

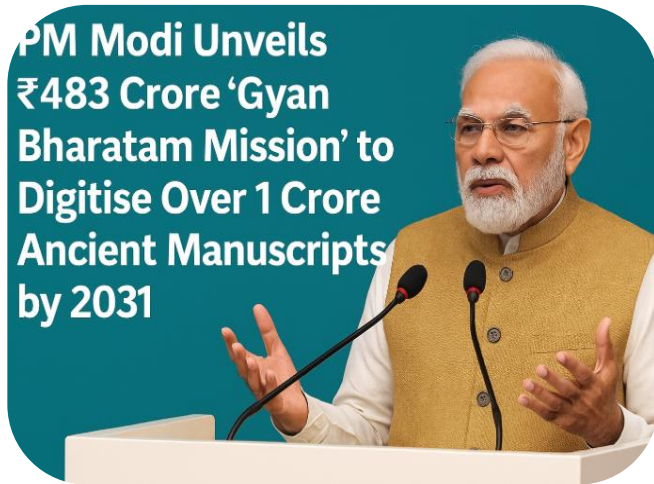


# **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**>> 29 JULY 2025**

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

### 1. PM Modi Unveils ₹483 Crore 'Gyan Bharatam Mission' to Digitise Over 1 Crore Ancient Manuscripts by 2031.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally inaugurated the Gyan Bharatam Mission on June 9, 2025, a restructured and expanded version of the National Manuscripts Mission. The initiative, under the Ministry of Culture, aims to digitise and conserve over one crore manuscripts, creating a global-accessible National Digital Repository by 2031.

- The Gyan Bharatam Mission replaces the earlier National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM), initially launched in 2003 by the Ministry of Culture through the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA). The revamped mission was announced during the Union Budget 2025-26, and its official launch ceremony took place on June 9, 2025, with PM Modi presiding. Its objective is to survey, document, conserve, and digitise more than ten million (one crore) manuscripts held across libraries, universities, museums, and private collections.

- In a major funding shift, the annual budget for manuscript preservation was escalated from ₹3.5 crore to ₹60 crore—a nearly seventeen-fold increase—as part of a larger ₹482.85 crore

Central Sector Scheme covering 2024-2031. This financing — overseen by the Ministry of Culture — will support a wide array of mission components: surveys, conservation, digitisation, research publications, capacity building, and outreach activities.

- The mission aims to digitise and preserve manuscripts through nationwide surveys, scientific conservation, and building a National Digital Manuscripts Library. Key efforts include training in manuscriptology and translation, with centres like Sampurnanand Sanskrit University in Varanasi leading preservation initiatives.

#### Key Points:-

(i) As of 2025, metadata for roughly 52 lakh manuscripts has been prepared, with around 3 lakh manuscripts digitised and approximately 1.35 lakh uploaded online, of which only 76,000 are freely accessible to the public. In the next five years, the mission aims to significantly expand both digitisation and public access, emphasising rare and fragile manuscripts. Over time, more manuscripts—including those in private collections, estimated to hold about 80% of India's manuscript wealth—will be brought into the repository through access-sharing policies.

(ii) The mission includes collaborative partnerships with universities, research centres, private collectors, and international platforms such as Google Arts & Culture. In expert consultation meetings chaired by Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, scholars including Udaya Narayana Singh, K. Ramasubramanian, and Sudha Gopalakrishnan helped shape policy frameworks, metadata standards, and digitisation protocols. The revamped

structure envisages an autonomous institutional mechanism replacing the earlier IGNCa sub-structure for better efficiency.

(iii) A Three-Day International Conference will be held in New Delhi from September 11–13, 2025, marking Swami Vivekananda's 1893 address. It will gather 500 delegates for sessions on AI-based script recognition, conservation, and paleography, showcasing startups and innovations in manuscript preservation—blending ancient Indian knowledge with modern scholarship and diplomacy.

## 2. Indian Railways Successfully Pilot-Tested Direct Drive Electronic Interlocking (DDEI) System to Prevent Accidents.



Indian Railways completed pilot tests of the advanced Direct Drive Electronic Interlocking (DDEI) system at Dinanagar (Jammu) and Tajpur (Ratlam division, Madhya Pradesh). The system promises to significantly reduce signaling failures and human error, helping avert tragedies like the Balasore rail accident that claimed nearly 300 lives.

- The DDEI system eliminates conventional relays by directly interfacing with signals, tracks, and point mechanisms. This reduces failure

points, simplifies maintenance, and lowers dependency on extensive copper wiring, thereby boosting reliability in critical signaling infrastructure.

- Commissioned initially at Tajpur station in November 2024, the pilot was implemented on Western Railway's Ratlam division. Supported by technical training from Japanese firm TSTS, the system enables faster operations, enhanced safety, and seamless integration with Automatic Train Protection systems like Kavach.

- Western Railway became the first zone to adopt this Japanese-origin technology. Optical fiber cables replace nearly 60–70% of traditional wiring and reduce the number of relays by about 70%, cutting maintenance costs and minimizing human error in signal handling.

### Key Points:-

(i) The DDEI system is fully compatible with Kavach, India's indigenous Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system. This integration will enable coordinated signaling and emergency braking when required, improving the overall safety envelope of train operation.

(ii) Following successful tests at Tajpur and Dinanagar, Indian Railways plans to scale the DDEI roll-out to other high-density and high-risk routes. The pilot implementation offers a model for progressive modernization across zones, with expected benefits in punctuality and accident prevention.

(iii) This development complements ongoing expansion of the Kavach system—approved as India's national ATP and certified at the highest Safety Integrity Level (SIL-4)—which has already been deployed across thousands of kilometers of track to prevent collisions and signal-passing errors.

### 3. Mangaluru Girl Remona Pereira Sets World Record with 170-Hour Nonstop Bharatanatyam Performance.



In July 2025, Remona Evette Pereira, a third-year BA student at St Aloysius (Deemed to Be University) in Mangaluru, Karnataka, began a seven-day continuous Bharatanatyam marathon starting on July 21. Her goal: to enter the Golden Book of World Records with a staggering 170-hour performance.

- Remona's record attempt officially kicked off at 10:30 AM on July 21 at Robert Sequeira Hall on her college campus, continuing round-the-clock with only 15-minute breaks every three hours for light food and rest. The performance is slated to conclude at 1 PM on July 28, spanning a full 170 hours.
- To prepare for this extraordinary feat, Remona trained for over 13 years under Guru Dr Shrividya Muralidhar at Sourabha Kala Parishat. She maintained a disciplined daily routine—practising 5–6 hours daily, balancing academics and dance—from 6:00 AM to 7:30 AM, and again from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM.
- Remona is a decorated performer with national recognition. She received the Pradhan

Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar in 2022 and holds prior entries in the India Book of Records, Golden Book of Records (London), and Bharat Book of World Records (2017). Her repertoire includes classical, semi-classical, folk, hip-hop, and acrobatic styles, often featuring daring elements like dancing on broken glass or balancing fire pots.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The current Guinness World Record for the longest Bharatanatyam performance stands at 127 hours, set in 2023 by Srushti Sudhir Jagtap of Latur, Maharashtra. Remona aims to surpass this by more than 40 hours, firmly extending India's legacy in classical dance endurance records.
- (ii) The marathon is not only a test of stamina but also a cultural tribute. Remona integrated devotional sequences—starting with prayers to Lord Ganesha on Day 1 and concluding with homage to Goddess Durga on Day 7—woven into traditional Bharatanatyam compositions like Alarippu, Jatiswaram, Varnam, Padam, and Tillana.
- (iii) The attempt drew strong community support. Key dignitaries such as District In-Charge Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, MLC Ivan D'Souza, MLA Vedavyas Kamath, Deputy Commissioner Darshan K V, and Zilla Panchayat CEO Narwade Vinayak Karbhari visited the venue. Her mother Gladis Pereira and a dedicated team of volunteers maintained morale throughout the week. Judges from the Golden Book of World Records are expected to validate the attempt upon completion.

### 4. NALSA Launches 'Veer Parivaar Sahayata 2025' to Provide Free Legal Aid for Defence Personnel and Families.



# NALSA

## NALSA Launches 'Veer Parivaar Sahayata 2025' to Provide Free Legal Aid for Defence Personnel and Families

In July 2025, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), in collaboration with the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and the J&K Legal Services Authority, launched the 'Veer Parivaar Sahayata 2025' scheme to ensure free and timely legal aid for defence personnel and their families.

- The scheme was officially launched by Justice Surya Kant, Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), during the North Zone Regional Conference held at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir. The conference was titled 'Reaffirming the Constitutional Vision of Justice for Defence Personnel and Tribals'.

- 'Veer Parivaar Sahayata 2025' has been designed to assist defence personnel and their families in resolving legal issues related to property disputes, family matters, land ownership, and domestic violence—especially in cases where personnel are posted in remote or high-tension areas such as Jammu & Kashmir and the North East Region (NER).

- The scheme will provide legal assistance not only to Army personnel but also to paramilitary forces including the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), acknowledging the

challenges they face due to deployment in difficult terrains.

### Key Points:-

(i) A core component of the scheme is the establishment of a structured network of legal services clinics across Zilla Sainik Boards, Rajya Sainik Boards, and Kendriya Sainik Boards. These will function as frontline legal aid access points for defence families in both urban and rural regions.

(ii) NALSA will deploy specially trained nodal officers, legal aid counsels, and paralegal volunteers—including ex-servicemen—across various regions to offer timely, on-ground support. This trained workforce is expected to act as a direct bridge between affected families and the justice delivery system.

(iii) To ensure accessibility and speed, digital integration has been prioritised under this scheme. NALSA will promote the use of e-Lok Adalats and online mediation platforms, ensuring that legal services reach even the most remote corners digitally and without the burden of physical travel.

**5. Odisha CM Inaugurates First-Ever ODISHA TEX 2025 in Bhubaneswar, Unveiling ₹7,808 Crore Textile Investment Wave.**



In July 2025, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi inaugurated ODISHA TEX 2025, Eastern India's first textile investment summit, at the State Convention Centre, Lok Seva Bhavan, Bhubaneswar. The landmark event showcased Odisha's emergence as a textile powerhouse, drew over 650 delegates, and resulted in significant investment and job commitments.

- **ODISHA TEX 2025** was officially launched on July 25, 2025, in Bhubaneswar, marking Odisha's first large-scale industry conclave dedicated to textiles, apparel, technical textiles, footwear, and accessories. The event was hosted at the State Convention Centre, Lok Seva Bhavan, and formally inaugurated by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi in the presence of Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, Cooperation Minister Pradeep Bal Samant, and key state officials.

- CM Majhi declared Odisha's ambition to become the "textile hub of Eastern India", as the summit attracted over 650 delegates, including national and international investors, global brands, startups, textile firms, and government officials. The participation from textile centres like Tirupur, Bengaluru, Surat, the National Capital Region (NCR), and West Bengal underscored the event's pan-India appeal.

- During the summit, Odisha signed 33 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with industry leaders—Major firms such as Page Industries, KPR Mills, Sportsking India, First Step Babywear, and Hindalco—unlocking investment intents worth ₹7,808 crore and pledging the creation of over 53,300 jobs in the textile and apparel sectors.

#### Key Points:-

(i) A key initiative announced was the launch of six new textile, apparel, and footwear parks in districts including Bolangir, Keonjhar, Sambalpur, Jagatsinghpur, Ganjam, and Cuttack. These parks feature plug-and-play infrastructure designed to attract global and domestic manufacturers and enhance supply-chain efficiency.

(ii) Chief Minister Majhi also unveiled a revised employment subsidy under the Odisha Apparel & Technical Textiles Policy 2022 (OATTP-2022): subsidies were enhanced from ₹5,000 to ₹6,000 per month for male workers and from ₹6,000 to ₹7,000 per month for female workers. A dedicated Task Force under the Industries Department was constituted to fast-track project execution.

(iii) Additional Chief Secretary Hemant Sharma emphasized Odisha's inclusive industrial strategy, leveraging the state's skilled workforce—especially returning migrant artisans from hubs like Tirupur and Surat—and integrating traditional crafts with modern technology. Sharma highlighted ongoing reforms like "Go Swift 2.0" for digital approvals and local MSME parks to support entrepreneurship. The summit aligns with the broader Purvodaya Bharat vision, positioning Odisha to generate over 1 lakh textile jobs by 2030–31.

## INTERNATIONAL

### 1. PM Narendra Modi Concludes Two-Day Official Visit to Maldives to Mark 60 Years of Diplomatic Ties.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a two-day official visit to the Maldives from July 25 to 26, 2025, marking the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Maldives. The visit reinforced bilateral cooperation through cultural celebrations, defence collaboration, and key infrastructure inaugurations.

- This visit marked PM Modi's third official trip to the Maldives since assuming office in 2014. He was received at Velana International Airport in Malé by Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu, symbolising strong diplomatic warmth and continuity in ties between the two nations.

- During his visit, PM Modi attended the 60th Independence Day celebrations of the Maldives on July 26, 2025, becoming the first Indian Prime Minister to be invited as a "Guest of Honour" for the event, which was held at Republic Square in Malé.

- On July 25, 2025, both leaders jointly released a commemorative postage stamp to mark 60 years of diplomatic relations. The stamp

features Indian boat Uru, handcrafted in Kerala's Beypore, and the Maldivian 'Vadhu Dhoni,' a symbol of shared maritime culture between the two countries.

#### Key Points:-

(i) PM Modi and President Mohamed Muizzu jointly inaugurated the new Dhoshimeyna Building of the Ministry of Defence in Malé, built with Indian assistance. The project symbolizes India's continuing support for Maldivian defence infrastructure and regional security.

(ii) In addition to defence cooperation, PM Modi launched various India-funded infrastructure and development projects in Maldives, including roadworks and investments under the ₹5,000 crore High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP).

(iii) The Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) also honoured PM Modi during his visit, acknowledging India's long-standing role in supporting Maldives' sovereignty, maritime capability, and regional peace through humanitarian and defence collaborations.

### 2. Turkey Unveils 'Gazap': World's Most Powerful Non-Nuclear Bomb at IDEF 2025 in Istanbul.



Turkey has unveiled its most powerful non-nuclear bomb named Gazap at the International Defence Industry Fair (IDEF) 2025, held in Istanbul. The launch of this advanced thermobaric bomb signifies a major leap in Turkey's indigenous defence manufacturing capabilities, placing it among the leaders in non-nuclear weapon technology globally.

- The Gazap bomb weighs approximately 970 kilograms and disperses over 10.16 lethal fragments per metre, which is nearly three times more than conventional bombs of its class.
- This advanced fragmentation system creates an extensive kill radius, enhancing its effectiveness in high-intensity combat situations, particularly in urban and fortified environments.
- Engineered with thermobaric technology, the Gazap can generate temperatures reaching 3,000°C, enabling it to cause extreme structural and human damage within a large radius. This bomb is aircraft-compatible, designed for deployment via F-16s and F-4s, and according to Turkish officials, efforts are underway to make it drone-deployable in the near future, significantly expanding its tactical versatility.

### Key Points:-

- (i) During the same event, Turkey's defence industry also showcased the NEB-2 Ghost, a deep-penetration bunker-buster bomb capable of piercing through 7 metres of reinforced concrete. This weapon has been developed to target underground bunkers and fortified shelters, enhancing Turkey's ability to execute strategic precision strikes.
- (ii) Both Gazap and NEB-2 Ghost have been developed under Turkey's national defence initiative, with the support of the Presidency of Defence Industries (SSB) and the Ministry of National Defense (MSB). The unveiling took place in the presence of Turkish Defence Minister Yaşar Güler, who emphasized Turkey's ambitions to establish next-generation conventional deterrents.
- (iii) These recent unveilings underline Turkey's growing defence ambitions and its capability to produce near-nuclear impact weapons without violating international non-proliferation norms. The IDEF 2025 platform has once again demonstrated Turkey's ability to integrate cutting-edge military science into deployable weapon systems for national and allied security.

## BANKING & FINANCE

1. Mastercard Partners with Andhra Pradesh to Elevate Tourism Experience Across the State.



In July 2025, the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Department joined hands with Mastercard to host a strategic workshop in Vijayawada. The collaboration aims to develop immersive tourism circuits, build a distinct state-wide brand identity, and enhance digital access for Mastercard holders and global travellers, under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's vision.

- In Vijayawada, officials from the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) collaborated with Mastercard representatives and tourism stakeholders in a workshop to design world-class tourism experiences. The focus was on curating thematic tourist circuits—ranging from coastal and tribal heritage to spiritual trails—and aligning them with global expectations for Mastercard cardholders and international visitors.

- Under the guidance of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh, and Special Chief Secretary Ajay Jain, the state is working toward establishing Andhra Pradesh as South Asia's top tourism destination. Development themes included digital marketing integration, immersive branding, and conceptualising a unique tourism tagline to be launched on World Tourism Day in September.

### Key Points:-

(i) Stakeholders discussed sustainable tourism models that integrate local communities and cultural exchange within destinations like Araku–Visakhapatnam (tribal culture), Godavari backwaters, Suryalanka–Chirala Coastal circuit, and the Tirupati spiritual corridor.

(ii) The partnership builds on Andhra Pradesh's eco-tourism and community-based initiatives. The state has identified over 500 new homestays across tribal, heritage, rural, and urban areas—set for upgrades by August 2025—and nearly 600 existing homes in Tirupati are receiving hospitality training with support from platforms like Airbnb, Oyo, and MakeMyTrip. Mastercard's collaboration plays a key role in driving this locus of inclusive growth and decentralized tourism livelihoods.

## 2. India's Unclaimed Bank Deposits Reach ₹67,003 Crore as of June 2025.



As of June 30, 2025, banks across India held ₹67,003 crore in unclaimed deposits—funds remaining dormant without any claim by account holders or claimants—according to information shared in Parliament. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched

digital tools and reforms to help citizens reclaim these funds efficiently.

- **Unclaimed deposits** refer to funds in savings, fixed, or recurring bank accounts that have remained inactive for over 10 years, with no withdrawal, deposit, or communication from the account holder or their nominee. Such inactive accounts are periodically reviewed and reclassified as inoperative under RBI regulations.

- As of June 2025, public sector banks held the lion's share with ₹58,330.26 crore in unclaimed deposits, while private sector banks accounted for ₹8,673.72 crore. Among public banks, State Bank of India (SBI) led with ₹19,329.92 crore, followed by Punjab National Bank (₹6,910.67 crore) and Canara Bank (₹6,278.14 crore). Among private banks, ICICI Bank topped the list with ₹2,063.45 crore.

#### Key Points:-

(i) According to the RBI's Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India, 2023–24, unclaimed deposits had previously surged to ₹78,213 crore by March 2024, marking a 26% year-on-year increase. This amount is part of the Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund, used for depositor awareness initiatives and safeguarding unclaimed funds.

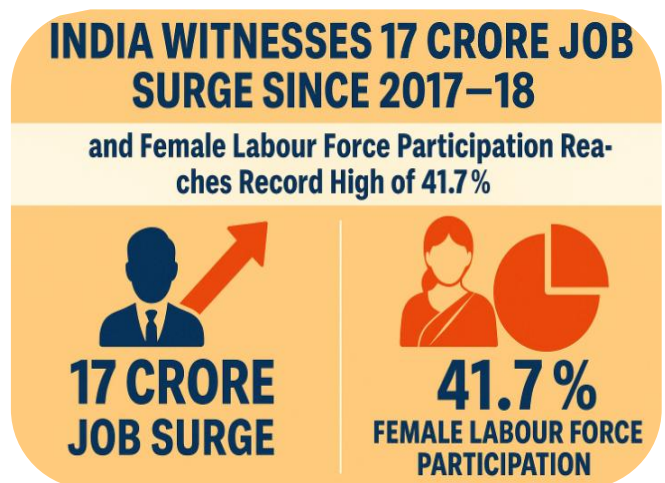
(ii) In response to rising dormancy, the RBI launched the UDGM Portal (Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to Access inforMation) in August 2023, enabling users to search for unclaimed deposits across multiple banks via their name, bank name, or Unclaimed Deposit Reference Number (UDRN). As of early July 2025, over 859,683 users have registered on UDGM.

(iii) To help citizens reclaim dormant funds, new RBI guidelines issued in May–June

2025 allow customers to update their Know Your Customer (KYC) details at any bank branch, use video KYC, or receive help from business correspondents, especially in rural areas. These reforms aim to reduce procedural barriers and enable faster fund recovery.

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

**1. India Witnesses 17 Crore Job Surge Since 2017–18 and Female Labour Force Participation Reaches Record High of 41.7%.**



Between the fiscal years 2017-18 and 2023-24, India added 17 crore jobs, increasing total employment from approximately 47.5 crore to 64.3 crore, as reported by Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment Shobha Karandlaje in the Lok Sabha. Notably, female labour force participation has exceeded 40%, and youth unemployment has declined significantly.

- A World Bank report indicates that since 2021-22, employment in India has grown faster than the working-age population. Urban unemployment fell to 6.6% in Q1 FY24-25, marking the lowest level since 2017-18. Female employment and self-employment—especially among rural women—have both surged in recent years.

- According to the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), rural FLFPR (Female Labour Force Participation Rate) climbed from 24.6% in 2017-18 to 41.5% in 2022-23, while urban FLFPR rose from 20.4% to 25.4%. The overall national FLFPR reached 41.7% in June 2024 according to PLFS data, showing a dramatic rise driven largely by rural women.

- The Economic Survey 2024-25 highlights that self-employment among women increased from 52.2% in 2017-18 to 58.4% in 2023-24. While this reflects growing economic participation, experts caution that the majority of these roles are in informal or low-paid sectors—only 15.9% of working women now hold regular wage or salaried jobs.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Despite overall employment gains, youth unemployment remains a challenge, with a rate of 13.3%, and even higher (29%) among degree holders. Meanwhile, the gender wage gap persists: self-employed women earn roughly one-third of what men earn, and only 23% of non-farm jobs are formal.

(ii) Schemes like Mudra Loans, Drone Didi, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY-NRLM), outcome-based skilling models like Skill Impact Bond (SIB), and entrepreneurship programmes under Startup India have driven inclusion. Over 73,151 startups with at least one woman director were registered by October 2024.

(iii) Despite encouraging trends, India's female participation lags behind G20 averages. A Reuters poll suggests India may take 20–30 years to reach the global average of around 50% female LFPR. Experts stress the need for safer workplaces, accessible childcare, anti-

discrimination laws, transport infrastructure, and formalization to sustain progress.

## SPORTS

### 1. Oscar Piastri Wins 2025 Belgian Grand Prix and McLaren Takes Top Two Spots.



Australian Formula One (F1) driver Oscar Piastri clinched a commanding victory at the 70th edition of the Belgian Grand Prix 2025, held at Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium, on July 27. Representing McLaren, a United Kingdom (UK)-based motorsport team, Piastri led a one-two finish alongside teammate Lando Norris, underlining McLaren's dominance in the current F1 season.

- This victory marked Oscar Piastri's sixth win in 13 races of the 2025 F1 season, further strengthening his position in the Formula One World Championship standings, where he now leads by 16 points over fellow McLaren driver Lando Norris.

- The race was the 70th edition of the Belgian Grand Prix, a key event in the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) Formula One World Championship calendar, and was conducted in mixed wet-dry conditions at the iconic Spa-Francorchamps circuit.

● Lando Norris, who initially fell behind in the race, made a strong recovery to secure second place for McLaren, while Charles Leclerc of Scuderia Ferrari clinched third for Monaco, completing the podium.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The 2025 Belgian Grand Prix marked McLaren's third consecutive one-two finish of the season, demonstrating the team's competitive edge in both car performance and race strategy, managed under the leadership of Team Principal Andrea Stella.

(ii) Max Verstappen from the Netherlands finished fourth for Red Bull Racing in his first race since the resignation of Christian Horner as Team Principal, while Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes showed great skill, climbing from 18th to 7th position by the end of the race.

(iii) The final podium results featured: Oscar Piastri (McLaren, representing the UK), Lando Norris (McLaren, UK), and Charles Leclerc (Ferrari, Monaco). The outcome has major implications for the Constructors' Championship and the ongoing battle for the 2025 F1 Drivers' Title.

## 2. Hockey India Hosts 15th Congress in Tamil Nadu and Launches Nationwide Celebrations for 100 Years of Indian Hockey.



In July 2025, Hockey India organized its 15th Hockey India Congress in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, to mark a historic 100 years since the formation of Indian hockey's national body. The event included major announcements focused on infrastructure, financial grants, and a grand centenary celebration on November 7, 2025.

● The Indian Hockey Federation (IHF), India's original governing body for field hockey, was officially formed on November 7, 1925, in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. The Congress in 2025 marks a century of this foundational milestone in Indian sports history.

● After IHF's suspension in 2008 due to governance concerns, the Indian Olympic Association established Hockey India on May 20, 2009, as a unified national governing body for both men's and women's hockey, ensuring compliance with international standards.

● As part of the centenary commemoration, Hockey India announced a Nationwide Festival of Hockey on November 7, 2025. This historic event will involve 1,000 matches—one men's and one women's match in each of India's 500+ districts.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The mega celebration is set to engage

over 36,000 players, including 18,000 men and 18,000 women. The initiative is designed to promote inclusivity, grassroots participation, and visibility for hockey at every administrative level across India.

(ii) To support this initiative, Hockey India unveiled a revised financial assistance plan. Each host of the Senior Men's and Senior Women's National Championships will now receive ₹70 lakhs, significantly boosting the scale and quality of national tournaments.

(iii) Further, ₹30 lakhs each has been allocated for Junior Men, Junior Women, Sub-Junior Men, and Sub-Junior Women National Championships. Additionally, ₹25 lakhs per state will be provided to organise district and state-level hockey competitions, ensuring broader outreach and infrastructure enhancement.

### 3. Divyanshi Bhowmick Makes History by Winning U-15 Girls' Singles Gold at 2025 Asian Youth TT Championships.



In July 2025, 14-year-old Divyanshi Bhowmick of India created a landmark moment in Indian table tennis by clinching the U-15 Girls' Singles gold at the 29th Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, ending India's 36-year

drought in this category. She also secured qualification for the upcoming World Youth Championships.

- Divyanshi became the first Indian in 36 years to win the U-15 Girls' Singles title at the Asian Youth TT Championships. The last Indian champion was Subramanian Bhuvaneshwari in 1989 during the New Delhi edition. This victory marks a pivotal milestone in India's journey in international youth table tennis.

- Seeded second in the tournament, Divyanshi dismantled three top Chinese players, including Zhu Qihi in the final (4-2) and Liu Ziling in a thrilling seven-game semifinal, showcasing mental resilience and top-tier play under pressure at the continental level.

- Her gold-winning performance earned her a slot at the World Youth Table Tennis Championships scheduled for November 2025 in Romania, signaling her emergence on the world stage and India's growing presence in global junior TT conditions.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Divyanshi is a product of the Dani Sports Foundation, part of the scouting and training pipeline alongside the Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) Juniors programme. She was also named Best Women's Player (Overall) at the Table Tennis Super League (TTSL) Maharashtra in April 2025, reinforcing her domestic credentials.

(ii) India concluded the Tashkent championships with a total of four medals: one gold (Divyanshi), one silver (U-15 Boys' team), and two bronze medals (U-19 Boys' team and U-19 mixed doubles), indicating strong depth and consistency across youth categories.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### 1. World Nature Conservation Day 2025 Observed Globally on July 28 to Promote Sustainable Use of Earth's Natural Resources.



World Nature Conservation Day (WNCD) was observed globally on July 28, 2025, to highlight the importance of preserving natural resources and biodiversity for a sustainable and ecologically balanced future. The day is dedicated to fostering awareness and action towards conserving air, water, land, forests, wildlife, and overall environmental health.

- The main aim of World Nature Conservation Day is to create global awareness about the urgent need to protect and efficiently manage Earth's finite natural resources including air, water, soil, flora, fauna, and energy to ensure a sustainable environment for present and future generations.

- This international observance stresses the need for responsible consumption patterns and the promotion of conservation efforts, renewable energy use, and pollution reduction, especially in the context of worsening climate change and environmental degradation.

- World Nature Conservation Day is observed under the broad framework of environmental sustainability and is aligned with the United

Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other global environmental frameworks. It underscores the collective responsibility of nations, institutions, and individuals to preserve nature.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The origin of this day dates back to June 1972, when the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden. This historic conference led to the creation of the UN General Assembly (UNGA)-backed United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the formal designation of July 28 as World Nature Conservation Day.

(ii) The observance of WNCD in 2025 holds added relevance in light of the ongoing global climate negotiations and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030).

(iii) The day also complements global movements for environmental justice, forest restoration, wildlife protection, and the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

### 2. Global Tiger Day Observed on 29 July 2025.



Global Tiger Day 2025, observed annually on July 29, aims to spotlight the sharp decline in wild tiger populations worldwide—from nearly 100,000 in the early 20th century to just around 4,000 today. The day marks a unified global effort to conserve tigers through awareness, policy action, and habitat protection.

- The observance was established in 2010 at the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit, where representatives from 13 tiger-range countries committed to the TX2 goal—to double the population of wild tigers by 2022. Though not all countries achieved this, it set a precedent for coordinated global tiger conservation.

- Wild tigers continue to face severe threats such as poaching, deforestation, habitat fragmentation, and illegal wildlife trade. These factors, combined with increasing human-wildlife conflict, have drastically reduced their habitats, putting tigers on the brink of extinction in many regions.

#### Key Points:-

(i) India remains a global leader in tiger conservation, currently home to 3,682 tigers as per the 2022 Tiger Census. Efforts under Project Tiger, led by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), have helped India achieve the TX2 target ahead of schedule, managing 53 tiger reserves nationwide.

(ii) On Global Tiger Day 2025, awareness campaigns were conducted across tiger habitats and zoos in India. Events included marathons, student rallies, face painting, and digital campaigns using hashtags like #GlobalTigerDay and #SaveTheTiger, drawing public attention toward tiger protection efforts.

### 3. World Hepatitis Day 2025 Observed Globally on July 28.



World Hepatitis Day (WHD) 2025 was observed recently on July 28, aiming to raise global awareness about viral hepatitis—a serious liver infection that can lead to liver disease and cancer. This year marked the 15th official observance, led by the World Health Organization (WHO) with the theme "Hepatitis: Let's Break It Down."

- World Hepatitis Day is commemorated annually on July 28 to highlight the urgent need for action in addressing viral hepatitis, a major global health issue.

- The event focuses on promoting preventive care, early diagnosis, and access to treatment. It brings together policymakers, healthcare providers, and the public to accelerate progress toward eliminating hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

- The theme for World Hepatitis Day 2025, "Hepatitis: Let's Break It Down," emphasizes dismantling the multiple barriers—financial, social, systemic, and stigma-related—that hinder hepatitis elimination and liver cancer prevention. The WHO calls on governments and civil society to strengthen public health

strategies to make hepatitis services accessible and stigma-free.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) This year, July 28, 2025, marked the 15th official observance of World Hepatitis Day, coordinated by the World Health Organization (WHO). The day aligns with the birth anniversary of Nobel Laureate Dr. Baruch Blumberg, who discovered the hepatitis B virus and developed the first vaccine.
- (ii) The first global observance of World Hepatitis Day took place on May 19, 2008, initiated by the World Hepatitis Alliance, a non-profit organization working in collaboration with patient groups.
- (iii) In May 2010, the 63rd World Health Assembly (WHA) officially adopted resolution WHA63.18 in Geneva, Switzerland, making July 28 the permanent date for this observance. The first WHO-recognised World Hepatitis Day was observed on 28 July 2011.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. Stardour Successfully Test-Fires India's First Hydrogen-Oxygen Propulsion Engine at IISc Bengaluru.



In July 2025, Stardour Aerospace Technologies Pvt. Ltd., a Bengaluru-based Indian space-tech startup, achieved a major breakthrough by successfully test-firing India's first hydrogen-oxygen propulsion engine at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Karnataka. The innovation marks a pivotal milestone in the nation's transition towards cleaner, reusable space propulsion systems.

● **Stardour's hydrogen-oxygen propulsion engine was entirely developed in-house, reflecting the growing technological self-reliance of India's private space sector. This test was conducted in partnership with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, one of India's premier scientific research institutions.**

● **The propulsion engine uses gaseous hydrogen and gaseous oxygen as its propellants. These elements are known for high efficiency and clean combustion, making them suitable for future-focused space missions. The selection of these green propellants aligns with global efforts toward sustainable aerospace engineering.**

#### Key Points:-

- (i) One of the standout features of the engine is its environmentally friendly exhaust. It releases only water vapor during combustion, making it a zero-carbon emission system. This places India among a limited number of nations developing clean propulsion technology for space missions.
- (ii) This engine is specifically designed to power Stardour's upcoming Lucas Orbital Transfer Vehicle (OTV), which is scheduled for launch in 2027. The Lucas OTV will play a crucial role in transporting payloads and satellites between orbits, aiding precise in-

space logistics and deployment.

(iii) Lucas, as a reusable vehicle, represents Stardour's ambition to support in-space satellite servicing and modular deployment. With this engine, Lucas will be capable of transporting payloads from the launch vehicle's drop-off point to the satellite's final intended orbit—improving efficiency and expanding the mission capabilities of India's commercial space sector.

## 2. China Advocates Global Consensus to Balance AI Development and Security at WAIC 2025.



In July 2025, during the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) held in Shanghai, the People's Republic of China, through Premier Li Qiang, emphasized the urgent need for a global consensus on responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) development. China urged the international community to collaboratively address AI-related security risks and governance challenges.

- At the 2025 edition of the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) in Shanghai, China, Premier Li Qiang delivered a keynote address calling for international collaboration to balance the benefits of AI innovation with

potential security threats. The event was organized by the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China, along with the Shanghai Municipal Government and leading AI research bodies.

- Li Qiang underscored that AI must evolve under human control and governance frameworks. He referenced global concerns around deepfakes, machine hallucinations, and algorithmic discrimination, calling them urgent issues needing a united global strategy. He reaffirmed China's support for international standards to ensure AI technologies are safe, reliable, and inclusive for all countries.

- China also showcased its Global AI Governance Initiative, first introduced in 2023, reaffirming its commitment to lead diplomatic efforts in building consensus-driven, ethical AI. The Initiative proposes cross-border coordination for risk assessment, open-source development, and multilateral regulation involving the United Nations, G20, and World Economic Forum.

### Key Points:-

(i) Leading technology firms such as Huawei, Tencent, Alibaba, and global players like Tesla, Amazon, and NVIDIA participated in WAIC 2025. Exhibits included AI-powered robotics, language models, and cybersecurity systems. China positioned itself as an advocate for AI for good, promoting transparency in data use and neutrality in algorithms.

(ii) Premier Li Qiang's remarks aligned with growing international calls for regulating frontier AI systems like generative AI, autonomous weapons, and AI-powered surveillance. China urged for a global code of conduct to prevent monopolization by

tech giants, especially in the Global South, where digital divides threaten AI fairness.

(iii) WAIC 2025 concluded with a proposal for an International AI Governance Framework, co-authored by Chinese, European, and ASEAN representatives. The document suggests the creation of an AI Safety Council, funding for AI literacy, and annual reporting to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on AI ethics and accountability progress.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

**1. Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami Launches Book on Student Wellness in Dehradun.**



On 26 July 2025, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami of Uttarakhand launched a book titled “Sustainable Wellness of Students: A Collective Responsibility in Higher Education” at the CM residence auditorium in Dehradun. The book emphasises holistic approaches to student well-being and higher education reform.

- The event was hosted at the Chief Minister’s residence auditorium where CM Dhami highlighted the urgent need for higher education

institutions to address students’ psychological and emotional challenges. He urged universities to adopt comprehensive welfare strategies, noting that mental health should be a priority alongside academic excellence.

- The book, “Sustainable Wellness of Students: A Collective Responsibility in Higher Education”, is a co-edited volume by Lata Pandey and Dr Ramanand, Director at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. It explores policy frameworks and institutional responsibilities for fostering student welfare in India. CM Dhami also proposed a Hindi translation to increase its accessibility.

### Key Points:-

(i) Speaking at the release, Dhami praised Uttarakhand as the first Indian state to implement the New National Education Policy (NEP), under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He reaffirmed the state's commitment to nurturing education ecosystems where student well-being and skill development go hand in hand.

(ii) Rector officials present included Prof Kamal Kishore Pandey, Director of Higher Education Department, and Prof Lata Pandey, Head of Home Science at DSB Campus, Kumaon University, alongside Dr Ramanand. Dhami emphasised that higher education institutions must function as centres of knowledge and welfare, not merely academic campuses.

## ENVIRONMENT

**1. ZSI Discovers India’s First Piratula Wolf Spider in West Bengal and Two New Culturally Significant Frog Species in Meghalaya.**



In July 2025, scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) announced the discovery of *Piratula acuminata*, marking India's first record of the *Piratula* genus wolf spider, found in the Sundarbans Delta of West Bengal. Alongside this, two rare and culturally significant frog species—*Raorchestes jajoid* and *Raorchestes jadoh*—were discovered in the hilly terrain of Meghalaya, highlighting India's unique biodiversity.

- **India's First *Piratula* Wolf Spider Discovered in Sundarbans Delta:** The newly identified species *Piratula acuminata* belongs to the Lycosidae family, also known as wolf spiders. This marks the first documentation of the *Piratula* genus in India, a genus previously known only in Asia, Europe, and North America.

- The species was discovered in Sagar Island, located in the Sundarbans Delta, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in West Bengal. It adds to the ecological richness of this mangrove ecosystem, which already supports tigers, estuarine crocodiles, and unique invertebrates.

- The spider measures approximately 8–10 mm in body length, with distinctive pale-cream coloring, chalk-white abdominal spots, and light-brown striping on the rear, aiding in camouflage within its wetland habitat.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The formal discovery of *Piratula acuminata* was published in the international journal *Zootaxa* on July 7, 2025, by the ZSI team, adding to the institution's legacy of pioneering taxonomic work in India.

(ii) **Discovery of Two Culturally Important Frogs in Meghalaya:** The newly identified frog species *Raorchestes jajoid* and *Raorchestes jadoh* were recorded in East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya by researchers Warjri and Madhurima Das from Assam Don Bosco University. These species were published in the *Journal of Threatened Taxa*.

(iii) **Frogs Named After Khasi Culture and Topography:** *Raorchestes jadoh* is named after 'Jadoh', a Khasi dish made of rice and meat, while *Raorchestes jajoid* derives its name from the Khasi word 'Jakoid', meaning frog. *Raorchestes jajoid* was found at 815 metres above sea level near Laitryngew, and *Raorchestes jadoh* was found at 1,655 metres above sea level near Langtor.

**Static GK**

<b>Indian Railways (IR)</b>	Minister : Ashwini Vaishnaw	Headquarters: New Delhi
<b>Maldives</b>	President: Mohamed Muizzu	Currency: Maldivian Rufiyaa
<b>Meghalaya</b>	Chief Minister (CM) : Conrad Sangma	Governor : Chandrashekhar H. Vijayashankar
<b>Hockey India</b>	President : Dilip Tirkey	Headquarters: New Delhi
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	Chief minister: N. Chandrababu Naidu	Governor: Syed Abdul Nazeer
<b>Turkey</b>	Capital: Ankara	Currency: Turkish lira
<b>RBI</b>	Governor : Sanjay Malhotra	Headquarter : Mumbai
<b>Odisha</b>	Chief minister: Mohan Charan Majhi	Governor: Hari Babu Kambhampati
<b>China</b>	President: Xi Jinping Official	languages: Mandarin, Putonghua