue an MBA in the USA.

SUMMITS & CONFERENCE / COMMITTEES & MEETINGS

1. MoS Pankaj Chaudhary Inaugurates Trade Facilitation Conference 2025 in New Delhi.



Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary inaugurated the Trade Facilitation Conference 2025 on 11 July 2025, held at C. Subramaniam Auditorium, ICAR-NASC, Pusa Campus, New Delhi. Organised by the Central Revenues Control Laboratory (CRCL) under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), the event drew over 400 participants from trade, science, and regulatory sectors.

- Themed “Scientific Excellence for Seamless Trade,” the first-ever national conference aimed to modernise India’s testing infrastructure to reduce clearance times, uphold quality, and support economic growth. MoS Chaudhary emphasised that modern, science-based laboratory systems are essential to enhance ease of doing business.

Key Points:-

(i) During the inaugural session, several key publications and materials were released, including a documentary titled “Science at the Border: The Story of Indian Customs Laboratories,” a CRCL coffee table book, a brochure outlining laboratory capabilities, and a Standard Operating Procedure video on petroleum liquid sampling. These releases highlighted CRCL’s evolving role since its origins in 1912.

(ii) The conference featured technical sessions led by officials including V. Suresh, Director (Revenue Laboratories), and representatives from Partner Government Agencies (PGAs) such as FSSAI, CDSCO, the Textile Committee, and Animal & Plant Quarantine. Discussions focused on trade compliance, integrated lab networking, R&D, capacity building, and process improvements.

(iii) Key outcomes included commitments to reduce testing turnaround time, upgrade laboratory infrastructure nationwide, form a core stakeholder group, and enhance training and human-resource capabilities. These measures align with the government's efforts to position India as a global trade hub by ensuring faster, safer, and compliant export–import processes.

• The day honors the memory of over 8,300 Bosnian Muslim (Bosniak) men and boys who were systematically killed by the Bosnian Serb Army during the Bosnian War (1992–1995) in and around Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Key Points:-

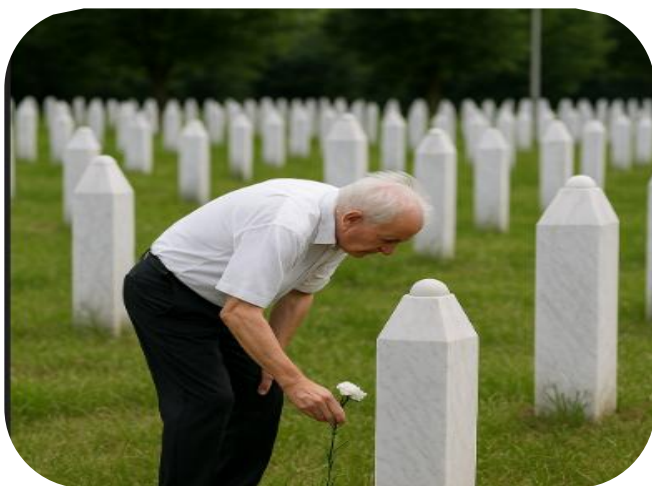
(i) In May 2024, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution A/RES/78/282, officially designating 11 July as the annual International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica to honor victims and promote genocide awareness.

(ii) The resolution was introduced by Germany and Rwanda and was supported by over 40 countries as co-sponsors, aiming to strengthen global remembrance efforts and preventive action against mass atrocities.

(iii) The first official observance of the International Day took place on 11 July 2024, establishing it as a yearly commemoration under the United Nations to ensure historical accountability and global solidarity with the victims and survivors.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica 2025 Observed on 11 July.



The International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica was observed globally on 11 July 2025, marking the 30th anniversary of the mass atrocity.

Static GK

UNESCO	Director-General: Audrey Azoulay	Headquarters: Paris, France
Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)	Minister : Shri Jual Oram	Headquarters: New Delhi
Kerala	Chief minister: Pinarayi Vijayan	Governor: Rajendra Arlekar
the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)	President & CEO : Julia Simpson	Headquarters : London (UK)
Forbes	CEO : Sherry Phillips	Headquarters : New Jersey, USA
Nvidia	CEO: Jensen Huang	Headquarters: Santa Clara, California, United States
United States-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF)	Chairman : John T. Chambers	Headquarters : Washington, D.C., United States of America (USA)