



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

 **15 JULY 2025**

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Inaugurates North-East Conclave 2025 at IIM Shillong to Boost Regional Start-up Ecosystem.



On 11 July 2025, Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the IICA North-East Conclave 2025, themed “From Ideation to Incorporation”, held at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Shillong, Meghalaya.

- The two-day event, organised by the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA), brought together entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers, and academia to strengthen the north-eastern entrepreneurial ecosystem
- The inaugural session included dignitaries such as Conrad K. Sangma, Chief Minister of Meghalaya; Deepti Gaur Mukerjee, Secretary, MoCA; Donald Phillips Wahlang, Chief Secretary, Meghalaya; and Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh, DG & CEO of IICA.

Key Points:-

- A key highlight was the foundation stone laying for the first North-East regional campus of the IICA at Umsawli, Shillong, marking a major step toward establishing a

permanent institutional base for corporate governance, policy education, and start-up support in the region.

- The conclave showcased 39 start-ups, farmer producer organisations, financial entities, and incubators from across northeastern India. It also featured seven Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed with organisations like MATI, IIM Shillong, STPI, ICAI, ICSI, ICAI, and NLU Assam to bolster capacity-building, compliance training, and incubator linkages.

- Structured around four themes—startup incorporation and regulatory frameworks, incubation models, funding mechanisms (seed-to-scale), and market access strategies—the conclave included technical sessions, fireside chats, and investor panels aimed at translating regional innovations into scalable ventures.

2. MoHI Launches India's First Incentive Scheme for Electric Trucks Under PM E DRIVE to Promote Green Freight Mobility.



The Ministry of Heavy Industries (MoHI) recently unveiled India’s first dedicated incentive scheme for electric trucks (e-trucks) under the PM Electric Drive Revolution in

Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) programme.

- Announced on 11 July 2025 by Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H. D. Kumaraswamy, the initiative offers financial incentives to accelerate adoption of clean freight vehicles.

- The scheme provides demand incentives of up to ₹9.6 lakh per electric truck—across N2 and N3 categories as per the Central Motor Vehicle Rules (CMVR)—to help offset high upfront costs. It targets deployment of 5,600 e-trucks nationally, including 1,100 vehicles in Delhi, supported by a dedicated ₹100 crore sub-allocation.

- To ensure reliability and long-term performance, manufacturer-backed warranties are mandatory: batteries for 5 years or 5 lakh km, and vehicle plus motor for 5 years or 2.5 lakh km, whichever comes first. Incentives will be passed on as upfront price reductions and reimbursed to original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) through the PM E-DRIVE portal on a first-come, first-served basis.

Key Points:-

(i) The scheme also mandates the scrapping of older diesel trucks, helping to reduce emissions and modernise logistics fleets. Priority deployment is aimed at key sectors: cement, ports, steel, and logistics, with major OEMs like Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland, and Volvo Eicher already supplying electric trucks.

(ii) As part of the initiative, SAIL (Steel Authority of India Limited) has committed to procuring 150 e-trucks over two years and ensuring 15% of its hired fleet is electric. Analysts expect the scheme will significantly cut greenhouse gas emissions, improve

urban air quality, and support PM E-DRIVE's goal of reducing total cost of ownership (TCO) for fleet operators.

(iii) This move marks a major policy shift under the PM E-DRIVE umbrella, which originally approved by the Cabinet in September 2024 with a ₹10,900 crore outlay. The e-truck sub-scheme alone has been allocated ₹500 crore to accelerate India's green freight transition toward its net-zero by 2070 and Viksit Bharat by 2047 commitments.

3. BIRLA Institute to Launch India's First AI-Focused Campus in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh.



India is set to launch its first dedicated Artificial Intelligence (AI) campus in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh by 2027. The Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani is spearheading the initiative as part of its ₹1,219 crore "Project Vistaar", aimed at revolutionizing AI-led higher education and research across the country.

- BITS Pilani will establish the country's first AI+ campus in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, with a major focus on AI, Machine Learning (ML), Data Science, and emerging technologies.

- The project involves an initial investment of ₹1,000 crore and is expected to host 3,000 to 7,000 students across two phases, offering cutting-edge academic and research infrastructure.

- The new campus forms a part of BITS Pilani's ₹1,219 crore infrastructure expansion plan, named "Project Vistaar", which also includes upgrades across its existing campuses in Pilani, Goa, and Hyderabad. The overall student capacity will increase from 18,500 to approximately 26,000 by 2031. Upgrades will feature modern laboratories, digital classrooms, and startup incubation zones.

Key Points:-

(i) In a parallel development, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has partnered with NVIDIA Corporation to establish an AI University in Amaravati. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in June 2025, under which NVIDIA will skill 10,000 engineering students and support 500 AI startups through its global Inception Program, bolstering India's AI startup ecosystem.

(ii) This dual initiative positions Amaravati as a national hub for deep-tech innovation, bringing together academia, industry, and government. With strategic support from the Government of Andhra Pradesh and institutions like BITS Pilani and NVIDIA, India is building a world-class AI talent and research ecosystem to drive its Viksit Bharat (Developed India) and Digital India missions.

4. Delhi Government to Launch 'Saheli Smart Cards' for Free Bus Travel for Women and Transgenders from July 2025.



In a major upgrade to Delhi's public transport system, the Delhi Government will launch the 'Saheli Smart Cards' in July 2025. This initiative replaces the existing pink ticket system, enabling free bus travel for women and transgender persons who are verified residents of Delhi, while ensuring digital authentication and streamlined operations.

- The 'Saheli Smart Card' initiative is being implemented by the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) under the framework of the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC). The smart card system seeks to digitize the free travel scheme, which was initially launched by the Delhi Government in 2019 for women and later extended to transgender persons.

- Only bona fide Delhi residents aged 12 years and above will be eligible to apply for the Saheli Smart Card. Applicants must submit valid proof of residence and other necessary documents. The eligibility will be verified through the Know Your Customer (KYC) process, ensuring that benefits are not misused.

- The Saheli Smart Card will be issued by authorized banks and will need to be activated via DTC's Automatic Fare Collection System (AFCS). The card supports top-up and recharge features and is intended to work not just for free

travel on DTC and Cluster buses but also on paid services such as Delhi Metro.

Key Points:-

- (i) Two categories of cards will be offered: (i) Non-KYC Cards, issued using address proof, usable on DTC buses and Delhi Metro; and (ii) KYC-Compliant Cards, which will include a user's name and photograph, allowing contactless payment on multiple public transport systems. This will help promote multimodal smart transport access.
- (ii) This scheme supports the Delhi Government's broader objective to enable inclusive, cashless, and safe travel for women and transgenders. It also aligns with the goals of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) under the Smart Mobility Initiative and Digital India Programme.
- (iii) The smart card rollout is expected to boost participation of marginalized groups in the public sphere, reduce manual interventions, and bring accountability to subsidy distribution. It further strengthens Delhi's ongoing mobility reforms, which include electric buses, women-only marshals, and real-time bus tracking through mobile apps.

5. DoT Launches Sanchar Mitra Scheme Nationwide to Empower Youth as Digital Ambassadors.



The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), under the Ministry of Communications, launched the 'Sanchar Mitra Scheme' in July 2025 to build digital awareness and cyber safety among citizens by engaging student volunteers as 'Digital Ambassadors'. The nationwide programme seeks to bridge the gap between the public and India's growing telecom and digital ecosystem.

- The first outreach session of the Sanchar Mitra Scheme was held at BSNL Bhawan, Guwahati, Assam, hosted by the Assam Licensed Service Area (LSA).
- The session was chaired by Sunita Chander, Advisor, Office of the Director General (DG), DoT. It witnessed participation from 18 prestigious engineering institutions, including the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), and National Institute of Technology (NIT).
- The Sanchar Mitra Scheme has three core pillars: Connect, Educate, and Innovate, which aim to create an informed, secure, and inclusive telecom environment. Volunteers will educate citizens on digital safety, cyber fraud prevention, Electromagnetic Field (EMF) radiation awareness, and responsible mobile usage practices, especially in rural and underserved areas.

Key Points:-

(i) Academic institutions will nominate students from domains such as telecom, computer science, and cybersecurity. These students will undergo certified training developed by experts from the National Communications Academy–Technology (NCA-T) and the DoT Media Wing. The training covers 5G, 6G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and ethical telecom usage.

(ii) Top-performing student ambassadors will receive internships, international exposure opportunities, and recognition for participation in major national telecom projects, including the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) forums and global innovation missions.

(iii) The programme was initially piloted in select institutions, but as of July 2025, it has been officially launched across all telecom circles of India. It is jointly supervised by Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia (Guna, Madhya Pradesh) and Minister of State Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani (Guntur, Andhra Pradesh), Ministry of Communications.

6. Union MoS Pankaj Chaudhary Inaugurates Trade Facilitation Conference 2025 to Promote Scientific Excellence in Customs Infrastructure.



In July 2025, Union Minister of State (MoS) for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary inaugurated the Trade Facilitation Conference 2025 at the C. Subramaniam Auditorium, ICAR-NASC Campus, New Delhi. Organized by the Central Revenues Control Laboratory (CRCL) under CBIC, the event aimed at enhancing customs infrastructure, trade efficiency, and laboratory modernization.

- The Trade Facilitation Conference 2025 was organized under the theme “Scientific Excellence for Seamless Trade” by the Central Revenues Control Laboratory (CRCL), functioning under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), Ministry of Finance (MoF). It was held at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)’s National Agricultural Science Complex (NASC), Pusa, New Delhi.

- Union MoS Pankaj Chaudhary presided over the inauguration, with key dignitaries including Vivek Ranjan, Member (Tax Policy & Legal), CBIC, and Surjit Bhujabal, Member (Customs), CBIC. The conference served as a high-level platform to discuss policy strategies for modernizing trade-related laboratory functions, standardizing procedures, and strengthening regulatory cooperation.

- The event focused on strengthening India’s trade facilitation ecosystem by reducing testing

delays, upgrading laboratory infrastructure, and enhancing Research & Development (R&D) capabilities. The CRCL also aims to expand its lab network across ports and entry points, improving customs efficiency through scientific and technical excellence.

Key Points:-

- (i) The conference also emphasized skill development and capacity building through technical training and stakeholder collaboration. A special stakeholder core group was proposed to enhance cross-institutional coordination, improve sampling procedures, and boost data-driven trade diagnostics for petroleum, chemicals, and allied products.
- (ii) As part of the conference, a documentary titled “Science at the Border: The Story of Indian Customs Laboratories” was launched, detailing CRCL’s journey since its establishment in 1912.
- (iii) Additionally, a CRCL Coffee Table Book and Brochure were released, along with a video on Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for sampling petroleum liquids.

INTERNATIONAL

1. India Signs 5-Year Long-Term Fertilizer Deal with Saudi Arabia for 3.1 Mn Tonnes DAP.



During his visit to Riyadh and Dammam from 11–13 July 2025, Union Minister J.P. Nadda, overseeing Chemicals and Fertilizers, signed landmark long-term agreements with Saudi state-owned mining firm Ma’aden and Indian companies Indian Potash Ltd (IPL), KRIBHCO, Coromandel, and Coal India Ltd (CIL).

- The pacts ensure the annual supply of 3.1 million metric tonnes of Diammonium Phosphate (DAP) fertiliser over five years from fiscal year 2025–26, with an option for a five-year extension.
- This significant increase in DAP imports follows China’s recent reduction in phosphate exports—a strategic shift that impacted global availability. The new Saudi deal boosts India's guaranteed supply, offering much-needed supply security for its 10–11 million tonnes annual fertiliser requirement and mitigating dependence on a single supplier.

Key Points:-

- (i) India’s DAP imports from Saudi Arabia reached 1.9 million tonnes in 2024–25, up 17% from the previous year.
- (ii) With the new deal, the total import volume is set to rise to 3.1 million tonnes annually, stabilizing national inventory and

supporting the government's Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) policy.

(iii) The agreements also include plans for joint research into India-specific, customized fertilisers and open avenues for reciprocal investments—allowing Indian public sector undertakings (PSUs) to invest in Saudi phosphate projects and Saudi investors to enter India's fertiliser sector. A bilateral working group, led by India's Fertiliser Secretary and Saudi's Vice-Minister for Mining, will drive these initiatives.

2. WHO Unveils First AI-Traditional Medicine Roadmap Recognising India's Global AYUSH Leadership.



The World Health Organization (WHO) released its first technical roadmap in July 2025 on integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) with traditional medicine. The release came through a report titled "Mapping the Application of Artificial Intelligence in Traditional Medicine", highlighting India's pioneering role in digitising and globalising ancient systems like AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy).

- This roadmap, developed based on India's proposals, marks WHO's first major step in

formalising a global AI-based framework for traditional health systems. It positions India at the forefront of combining AI with traditional medicine to develop evidence-based healthcare solutions for the future.

- The roadmap emphasised India's platforms such as SAHI (Showcase of Ayurvedic Historical Imprints), NAMASTE (National AYUSH Morbidity and Standardised Terminologies Electronic Portal), and ARP (Ayush Research Portal) as key digital enablers.

- These platforms aim to preserve centuries-old medical texts and offer an accessible research base for the world. The ARP portal serves two critical roles: safeguarding traditional knowledge and creating globally acceptable AI-augmented treatment models.

Key Points:-

(i) WHO acknowledged India's innovation in AI and traditional medicine, recognising it as a leading force in shaping the digital healthcare ecosystem. It also praised India's efforts to document, codify, and modernise AYUSH systems in partnership with global AI communities and health institutions.

(ii) India also became the first country to establish a TKDL (Traditional Knowledge Digital Library), which has earned global recognition for responsibly preserving indigenous medical heritage. TKDL is now a global model for digitising traditional knowledge systems with AI-backed intelligence and accessibility.

3. US Department of Defense Awards \$200 Million AI Contracts to OpenAI, Google, Anthropic, and xAI for National Security Innovation.



The United States Department of Defense (DoD) has recently awarded artificial intelligence (AI) contracts worth up to USD 200 million each to OpenAI, Google, Anthropic, and xAI. This move aims to strengthen the U.S. national defense system through secure and mission-driven AI applications, including defense operations, cybersecurity, and strategic decision-making.

- These contracts, signed in July 2025, fall under the broader AI acquisition strategy developed by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) and the Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Office (CDAO).

- Each company will provide advanced AI solutions such as OpenAI's "ChatGPT Gov," Google's "Gemini AI," Anthropic's "Claude Gov," and xAI's "Grok for Government" models to serve U.S. federal agencies and military departments.

- OpenAI, known for its generative AI tool ChatGPT, has been tasked with developing AI prototypes to support secure battlefield analytics and operational readiness. Google Public Sector will provide high-performance infrastructure, including Tensor Processing Units (TPUs), for projects with the U.S. Air Force and Navy, focusing on AI model training, simulations, and logistics automation.

Key Points:-

(i) Anthropic, backed by Amazon and Google, will deploy its Claude Gov models to improve threat detection, intelligence processing, and ethical AI usage in sensitive defense missions.

(ii) Meanwhile, xAI, the artificial intelligence firm led by Elon Musk, will provide "Grok for Government," targeting real-time strategic reasoning and battlefield AI applications.

(iii) The Department of Defense emphasized that these partnerships will speed up the safe and responsible adoption of AI across the military and civilian spectrum. Dr. Doug Matty, Chief Digital and AI Officer of DoD, stated that this program will advance secure AI deployment to achieve operational superiority while complying with national ethical and privacy standards.

4. IMF Report 2025: India Tops Global Fast Payment Rankings as UPI Crosses 18 Billion Monthly Transactions.



India has become the world leader in fast payments, with the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) now processing over 18 billion transactions per month. According to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) fintech

note released in July 2025, this surge reflects India's rapid shift toward a cashless economy and sets a global benchmark in digital transaction speed.

- UPI, launched in April 2016 by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), runs atop the Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) platform regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Its interoperable design allows users to transact across different banks and apps seamlessly, making it the world's largest real-time payment system by volume.

Key Points:-

(i) In June 2025, UPI recorded an 18 billion+ transactions (a 32% year-on-year increase) and a 20% rise in transaction value. Daily volumes touched around 613 million transactions. Meanwhile, proxies for cash usage—such as ATM withdrawals, debit, and credit card payments—continued a steady decline.

(ii) The IMF note titled “Growing Retail Digital Payments: The Value of Interoperability” emphasised how UPI's open architecture fosters user choice, competition, and innovation. It also served as a model for other countries, highlighting the importance of interoperability and urging regulators to monitor potential market concentration risks.

(iii) The report underlined UPI's role in boosting financial inclusion, with over 500 million active users and its potential for future expansion into cross-border payments, credit flows, and extending reach to feature phone users via UPI Lite. It further recommended continued regulatory vigilance to maintain UPI's open ecosystem and healthy competition.

5. India Participates in Australia's 'Talisman Sabre 2025' Bilateral Military Exercise for the First Time.



In July 2025, India officially joined the 11th edition of the bilateral military exercise 'Talisman Sabre 2025' in Australia, marking its first-ever participation in this large-scale Indo-Pacific defense collaboration. This milestone enhances India–Australia defense ties and promotes regional security and military interoperability. The exercise is being conducted from July 13 to August 4, 2025, across multiple locations in Australia and extended operations in Papua New Guinea, showcasing expanding regional partnerships and multilateral defense coordination.

- Exercise Talisman Sabre began in 2005 as a biennial military drill between the United States of America (USA) and Australia, with the objective of enhancing interoperability, strategic response readiness, and command-control integration. India's inclusion in 2025 signifies its growing military footprint in the Indo-Pacific region.

- The 2025 edition involves over 35,000 personnel from 19 nations, including India, Australia, USA, UK, Japan, Indonesia, France, Germany, Canada, New Zealand, South Korea, Philippines, Fiji, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia

(observer), Vietnam (observer), and others. These countries will jointly conduct land, air, sea, and amphibious defense drills.

- Live-fire field drills, tactical response missions, and amphibious landings are key components. The exercise will also include air combat, maritime security operations, force participation exercises, and command-level coordination, reflecting readiness for multilateral defense missions.

Key Points:-

(i) India's participation includes personnel from all three services. The Australian Defence Force (ADF) will deploy systems like the UH-60M Black Hawk, Precision Strike Missiles, HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems), and NASAMS (National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System).

(ii) India's engagement in 'Talisman Sabre 2025' reinforces its defense diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific, demonstrating commitment to regional peace, freedom of navigation, and military synergy with key partners such as Australia, USA, and Japan under a multilateral format.

(iii) For the first time, Papua New Guinea is also hosting operations under the exercise umbrella. This reflects the growing security concerns and joint preparedness strategies in the Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) region.

BANKING & FINANCE

1. Taiwan's CTBC Bank to Open Branch in GIFT City, Strengthening Global Financial Ties.



In January 2025, CTBC Bank, a leading Taiwanese lender, secured approval from Taiwan's Financial Supervisory Commission (FSC) to establish its first branch in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), India's pioneering smart and financial hub. Pending final clearance from Indian authorities, this move marks CTBC as the first Taiwanese bank to directly enter GIFT City's International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).

- Launched in April 2015 and operating under the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), GIFT City is India's premier Greenfield smart city and IFSC located in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Spanning 886 acres, it currently hosts over 850 financial and tech entities, including 23 public sector banks, multinational lenders, and two international stock exchanges.

- CTBC Bank joins Taiwan's growing presence in GIFT City, including Taipei Fubon Commercial Bank, which received its FSC approval in July 2025. Indian regulators are actively encouraging Taiwanese investment, citing regulatory alignment, tax benefits, and market access as strong drivers.

Key Points:-

(i) GIFT City offers clear advantages: single-window approvals, regulatory parity with global centres, plug-and-play infrastructure, and preferential tax regimes. For foreign banks, it provides a cost-effective platform to offer comprehensive services—ranging from trade finance to treasury and cross-border operations.

(ii) If operationalised, CTBC Bank will leverage its existing network in New Delhi and Sriperumbudur, and Taiwan branches to serve both Indian and Taiwan-based clients. Its expansion into GIFT City will help it tap into India's growing financial services market and reinforce bilateral trade links.

(iii) With growing global bank entries like CTBC and Taipei Fubon, GIFT City continues to solidify its status as a global financial nucleus. The IFSC aims to scale further through policy incentives and infrastructure upgrades, projecting India as a competitive alternative to global centres such as Singapore and Dubai.

On July 14, 2025, President of India, Droupadi Murmu, approved new gubernatorial appointments for the states of Haryana and Goa, along with a new Lieutenant Governor (LG) for the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh. These appointments will come into effect upon the assumption of office by the respective individuals.

- Professor Ashim Kumar Ghosh has been appointed as the new Governor of Haryana, succeeding Bandaru Dattatreya who served in the role since July 2021. Ghosh is known for his academic and political contributions and has held multiple senior positions in higher education institutions. He hails from West Bengal (WB).

- Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju has been appointed as the new Governor of Goa, replacing P. S. Sreedharan Pillai. Raju is a veteran politician from Andhra Pradesh and former Union Minister for Civil Aviation under the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) from 2014 to 2018.

- Kavinder Gupta, a senior BJP leader from Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), has been appointed as the new LG of Ladakh. Gupta has previously served as Deputy Chief Minister (DCM) of J&K and was the Speaker of the J&K Legislative Assembly. He replaces Brigadier (Retd.) B.D. Mishra, who has served in the role since February 2023.

Key Points:-

(i) The resignation of Brigadier B.D. Mishra (Retd) from the post of LG of Ladakh was formally accepted by the President. Mishra, a decorated Indian Army veteran and former commander of the National Security Guard (NSG), had earlier served as the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh before being

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

1. President Droupadi Murmu Appoints New Governors for Haryana & Goa and Kavinder Gupta as LG of Ladakh.



appointed as LG of Ladakh.

(ii) Alongside these appointments, President Murmu nominated four eminent personalities to the Rajya Sabha under Article 80(1)(a) of the Constitution of India. These nominations include experts from law, diplomacy, social work, and literature, highlighting diverse representation in the Upper House.

(iii) The four nominated Rajya Sabha members are: Ujjwal Nikam, a renowned public prosecutor known for his role in high-profile terrorism trials including the 26/11 Mumbai attacks and 1993 blasts; Harsh Vardhan Shringla, former Indian Foreign Secretary (January 2020 – April 2022), and ex-Ambassador to the USA and Bangladesh; C. Sadanandan Master, a senior social worker and educationist from Kerala known for grassroots-level development work; and Dr. Meenakshi Jain, a noted historian and academic recognized for her literary contributions on Indian civilization and history.

Coca-Cola, appointed Hemant Rupani as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO), set to take charge from September 8, 2025, succeeding outgoing CEO Juan Pablo Rodriguez.

- **Hemant Rupani brings over two decades of experience in consumer goods and technology.** A 1997 mechanical engineering graduate from a Jaipur engineering college and an MBA in Marketing from the Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), University of Delhi, he launched his career at ICI India Ltd, then held key leadership roles at PepsiCo, Infosys Technologies, Vodafone, and Britannia Industries, before moving to Mondelez International in 2016.

- **Before joining HCCB, Rupani served as President, South East Asia (SEA) at Mondelez International, overseeing business operations in countries including Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.** He moved up from leading India sales to managing multiple markets, marking a transformative nine-year tenure.

Key Points:-

2. Hemant Rupani Appointed as New CEO of Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages Effective September 2025.



Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages Pvt Ltd (HCCB), India's largest bottling partner of

(i) Hemant Rupani takes over from Juan Pablo Rodriguez, who led HCCB for over two decades, serving in roles across markets like the Philippines, Mexico, Singapore, and India. Rodriguez will transition to a new position within the Coca-Cola system, as HCCB focuses on consolidating local ownership following the Jubilant Bhartia Group's 40% stake acquisition in December 2024 (approx. ₹12,500 cr).

(ii) Headquartered in Bengaluru and founded in 1997, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages operates with over 7,000 employees, serving as a key bottler and distributor of

Coca-Cola products in India. Under Rupani, HCCB aims to drive investment-led growth, enhance efficiency across its ₹12,500 cr JV, and capitalize on its strong market position in India.

3. R Doraiswamy Appointed as LIC's Managing Director and CEO Until 2028.



In July 2025, Ramachandran Doraiswamy officially assumed the position of Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC). His three-year term (or until reaching the age of 62) is set to end in August 2028, marking a significant leadership transition at India's largest life insurer.

- The Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) recommended Doraiswamy for the top role on June 11, 2025, after evaluating four senior MD candidates. His appointment was subsequently approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) and notified by the Department of Financial Services.

Key Points:-

(i) Doraiswamy replaced Sat Pal Bhanoo, who had served as interim MD & CEO since June 8, 2025, following the retirement of Siddhartha Mohanty on June 7. His term will

extend up to August 31, 2028, or until he turns 62, whichever comes first.

(ii) A mathematics graduate from Madurai Kamaraj University, Doraiswamy is a Fellow of the Insurance Institute of India, with over 38 years of experience spanning operations, marketing, technology, and academics. He has held roles including Executive Director (IT) and regional marketing head in Chennai, Kottayam, and Pune.

(iii) As MD & CEO, Doraiswamy will steer LIC's transformation in the post-IPO era, overseeing ₹45 lakh crore in assets under management (AUM), digital innovation, product expansion, and investor confidence. His leadership is closely watched by stakeholders and market analysts alike.

AWARDS

1. Leila Aboulela Wins PEN Pinter Prize 2025 for Her Powerful Literary Work on Migration and Muslim Women's Lives.



In July 2025, renowned Sudanese-Scottish author Leila Aboulela was honoured with the prestigious PEN Pinter Prize 2025, awarded by English PEN. The award celebrates her distinguished contributions to literature, particularly her insightful writing on themes such as migration, Islamic faith, and the lived

experiences of Muslim women in diaspora and displacement.

- The PEN Pinter Prize is awarded annually by English PEN to a writer who fearlessly addresses themes of truth, human rights, and social justice. The 2025 edition was announced during the English PEN Summer Party at the October Gallery in London, United Kingdom (UK), marking the 16th year of this literary recognition.

- Leila Aboulela will be formally presented with the award on October 10, 2025, during a ceremony at the British Library (BL) in London. During this event, the co-winner of the PEN Pinter Writer of Courage 2025, chosen jointly by Aboulela and English PEN, will also be announced — highlighting voices persecuted or silenced globally.

Key Points:-

(i) The 2025 selection panel included literary figures such as Ruth Borthwick, Chair of English PEN; poet and writer Mona Arshi; and celebrated novelist Nadifa Mohamed. The judges praised Aboulela's ability to craft narratives that intertwine personal stories with global socio-political realities, drawing particular attention to the struggles and strength of Muslim women in exile.

(ii) The PEN Pinter Prize, established in 2009 in honour of Nobel Laureate Harold Pinter, honours a 'Writer of Courage' from the UK, Ireland, or the Commonwealth for fearless truth-telling in English.

(iii) Leila Aboulela is the author of six critically acclaimed novels, including *The Translator* (1999), *Minaret* (2005), *Lyrics Alley* (2011), and her latest *River Spirit* (2023). She won the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2000 for her short story *The*

Museum, and the Scottish Book Award for Lyrics Alley. Her work has frequently featured in the BBC Radio 4 Short Story Awards, and she was shortlisted for the Saltire Fiction Book of the Year in 2018.

2. Former Chief Justice Kalyan Shrestha Honoured with Hem Bahadur Malla Award 2080.



In July 2025, former Chief Justice Kalyan Shrestha was honoured with the prestigious Hem Bahadur Malla Award 2080 in Kathmandu. The award, accompanied by a ₹200,000 purse, recognized his exceptional contributions to judicial leadership, institutional development, and causes such as transitional justice and environmental protection.

- The prestigious award is named after Hem Bahadur Malla, founder of the Salt Trading Corporation, and has been presented annually since 2003 by the Nepal Public Administration Association (NPAA).

- In 2025, Chief Justice Prakashman Singh Raut presented the honour to Shrestha during a joint event by NPAA and the corporation.

Key Points:-

(i) Shrestha, the 25th Chief Justice of Nepal, earned acclaim for promoting legal reform, inclusive democracy, and environmental justice. His tenure included significant judicial activism during Nepal's post-conflict constitutional transition and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

(ii) A selection committee led by former Public Service Commission Chair Umesh Mainali recommended Shrestha for his leadership and institutional strengthening efforts. The award includes a cash prize of NPR 200,000 (approx. ₹200,000) and a certificate of honour.

(iii) The award reflects Nepal's dedication to recognising individuals who advance good governance, judicial independence, and public service excellence. Chief Justice Raut praised Shrestha as a towering figure in Nepal's legal history.

globally renowned Pakistani education activist. The day reaffirms the international community's commitment to ensuring education for every girl and promoting gender equality through access to learning.

- The observance highlights the ongoing global struggle for girls' education and equality in educational opportunities. It draws attention to the challenges faced by girls across various regions in accessing quality education, while celebrating advocates like Malala Yousafzai who have become global symbols of educational justice.

- The day's significance originates from 12 July 2013, when Malala delivered a historic speech at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, just after surviving an assassination attempt by the Taliban in 2012. The speech emphasized equal access to education and established her international identity as a youth leader and champion for the rights of girls and marginalized communities.

- Following her powerful address, the United Nations officially declared 12th July as "Malala Day," in honour of her advocacy. The first global observance of Malala Day took place on 12th July 2013. Since then, it is commemorated every year to remind the world of the unfinished agenda of universal education and Malala's enduring legacy.

Key Points:-

(i) The 2025 edition of Malala Day also supports the UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI), launched in 2012. GEFI mobilizes governments and civil society to prioritize education in national policies, with a special focus on free and compulsory schooling for every child, especially girls.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. International Malala Day 2025 Observed Globally on July 12 to Promote Girls' Right to Education.



International Malala Day 2025 was observed across the world on 12th July 2025 to mark the birth anniversary of Malala Yousafzai, the youngest Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and

(ii) Malala Yousafzai, born in 1997 in Pakistan's Swat Valley, became a global icon after surviving a targeted attack in 2012.

(iii) She later co-authored her memoir "I Am Malala", and in 2014 became the youngest-ever recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize at age 17. Her foundation, the Malala Fund, works worldwide to ensure 12 years of free education for all girls.

2. World Youth Skills Day observed on 15 July 2025.



World Youth Skills Day 2025, observed on 15 July, marks the 10th anniversary of the UN-designated day. This year's theme—'Youth Empowerment through Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Skills'—highlights the urgent need to equip young people with future-ready competencies for employment, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development.

- Established by a UN General Assembly resolution in November 2014, World Youth Skills Day was first observed on 15 July 2015. Since then, it serves as a platform for governments, educators, industry, and youth to bridge the global skills gap.

- The 2025 theme underscores the integration of AI and digital skills into Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems. These skills range from basic digital literacy to advanced data science, coding, VR/AR, and cybersecurity—key to fostering inclusive, tech-driven growth.

Key Points:-

(i) Organizations like UNESCO-UNEVOC hosted global events in Paris, while Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (UP) launched national fairs and innovation platforms. UP's Skill Olympic showcased youth innovations in AI, drone tech, health-tech, and agri-tech; Bihar signed MoUs to promote digital arts and AI awareness.

(ii) The day aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). By advocating AI-inclusive skills, the observance aims to ensure equitable access to education and meaningful employment for millions of youth.

DEFENCE

1. Indian Army Demonstrates 'Prachand Shakti' in Meerut to Highlight Cutting-Edge Warfare Technologies.



In July 2025, the Indian Army's Ram Division showcased its revolutionary "Prachand Shakti" demonstration at the Kharga Corps Field Training Area in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

- The live exercise underlined the integration of advanced technologies—such as drones, artificial intelligence, loitering munitions, and autonomous systems—within Strike Corps infantry operations.
- The exercise emphasized the Army's commitment to battlefield modernisation—deploying Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), AI-enabled platforms, loitering munitions, and autonomous weapon systems—to elevate infantry formations' agility, lethality, and survivability during deep offensive missions.

Key Points:-

- (i) Prachand Shakti is part of the broader "Year of Tech Absorption" drive aimed at accelerating the integration of Make in India innovations and civilian-developed military solutions, reinforcing the Army's push for self-reliance and future-readiness.
- (ii) Led by the Ram Division of the Kharga Corps, the demonstration drew senior leadership and highlighted real-time application of drone swarms, AI-powered targeting, and precision loitering munitions in strike corps scenarios—signaling a tectonic shift in operational doctrine.
- (iii) According to senior Army officials, Prachand Shakti marks a strategic shift towards digitised, networked warfare. The exercise equips infantry units with tomorrow's combat tools, ensuring rapid adaptability in high-intensity operations and reinforcing India's defence innovation ecosystem.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. DRDO & IAF Successfully Conduct Flight-Test of Indigenous Astra BVRAAM Missile from Su-30 MKI in Odisha.



In July 2025, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) jointly conducted a successful flight-test of the indigenously developed Astra Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM) equipped with an indigenous Radio Frequency (RF) seeker from a Su-30 MKI aircraft. The test was carried out at the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur, Balasore district, Odisha.

- The test involved two Astra missiles launched under varying combat conditions. Both missiles effectively destroyed their designated aerial targets. The trials validated the missile's seeker performance, developed by DRDO, which met all parameters successfully.
- This test marks a significant milestone in India's defence indigenization efforts. The RF seeker—a key component in modern missile guidance—allows for autonomous target tracking and engagement with a fire-and-forget capability. This has made Astra one of the most advanced air-to-air missiles in its class.

- The Astra missile system was tested using high-precision telemetry systems deployed by ITR Chandipur. The data validated the flawless functioning of the seeker and guidance mechanisms during flight, showcasing India's growing R&D capabilities in high-end defence technologies.

Key Points:-

- (i) Astra BVRAAM has been developed by DRDO and produced by Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL). It features a high-speed range of up to 100 km, a mid-body wing configuration, and a 160–180 kg weight profile.
- (ii) The missile is capable of neutralizing highly agile enemy aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The current tests were conducted using the IAF's Su-30 MKI fighter jet, with future integrations planned on platforms like Tejas Mk-1, MiG-29K, and the Indian Navy's fighter fleet.

Static GK

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Haryana	Chief minister: Nayab Singh Saini	Governor: Ashim Kumar Ghosh
DRDO	Chairman: Sameer V. Kamat	Headquarters : New Delhi
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