



# **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**25 JULY 2025**

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

### 1. MoHUA Launches 'Safai Apnao, Bimaari Bhagao (SABB)' Campaign Ahead of Monsoon 2025.



To prevent monsoon-related health hazards and ensure urban sanitation, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) recently launched the nationwide 'Safai Apnao, Bimaari Bhagao (SABB)' campaign on July 23, 2025. The campaign runs from July 1 to July 31, 2025 and aims to clean drains and promote safety under the broader Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) 2.0.

- The SABB campaign is MoHUA's monsoon-preparedness drive that specifically focuses on drain cleaning, hygiene promotion, and public engagement across cities and towns. It emphasizes active participation from Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), citizens, schoolchildren, and civil society. The aim is to reduce health risks and vector-borne diseases during the rainy season by clearing blockages and promoting behavioral change.

- As part of SBM-U 2.0, the SABB campaign reinforces the six "Swachhata Mantras": clean hands, clean homes, clean neighborhoods, clean toilets, clean drains, and clean public spaces. These guiding principles are being promoted through social media campaigns, street rallies,

and interactive programs in urban areas to instill hygiene practices among citizens.

- Various states have innovatively participated in the SABB campaign. In Bihar, the Patna Municipal Corporation (PMC) introduced "Manhole Ambulances" — specially designed vehicles to conduct quick and safe manhole maintenance. In Delhi, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) organized 'Pinkathon', a walkathon event featuring over 400 National Cadet Corps (NCC) girl cadets spreading awareness on hygiene.

#### Key Points:-

(i) In Maharashtra, the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC), in collaboration with Dnyandeep Seva Mandal High School, conducted a Swachhata Rally involving 600+ students, teachers, and parents.

(ii) In Telangana, multiple initiatives were launched such as door-to-door campaigns on waste segregation and desilting of drains to prevent waterlogging and improve public hygiene.

(iii) This proactive monsoon sanitation initiative by MoHUA is a key step in transforming Swachh Bharat into a daily practice and not just a campaign. With wide public participation, especially from schools, urban institutions, and local governments, SABB is becoming a people-led movement for clean and disease-free cities.

### 2. India Marks 10 Years of Skill India Mission with Bharat SkillNxt 2025 Launch at Bharat Mandapam, Delhi.





In July 2025, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) commemorated a decade of the Skill India Mission by organizing a grand exhibition and conference titled 'Bharat SkillNxt 2025' at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The event marked the launch of transformative skilling initiatives and the signing of several critical MoUs.

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Jayant Chaudhary, presided over the event and led the key launches aligned with India's skill transformation roadmap for the next decade.
- The conference featured the unveiling of major initiatives including the IndiaSkills 2025-26 Operational Guidelines and Registration Portal, the SOAR platform (Skilling for Artificial Intelligence Readiness), and the Kaushal Verse Digital Enterprise Portal (DEP) by the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVT).

#### Key Points:-

- A landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between MSDE and the Government of the French Republic, highlighting India's strategic international collaboration in vocational

training and education.

- Additional MoUs were exchanged with National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs), including those in Bengaluru (with SLN Technology under DST scheme) and Mumbai (with ICICI Foundation) to promote incubation and advanced skilling.

- Several Flexi-MoUs were also signed by Regional Directorates of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (RDSEs) with major Indian industry players like Microsoft, HCL, Dixon Technologies, and Apollo MedSkills as well as prestigious institutes such as IIT Patna, IIIT Una, IIT Hyderabad, NIT Agartala, and more under PMKVY to enhance public-private skill development collaboration.

### 3. India Achieves 20% Ethanol Blending in Petrol by 2025, Surpassing 2030 Target Ahead of Time.



In early 2025, India successfully reached a 20% ethanol blending ratio (E20) in petrol—five to six years ahead of the original deadline of 2030. The milestone was officially confirmed by Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on 23 July 2025, during an event linked to the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) Round-IX signing ceremony.

- Back in June 2021, the government revised its ethanol blending roadmap—shifting the 20% target from 2030 to Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2025-26—as part of the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme. By early 2022, India had already surpassed the 10% blending mark, reaching nearly 19.6% by late 2024.

- This achievement has led to significant savings of foreign exchange—around ₹1.36 lakh crore, up to ₹1.5 lakh crore—by reducing crude oil imports. It has also boosted rural incomes: ₹1.18 lakh crore paid to distilleries and ₹1.96 lakh crore transferred to farmers benefiting from higher ethanol demand. Approximately 698 lakh tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were avoided due to cleaner fuel use.

- India's ethanol production capacity surged to nearly 1,685 cr litres by mid-2025, underpinned by expanded infrastructure and feedstock diversification—drawing from sugarcane, maize, and surplus rice. For example, record 5.2 million MT of FCI rice was allocated for ethanol to support blending goals.

#### Key Points:-

(i) According to the government's roadmap, addressing domestic supply required about 1,016 cr litres of ethanol annually by ESY 2025-26—correctly calibrated by production data.

(ii) Following E20 success, the government is exploring accelerated blending targets up to 27% (E27)—aligning with global standards like Brazil. A committee under NITI Aayog is evaluating the feasibility and ecosystem readiness to scale blending beyond 20%.

(iii) According to the Minister, ethanol blending is a core pillar alongside green hydrogen and electric vehicles (EVs) in

India's long-term energy transition vision—targeting a sustainable economy sized at \$7–10 trillion. India now ranks among the top ethanol-blending nations globally, with Brazil being a benchmark for future ambition.

## INTERNATIONAL

### 1. India & New Zealand Conclude 2nd Round of FTA Talks in New Delhi and 3rd Round Set for September 2025.



India and New Zealand have recently successfully concluded the second round of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations in New Delhi, held from 14 to 25 July 2025. The talks advanced critical issues including goods, services, investment, trade facilitation, rules of origin, and technical barriers to trade, setting the stage for an upcoming third round scheduled in New Zealand in September.

- The resumption of FTA negotiations in March 2025 followed a decade-long hiatus since 2015. The second round of talks, which took place over 12 days, was launched to build upon initial deliberations held in early May and aims at crafting a balanced, comprehensive and forward-looking trade deal between the two nations.

- These ongoing negotiations reflect robust economic momentum: India–New Zealand merchandise trade reached USD 1.3 billion in FY 2024-25, a 48.6% increase compared to the previous fiscal year. This growth underscores the potential benefits of a comprehensive trade pact.

- Key challenges in the negotiations include dairy market access — a sensitive sector for India. New Zealand has pushed for greater access to Indian dairy, meat, and wine markets. India, meanwhile, is seeking improved market access for its IT, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and services industries, highlighting the complex balance of concessions required.

#### Key Points:-

(i) India's delegation was led by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, while New Zealand's Trade Minister Todd McClay played a leading role from the Kiwi side. Their participation reflects the political commitment at the highest level to expedite the FTA negotiations and strengthen bilateral economic ties.

(ii) A successful FTA would transform trade between the two Commonwealth partners by enhancing supply chain integration, diversifying exports (such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, agricultural machinery, electronics, and shrimps), and creating stronger avenues for investment and services collaboration. Planned intersessional virtual meetings aim to maintain momentum ahead of the September 2025 round in New Zealand.

## 2. India Climbs 8 Spots to 77th Rank in Henley Passport Index July 2025 and Singapore Tops the List.



India climbed 8 spots to reach the 77th position in the Henley Passport Index July 2025, up from 85th in January 2025. Released on 22 July 2025 by Henley & Partners, the index highlights India's improved global mobility and stronger diplomatic ties, marking a significant step in expanding visa-free access.

- India now enjoys visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 59 countries globally, up from 57 in the previous index. With this improvement, India now shares the 77th rank with Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire.

- This progress is the highest upward movement recorded in this edition of the index and aligns with India's growing international partnerships and improved bilateral travel agreements facilitated by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

- Singapore retained the top spot in the Henley Passport Index 2025 by offering visa-free access to 193 of 227 destinations, making it the world's most powerful passport. Japan and South Korea jointly hold the second rank with access to 190 countries. The strong performance of Asian countries in the top three demonstrates their global influence and robust diplomatic ties.

#### Key Points:-



(i) The third rank in the global index is jointly held by seven European Union (EU) countries: Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Finland, Denmark, and Ireland, each providing visa-free access to 189 destinations. The fourth rank includes Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and Sweden, with access to 188 destinations, reflecting Europe's continued strength in passport mobility.

(ii) India's performance has steadily improved in recent years. In 2023, India stood at the 84th rank with visa-free access to 56 countries. By January 2025, the rank dropped slightly to 85th, but the July 2025 leap to 77th demonstrates the impact of recent bilateral efforts. Countries such as Madagascar, Bolivia, and Rwanda have recently added India to their visa-free or visa-on-arrival lists, boosting India's global mobility score.

(iii) The Henley Passport Index is compiled using exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and ranks 199 passports based on visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 227 destinations. It is widely used as a benchmark to evaluate a country's travel freedom and international influence. India's rise in the 2025 index enhances opportunities for business, education, and tourism and strengthens its diplomatic presence on the global stage.



State Bank of India (SBI) has been adjudged the World's Best Consumer Bank for 2025 by Global Finance magazine. The award reflects a global benchmark in customer-centric innovation and excellence in consumer banking. SBI Chairman Challa Sreenivasulu Setty is slated to receive the honour at the World's Best Bank awards ceremony in Washington, DC, on 18 October 2025 during the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings.

- SBI's selection was based on Global Finance's extensive evaluation, incorporating feedback from corporate finance executives, analysts, and global banking experts. The criteria emphasized customer engagement, digital transformation, accessibility, financial strength, and innovation.

- Chairman C. S. Setty emphasised that customer experience remains central to SBI's growth strategy. He highlighted initiatives such as simplified onboarding, vernacular voice banking, 24/7 digital support, and AI-powered hyper-personalised offerings designed for diverse segments, especially in rural and semi-urban India.

- The award recognition underscores SBI's robust scale and performance. As of March 2025, SBI holds a deposit base exceeding ₹53.82 lakh crore, with advances over ₹42.20 lakh crore, and a home loan portfolio of ₹8.3 lakh crore.

## BANKING & FINANCE

### 1. SBI Named World's Best Consumer Bank 2025 by Global Finance Magazine.

crore accounting for 27.3% of the Indian mortgage market. SBI serves more than 52 crore customers with 22,542 branches and over 63,580 ATMs nationwide.

#### Key Points:-

(i) SBI's digital transformation has been pivotal: around 92% of transactions are now digital, driven by its flagship YONO app, which boasts nearly 8.13 crore registered users, adding 3.7 million in FY2025 alone. This digital push has meaningfully boosted revenue and profitability.

(ii) Globally, the World's Best Consumer Bank awards assess banking excellence across over 150 countries and 11 regions. Global Finance evaluates banks using both quantitative performance indicators and qualitative expert input—making it a trusted benchmark for leadership in customer-focused banking.

(iii) SBI's recognition as the Best Consumer Bank 2025 not only highlights its leadership among Indian public sector banks but also cements its presence on the world stage, showcasing India's strides in inclusive finance, scalable digital infrastructure, and financial innovation.

## 2. Public Sector Banks (PSB) Flag 1,629 Wilful Defaulter Cases Worth ₹1.62 Trillion as of March 31, 2025.



As of 31 March 2025, Public Sector Banks (PSBs) in India have identified 1,629 wilful defaulter cases with combined outstanding dues of ₹1.62 trillion, according to a recent disclosure by the Union Finance Ministry. These loans are from entities capable of repaying but deliberately avoiding repayment, posing a serious concern for banking sector health.

- In response to the crisis, the government has initiated multiple legal and administrative recovery mechanisms, including actions under the SARFAESI Act, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), and through public disclosure via credit bureaus such as CIBIL and Experian.

- This issue is particularly alarming because it coincides with slower deposit growth and increasing credit risk across PSBs — factors that reduce banks' capacity to absorb financial shocks.

#### Key Points:-

(i) As a comparison, the All India Bank Employees' Association had earlier (in 2020) issued a list of 2,426 wilful defaulter accounts owing ₹1.47 lakh crore, underscoring longstanding systemic problems.

(ii) Top institutions bear much of the burden: State Bank of India (SBI) alone has hundreds of wilful defaulter accounts amounting to tens of thousands of crores. Other major PSBs like Punjab National Bank, Union Bank, and Bank of Baroda have also reported high non-performing dues.

(iii) The Finance Ministry and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have recommended stringent reporting norms: PSBs must obtain passports of large borrowers, publish defaulter profiles, issue Look Out Circulars, and prevent wilful defaulters from accessing credit or capital markets.

### 3. PayPal Launches 'PayPal World' in Partnership with NIPL and Global Payment Providers.



On 23 July 2025, PayPal, a leading U.S.-based digital payments firm, announced the launch of a new cross-border payments platform, 'PayPal World', in partnership with India's NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), along with three other global providers, to enable seamless Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions across international merchants.

- In its initial phase, PayPal World has established strategic partnerships with four major international payment service providers.

- These include NIPL (the international arm of NPCI and operator of UPI), Mercado Pago from Brazil, Tenpay Global (Weixin Pay) from China, and Venmo, which is a U.S.-based subsidiary of PayPal. These collaborations aim to simplify global merchant acceptance of Indian UPI-based transactions and digital wallets across borders.

- The initiative allows Indian users to use their UPI credentials for payments at international online merchants that accept PayPal, significantly enhancing the global utility of India's real-time payment infrastructure. This is a major step forward in India's ambition to globalize UPI and reduce dependency on traditional banking rails for cross-border digital commerce.

#### Key Points:-

(i) PayPal World supports multiple local payment systems, digital wallets, and multi-currency usage, thereby easing international payments and remittances. It offers a consumer-friendly platform where Indian customers can pay globally using familiar local payment methods backed by UPI's infrastructure.

(ii) The new solution also focuses on streamlined merchant integration. With this system, merchants worldwide will be able to connect to a broader customer base without having to incorporate multiple payment gateways. This could drastically reduce onboarding complexity and boost cross-border e-commerce.

(iii) From a technological standpoint, 'PayPal World' is built on a cloud-native architecture. It ensures high availability, low latency, and



global scalability to support next-gen dynamic payment features, including support for stablecoins and programmable payments.

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

### 1. India Ratings & Research (Ind-Ra) Lowers India's FY26 GDP Forecast to 6.3%, Citing Global Uncertainty and Weaker Investment Climate.



In July 2025, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra), a wholly owned subsidiary of Fitch Group, has recently revised down India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast for FY2025-26 to 6.3%, reducing it by 30 basis points from its earlier projection of 6.6% made in December 2024.

- India Ratings cited both domestic and global challenges, including tariff hikes by the United States and a weaker investment environment, as key reasons for this downward revision. Despite the downgrade, positive factors such as easing inflation and strong rainfall projections are expected to cushion the economic impact in the coming fiscal year.

- The agency outlined significant headwinds, including rising global uncertainties from the US's unilateral tariff hikes affecting multiple economies and a weaker investment climate,

both of which may dampen private and institutional investor confidence in India.

- However, tailwinds such as expected monetary easing, a sharper-than-expected decline in inflation, and above-normal monsoon predictions for 2025 have been highlighted. Ind-Ra stated that these positive developments could offset the adverse impact of global headwinds to some extent.

#### Key Points:-

(i) On the retail inflation front, Ind-Ra has revised its forecast for FY26 to 3%, down from the earlier projection of 4.3%. This revision is backed by CPI-based inflation having dropped to 2.1% in June 2025, staying well below the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) 4% target range.

(ii) Private consumption is expected to grow steadily, with Ind-Ra projecting Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) to rise 6.9% Year-on-Year (YoY) in FY26. This projection reflects improving consumer sentiment following a decline in inflationary pressure.

(iii) Regarding investment demand, Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) is now expected to grow at 6.7% in FY26, which is lower than the earlier estimate of 7.2%. Ind-Ra noted that this decline signals cautious sentiment among corporate and infrastructure investors amid global trade and policy uncertainties.

### 2. ADB Lowers India's FY25 GDP Growth Forecast to 6.5%, Citing Trade Uncertainty and Weak Investment.



On 11–12 December 2024, the Manila-headquartered Asian Development Bank (ADB) revised its GDP growth projections for India, trimming its FY25 forecast to 6.5% from an earlier 7%. This adjustment reflects concerns over slowing private investment, constrained housing demand, and global trade tensions.

- ADB cited a sharp drop in Q2 FY25 growth to 5.4%—a seven-quarter low, following a slowdown in manufacturing output (3.6% YoY), stricter prudential norms on unsecured loans, and a slowdown in government capital spending. Despite strong services (7.1%) and agriculture (3.5%) growth, overall momentum lagged behind expectations.

- In its July 2025 Asian Development Outlook, ADB further revised India's FY26 GDP forecast to 6.5% (from 6.7%), pointing to elevated U.S. tariffs, ongoing policy uncertainty, and weaker global demand—especially in export markets—as key growth impediments.

- While retaining its inflation estimate for FY25 at 4.7%, ADB lowered its FY26 projection to 3.8%, citing declining food and energy prices. The outlook assumes that lower inflation will provide fiscal room for further monetary easing in early 2026.

### Key Points:-

(i) Despite the downgrade, India's economy demonstrated resilience with a 7.4% growth in Q4 FY25, driven by rural revival, strong consumer demand, and robust services sector activity. ADB underscores that these fundamentals may support a gradual recovery in forthcoming quarters.

(ii) ADB projects FY26 GDP growth at 6.5%, upwardly revising it to 7.0% for FY27, assuming stabilization in investment flows, favorable monsoon-induced agricultural strength, and continued domestic demand. The forecast anticipates private investment recovery alongside stronger capital expenditure after fiscal headwinds ease.

### MOUs and Agreement

#### 1. Maruti Suzuki Signs MoU with DPIIT to Propel Auto & Mobility Startup Innovation Across India.



On 23 July 2025, Maruti Suzuki India Limited entered into a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). The partnership aims to bolster technology-driven innovation in the automobile manufacturing and mobility sectors, enabling DPIIT-recognised startups

to access Maruti Suzuki's innovation ecosystem under the 'Startup India' initiative.

- Maruti Suzuki will ensure selected startups can participate in its four flagship innovation platforms—Accelerator, Incubation, Mobility Challenge, and Nurture. These programs provide structured mentorship, industry insights, and access to real-world testing infrastructure for developing and validating market-ready technologies. This collaboration reflects a deeper alignment with the national objectives of both Make in India and Startup India.
- Startups approved under the DPIIT framework will be linked to a broader innovation network—incubators, accelerators, investors, and potential corporate partners—to scale promising solutions globally. This will help bridge the traditional gap between early-stage ideation and commercialization within the automotive value chain.

#### Key Points:-

- With over 5,000 startups screened, around 150 engaged, and 28 onboarded in prior cohorts, Maruti Suzuki has demonstrated its commitment to nurturing innovation.
- This MoU with DPIIT is set to enhance India's leadership in next-generation industrial and mobility innovation by providing startups strong scalability pathways and direct access to real manufacturing validation environments.

## APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

### 1. Ajay Seth Appointed as New IRDAI Chairman for 3 Years by ACC.



The Government of India has appointed former Finance Secretary Ajay Seth as the new Chairman of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) for a tenure of three years, effective from July 24, 2025. This appointment was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

- Ajay Seth's appointment fills the top vacancy created in March 2025 following the completion of the term of Debasish Panda, the former IRDAI Chairman. As per norms, the tenure will continue for three years or until Mr. Seth attains the age of 65, whichever is earlier. The appointment reinforces the government's focus on experienced leadership in the insurance regulation sector.
- The selection was made based on recommendations from the Financial Sector Regulatory Appointments Search Committee (FSRASC), led by the Cabinet Secretary.
- This committee is responsible for shortlisting competent candidates for key regulatory positions in India's financial sector. The final decision was taken by the ACC upon FSRASC's submission.

#### Key Points:-



(i) Ajay Seth is a 1987-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Karnataka cadre. He brings over three decades of experience in finance, infrastructure, and regulatory policy. Prior to this role, he served as Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) under the Ministry of Finance from 2021 to June 2025.

(ii) In addition to his DEA role, Seth was appointed as Revenue Secretary in March 2025 after Tuhin Kanta Pandey demitted office. He was also part of the high-level panel that dealt with financial market regulation and held responsibilities overlapping with SEBI and other regulators.

(iii) Ajay Seth's profile includes notable experience in public finance, urban development, and public-private partnerships (PPP). He has also worked closely with multilateral institutions like the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank. His contributions were recognized with the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration in 2013.

On 25 July 2025, the United Nations observed the International Day for Women and Girls of African Descent, an official UN-designated day first adopted via General Assembly Resolution 78/323 in August 2024. It recognizes the unique contributions and challenges of African-descended women and girls around the world.

- This observance aligns with the International Decade for People of African Descent (2025–2034) and seeks to raise global awareness about the intersecting discrimination based on race, gender, and socio-economic status. It underscores the importance of targeted policymaking to foster justice, dignity, and development.

- The day spotlights systemic inequalities faced by women and girls of African descent—limited access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and political representation—while celebrating their achievements across domains such as law, politics, culture, science, art, and activism.

#### Key Points:-

(i) UN agencies and human rights institutions emphasize the need for disaggregated race and gender data, affirmative action, and protection of activists to dismantle historic biases and stereotypes. Empowerment programmes focused on leadership, education, and legal justice are highlighted as pathways to equity.

(ii) On this day, governments, NGOs, civil society, and communities organise events like conferences, cultural workshops, and panel discussions to elevate voices of African-descended women and girls, celebrate their resilience, and demand global commitment to end racism, sexism,

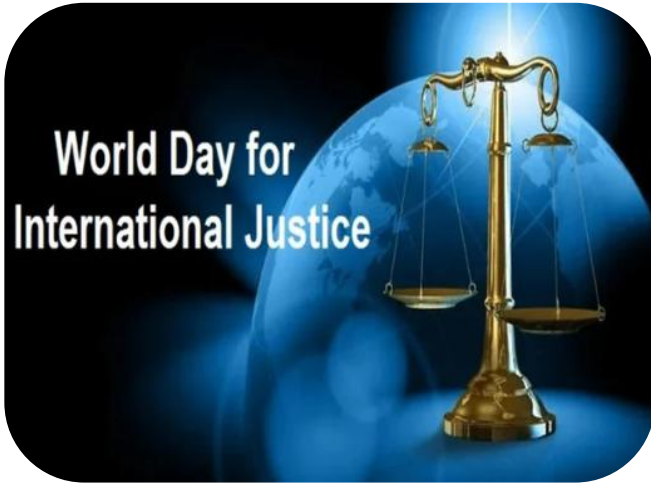
## IMPORTANT DAYS

### 1. International Day for Women and Girls of African Descent Marked on 25 July 2025.



xenophobia, and marginalization.

## 2. International Day for Judicial Well-Being Inaugurated on 25 July 2025, Marking a Milestone in Global Justice Reform.



On 25 July 2025, the United Nations marked its first official International Day for Judicial Well-Being, following the unanimous adoption of UN Resolution A/RES/79/266 on 4 March 2025. Co-sponsored by over 70 countries, the resolution underscores the fundamentals of judicial health, mental resilience, and its critical role in preserving judicial independence and integrity.

- This day was chosen to correspond with the adoption of the Nauru Declaration on Judicial Well-Being, originally passed on 25 July 2024 at a Regional Judicial Conference.
- The roots of this observance trace back to the Nauru Declaration, adopted from 23–25 July 2024, which laid out seven core principles aimed at normalizing judicial well-being discussions globally. Spearheaded by Justice Rangajeeva Wimalasena of Nauru, the Declaration called for open conversations on judicial stress—historically considered taboo—and promoted policies for emotional and mental support systems for judges.

- The day was officially proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, with 160 member states voting in favour, making this only the second UN-recognized day focusing on the judiciary—the first being the International Day of Women Judges (10 March). This observance emphasises that healthy judicial officers are indispensable to upholding the rule of law and protecting public trust.

### Key Points:-

- (i) Global surveys, such as the 2021–22 study by the UN Global Judicial Integrity Network, revealed overwhelming levels of stress among judges. About 92% reported experiencing job-related stress, 76% said they lacked sufficient time for personal well-being, and 69% viewed discussions on mental health as taboo. These alarming figures underscore the need for systemic interventions to support judicial officers worldwide.
- (ii) The International Bar Association (IBA) and related organizations hosted events on 25 July 2025, including webinars and panel discussions discussing “Wellness & the Judiciary: Global Perspectives”. Judicial leaders and experts emphasized the urgency of collective responsibility, destigmatizing support-seeking, and embedding well-being within judicial institutions for sustained integrity.
- (iii) The establishment of this day also serves to reinforce Sustainable Development Goal 16 which promotes inclusive, accountable institutions and equal access to justice. Observing judicial well-being nationally and globally becomes a strategic tool to strengthen the quality of justice, reduce corruption risks, and enhance public confidence in courts.

## DEFENCE

### 1. India Launches 'Samudra Prachet': Second Indigenous Pollution Control Vessel to Strengthen Maritime Environmental Security.



On 23 July 2025, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) launched 'Samudra Prachet', India's second indigenously built Pollution Control Vessel (PCV) at Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL). This launch marks a major step in enhancing India's maritime oil spill response capacity and reflects the country's self-reliance in maritime defense infrastructure under Atmanirbhar Bharat.

- The 4,170-tonne vessel is equipped with cutting-edge oil spill control and marine pollution response systems, including oil containment booms, skimmers, side-sweeping arms, and dispersant spray systems. It measures 114.5 metres in length and 16.5 metres in breadth, and is designed to handle complex operations such as real-time pollution detection, oil recovery, onboard separation of pollutants, and safe storage of recovered oil using fully automated processes.

- With 72% indigenous content, 'Samudra Prachet' exemplifies the Make in India initiative, involving significant contributions from Indian

MSMEs and marine technology suppliers. This boosts local employment, innovation, and skill development in India's growing shipbuilding sector. The ship is manned by 14 officers and 115 sailors, demonstrating its crew's operational readiness for rapid deployment in critical pollution control operations.

- The vessel is a follow-up to its sister ship 'Samudra Pratap', launched on 29 August 2024, completing the ICG's twin PCV project under the Ministry of Defence. These vessels will significantly enhance India's ability to respond to oil spills and chemical leaks across the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), especially in environmentally sensitive zones and near major ports.

#### Key Points:-

(i) 'Samudra Prachet' is also capable of secondary missions including firefighting, high-speed interdiction, environmental monitoring, and maritime law enforcement.

(ii) With a top speed of 22 knots, dynamic positioning systems, and long-range operational capacity, the vessel is a multi-role platform critical to India's marine security and environmental preservation framework.

(iii) The launch ceremony was attended by Director General of Indian Coast Guard, Rakesh Pal, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Defence and Goa Shipyard. The vessel's deployment marks a milestone in India's marine safety infrastructure, aligning with international pollution control standards under the MARPOL Convention (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships).



## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. NASA Launches TRACERS Twin Satellite Mission to Study Earth's Magnetosphere.



In July 2025, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launched a new space science mission titled Tandem Reconnection and Cusp Electrodynamics Reconnaissance Satellites (TRACERS). This twin-satellite initiative aims to explore how Earth's magnetosphere protects the planet from harmful solar wind originating from the Sun.

- The TRACERS spacecraft pair was launched aboard SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from Space Launch Complex 4 East at Vandenberg Space Force Base, California, United States.
- The launch is part of NASA's strategic commitment to better understand space weather dynamics and their influence on Earth's upper atmosphere and technological systems.
- This mission is led by Principal Investigator David Miles from the University of Iowa (UI), in collaboration with the Southwest Research Institute, based in San Antonio, Texas. The goal is to monitor magnetic reconnection events at the polar cusp—a region where solar wind particles penetrate Earth's magnetic shield.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The TRACERS satellites were designed and developed by Boeing Company, previously known as Millennium Space Systems. The mission represents Boeing's contribution to high-precision, small-satellite platforms designed for scientific exploration of space plasma interactions and magnetic field behavior.

(ii) Flying in tandem just 10 seconds apart, the twin satellites will collect over 3,000 high-resolution observations during their one-year mission. These measurements will provide unprecedented insights into the mechanisms that allow solar wind to interact with the Earth's magnetosphere, contributing to future space weather forecasting models.

(iii) Along with , the Falcon 9 launch also deployed three additional NASA payloads: Athena EPIC (Economical Payload Integration Cost) SmallSat, PEXT (Polylingual Experimental Terminal) for tech demonstrations, and REAL (Relativistic Electron Atmospheric Loss) CubeSat. These secondary missions are aimed at testing communication, payload integration, and atmospheric particle loss technologies in Earth's orbit.

## OBITUARY

### 1. Renowned Theatre Director Ratan Thiyam Passes Away at 77 in Imphal, Manipur.



Padma Shri awardee and celebrated Indian theatre director Ratan Thiyam passed away on 23 July 2025 at the age of 77 in Imphal, Manipur. Recognized for his immense contribution to Indian theatre, Thiyam was a pioneer in shaping modern Indian dramatic expression through the fusion of classical and traditional forms.

- Ratan Thiyam, born on 20 January 1948 in Nabadwip, West Bengal, founded the Chorus Repertory Theatre in 1976, which became a key centre for experimental theatre in India.

- Ratan Thiyam briefly served as the Director of the National School of Drama (NSD) from 1987 to 1988 and was later appointed Chairperson of NSD from 2013 to 2017. His leadership was marked by a revival of indigenous forms and the integration of traditional aesthetics into mainstream theatrical training.

- A prominent figure in the Theatre of Roots Movement during the 1960s and 70s, Thiyam developed a distinctive performance language by blending Indian classical forms like Kathakali, Yakshagana, and Chhau with contemporary themes. His work aimed to reconnect modern Indian theatre with its cultural roots, creating productions rich in symbolism and ritualistic storytelling.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Some of his most acclaimed plays include Leima Yenlingai (1980), a political critique of religious corruption; Urubhangam (1981), a Sanskrit adaptation exploring Duryodhana's tragic end; and Andhayug (1981), based on the moral devastation after the Mahabharata war. Other important works include Chakravyuha (1984), Uttar Priyadarshi (1996), and Ritusamharam (2002).

(ii) Over his career, Thiyam received numerous accolades including the Padma Shri in 1989, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1987, Kalidas Samman in 1997, and the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship (Akademi Ratna) in 2012 for his lifetime contribution to Indian theatre.

(iii) His plays were performed at international festivals in countries including Germany, France, Japan, USA, UK, Canada, and across Southeast Asia, marking him as a global ambassador of Indian theatre.

## Static GK

<b>Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)</b>	Chairperson: Ajay Seth	Headquarter : Hyderabad
<b>New Zealand</b>	Capital: Wellington	Currency: New Zealand dollar (\$) (NZD)
<b>Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)</b>	Union Minister : Jayant Chaudhary	Headquarters : New Delhi
<b>Maruti Suzuki India Limited</b>	CEO : Hisashi Takeuchi	Headquarters : New Delhi
<b>Henley &amp; Partners</b>	CEO : Dr. Juerg Steffen	Headquarters : London, United Kingdom (UK)
<b>SBI</b>	Chairman : Challa Sreenivasulu Setty	Headquarter : Mumbai
<b>PayPal Holdings, Inc.</b>	CEO: Alex Chriss	President: Alex Chriss
<b>ADB</b>	President: Masato Kanda	Headquarters : Mandaluyong City, Philippines

<b>National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)</b>	Acting Administrator : Sean Patrick Duffy	Headquarters : Washington DC, (USA)
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