



# **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**> 06 AUGUST 2025**

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

### 1. India Signs Key MoUs to Boost Conservation and Cultivation of Medicinal Plants with Focus on RET Species.



On August 4, 2025, the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), under the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy), signed important Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Ish Ved-Bioplants Venture and a tripartite agreement with the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi.

- The agreements aim to strengthen the conservation, propagation, and awareness of medicinal plants across India.
- The MoUs were formally signed at Nirman Bhawan in New Delhi in the presence of Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Prataprao Jadhav, who oversees both the Ministry of AYUSH and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). This strategic collaboration underlines the government's push to integrate traditional plant-based healing with modern healthcare systems and sustainable practices.
- NMPB signed a dedicated MoU with Ish Ved-Bioplants Venture to focus on the conservation

and germplasm preservation of Rare, Endangered, and Threatened (RET) medicinal plant species using tissue culture technology. The initiative is aimed at reviving critically important plant species essential to traditional Indian medicine.

#### Key Points:-

- As part of the MoU with Ish Ved-Bioplants Venture, the agreement also focuses on developing sustainable and scalable cultivation protocols to enhance the supply chain of medicinal plants. These efforts are crucial to supporting the production of high-quality Ayush-based healthcare products and to ensure long-term availability of plant materials.
- A separate tripartite agreement was signed involving NMPB, AIIA, and AIIMS–New Delhi for the establishment of a national-level medicinal plants garden within the AIIMS campus. This garden is designed to promote awareness about India's medicinal flora and its therapeutic value among patients, medical students, and the general public.
- The garden will function as an educational and awareness hub that will allow medical students, researchers, and hospital visitors to engage with live specimens of medicinal plants. It aims to create deeper understanding of their clinical use, ecological importance, and role in India's Ayush systems.

## INTERNATIONAL

### 1. India Collaborates with UN to Launch 4 New Projects under Global Capacity Building Initiative for Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.





In August 2025, the Government of India (GoI) officially launched the 1st phase of four developmental projects in partnership with the United Nations (UN), under the “India–UN Global Capacity Building Initiative (GCBI),” to help nine partner countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The projects were inaugurated by Tanmaya Lal, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), along with Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator, in New Delhi.

- These projects aim to support countries from the Global South in implementing the SDGs through knowledge sharing and South–South cooperation. The nine participating nations are Nepal, Zambia, Laos, Belize, Barbados, St. Kitts & Nevis, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, and South Sudan.

- The four projects launched cover distinct areas: Rice Fortification and Supply Chain Management (Nepal), Development of Digital Health Platforms (Zambia, Laos), Training in Census Preparedness (Belize, Barbados, St. Kitts & Nevis, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago), and Vocational Training Initiative (South Sudan).

- These projects are supported by various UN bodies such as the World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), and

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

### Key Points:-

(i) The India–UN Global Capacity Building Initiative (GCBI) was first introduced by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar during India’s G20 Presidency at the 78th UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2023. It is jointly steered by the GoI and the UN to strengthen cooperation with developing nations across Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

(ii) The programme functions under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) framework, offering 12,000 training slots annually with over 400 specialized courses. As of now, more than 2.25 lakh professionals from 160 countries have benefited from these initiatives.

(iii) The selected training courses for the nine partner countries are scheduled to begin by September 2025. The training modules will be conducted across institutions in India with participation from nominated officials and professionals of the respective countries.

## 2. Moldova Becomes 107th Member of International Solar Alliance (ISA).



In August 2025, the Republic of Moldova officially became the 107th member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) after handing over the Instrument of Ratification to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, during a formal event held in New Delhi.

- The Instrument of Ratification was handed over by Ana Taban, Ambassador of Moldova, to P.S. Gangadharan, Joint Secretary (Economic Diplomacy), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), at an official ceremony in Delhi. The move marks Moldova's commitment to international solar cooperation.

- The primary goal of Moldova joining the ISA is to promote clean energy adoption and long-term sustainability by leveraging solar power and participating in ISA's global framework of energy cooperation.

- Moldova signed the ISA Framework Agreement in December 2024 during the inauguration of its Embassy in New Delhi. The agreement was signed between India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Moldova's Deputy Prime Minister Mihai Popșoi.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an inter-governmental treaty-based

organization jointly launched by India and France at COP21 in 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). ISA works to increase the deployment of solar energy globally.

(ii) ISA targets to mobilize USD 1 trillion in investments for solar projects by 2030. It collaborates with Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), Development Financial Institutions (DFIs), civil society, and public-private partnerships to fund and implement solar projects globally.

(iii) With Moldova's accession, ISA now consists of 124 member and signatory countries. The Alliance supports more than 100 countries, focusing on delivering solar solutions to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) by reducing the cost of solar technologies and improving access to sustainable energy.

### 3. India to Host WHO-IRCH Workshop on Herbal Medicine Safety and Regulations.



From 6 to 8 August 2025, India will host the prestigious WHO–International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines (IRCH) Workshop in New Delhi/Ghaziabad. This global event, organized by the Ministry of

AYUSH in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and supported by the Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H), aims to bolster regulatory capacity and ensure the safety and efficacy of herbal medicines.

- The workshop will be inaugurated by Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary of the Ministry of AYUSH, and Dr. Kim Sungchol, Chairperson of WHO-IRCH. Representatives from countries including Bhutan, Brunei, Cuba, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Paraguay, Poland, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and Zimbabwe are expected to attend in person, while delegates from Brazil, Egypt, and the USA will join virtually.

- Serving as an international platform, the workshop will foster global cooperation and technical exchange, with key agenda items including strengthening safety and efficacy mechanisms, advancing regulatory convergence, and empowering traditional medicine systems worldwide.

- Deliberations will include reviews of WHO-IRCH Working Groups 1 and 3, which focus respectively on the safety, regulation, efficacy, and intended use of herbal medicines. Additional sessions will address pre-clinical research, regulatory frameworks, and safety case studies, featuring a spotlight on Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*).

#### Key Points:-

(i) Participants will gain hands-on training in herbal drug identification, heavy metal analysis, and chemo-profiling techniques using HPTLC (High-Performance Thin-Layer Chromatography) at the PCIM&H laboratories. This practical exposure aims to strengthen quality control and pharmacovigilance in herbal medicine.

(ii) The event will officially launch the Ayush Suraksha (Pharmacovigilance) Programme, aimed at enhancing the safety monitoring of traditional medicine products through robust pharmacovigilance practices.

(iii) Delegates will visit key Indian institutions, including PCIM&H, the National Institute of Unani Medicine (NIUM) in Ghaziabad, and the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in New Delhi, to experience India's integrative health ecosystem first-hand. The workshop is expected to significantly contribute to harmonizing global standards and integrating traditional medicine into mainstream public health systems.

## BANKING & FINANCE

### 1. PFRDA Launches Modernized Website under "PFRDA CONNECT" Initiative to Enhance Digital Engagement.



On 4 August 2025, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) officially launched its modernized website as part of the PFRDA CONNECT digital transformation initiative. The revamped platform aims to boost transparency, accessibility, and efficiency in India's pension

sector for subscribers, intermediaries, and the general public.

- PFRDA Chairperson S. Ramann unveiled the new site in New Delhi. He emphasized that the initiative aligns with PFRDA's long-term vision to foster a tech-driven, proactive, and transparent regulatory environment in the pension sector.
- The website has been built in full compliance with the Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW) and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), ensuring a secure, inclusive, and government-standard digital experience for all users.
- The new website delivers a responsive interface for devices including desktops, tablets, and smartphones. Content is reorganized into intuitive sections covering policy updates, circulars, pension schemes, and compliance requirements to facilitate easy navigation.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The upgraded platform features a powerful search engine, a modular content management system (CMS) for rapid updates, and seamless integration with other regulatory portals—improving usability for users and admins alike.
- (ii) With interactive tools, educational resources, and digital outreach features, the site aims to drive pension literacy across India. It serves as a central digital hub for information under the National Pension System (NPS) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY).
- (iii) The website launch marks a crucial step in the broader PFRDA CONNECT (Technology Architecture – TARCH) project to digitally transform pension governance. It advances PFRDA's goal of building an accessible, efficient, and transparent

pension ecosystem for India's expanding user base.

## 2. UPI Sets New Benchmark with 707 Million Daily Transactions, Marking a Major Milestone in India's Digital Payment Revolution.



On 2 August 2025, India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) hit an unprecedented milestone by processing over 707 million transactions in a single day—its highest ever—according to data released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). This record-breaking feat underscores UPI's accelerating dominance in the nation's digital economy.

- UPI crossed the 700 million daily transaction mark for the first time on 2 August, doubling its usage compared to two years ago, when it averaged around 350 million transactions per day. By August 2024, daily volume had reached 500 million, making this recent surge a clear indicator of rapid adoption.
- Experts attribute the spike to routine financial activities that occur at the beginning of each month, such as rent payments, utility bills, emergency transfers, and payroll disbursements—demonstrating UPI's deep integration into daily financial habits.



- UPI now processes around 85% of India's digital payments and handles nearly half of the world's real-time digital payments. Merchant transactions contribute approximately 62% of total UPI traffic, highlighting its growing importance in business-to-consumer (B2C) ecosystems.

#### Key Points:-

(i) In July 2025, UPI recorded 19.47 billion transactions worth ₹25.08 lakh crore, averaging 628 million daily transactions, up from 613 million in June. This reflects a 35% year-on-year growth in volume and a 4% month-on-month rise from the previous month.

(ii) With the government's target of reaching 1 billion daily UPI transactions by 2026, analysts highlight that the growth curve is on track—provided regulatory steps like Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) reintroduction support long-term sustainability.

(iii) The UPI milestone reinforces India's role as a digital fintech innovator. With increasing smartphone penetration and contactless payments, UPI accelerates financial inclusion—especially in tier-II and tier-III cities—while supporting small businesses, digital vendors, and consumer convenience.

### 3. IDFC FIRST Bank and IndiGo Launch New 'IndiGo IDFC FIRST Dual Credit Card' with Mastercard and RuPay.

**IDFC FIRST Bank and IndiGo Launch New 'IndiGo IDFC FIRST Dual Credit Card' with Mastercard and RuPay.**



In August 2025, IDFC FIRST Bank Ltd., in collaboration with IndiGo Airlines, unveiled a co-branded dual network credit card named 'IndiGo IDFC FIRST Dual Credit Card'. This innovative product aims to enhance travel and payment convenience by offering two cards—Mastercard and RuPay—under a unified credit limit and single billing structure.

- The dual credit card is the first-of-its-kind offering by a private sector bank in India and a major airline. It provides users with both Mastercard and RuPay credit cards, enabling them to access wider domestic and international transaction networks with one credit limit.

- Customers will receive a single consolidated monthly statement for transactions on both cards. This helps in better tracking of expenses and avoids confusion caused by multiple card bills.

- The card carries a joining and annual fee of ₹4,999 (inclusive of GST). From the second year onwards, the same annual fee applies—unless the applicant chooses the FD-backed variant, which waives the fee upon maintaining a Fixed Deposit of at least ₹1 lakh with the bank."

#### Key Points:-

(i) A unique feature is the ability to set different Personal Identification Numbers

(PINs) and separate transaction preferences for each card, enhancing security and offering greater user control.

(ii) Additional benefits include a maximum air accident insurance cover of ₹1 crore and a personal accident cover of up to ₹10 lakh. The card also provides lost card liability coverage for up to ₹50,000.

(iii) The partnership blends IDFC FIRST Bank's fintech-driven banking services with IndiGo's massive travel network. It's primarily designed for frequent flyers and digital-savvy consumers seeking flexibility across domestic (RuPay) and global (Mastercard) transactions.

the life insurance component will now operate as Generali Central Life Insurance Company Limited, and the general insurance division will function as Generali Central Insurance Company Limited. This renaming is part of a broader effort to streamline branding and increase consumer recognition.

- The objective behind this joint venture rebranding is to combine Generali Group's international insurance expertise, operating across more than 50 countries, with the CBI's extensive domestic network of over 4,500 branches. The collaboration is expected to expand insurance accessibility, particularly in rural and underpenetrated regions of India.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The shareholding structure remains unchanged, with Generali Group retaining a 74% stake and Central Bank of India holding 26% in the joint venture.

(ii) This reinforces the long-standing partnership between both entities and reflects continuity in leadership and investment.

(iii) As part of the rebranding initiative, Generali Central now features a new visual identity, including an updated logo, typography, a new web portal, and enhanced social media presence. These changes aim to build stronger brand awareness and create a more digital, consumer-focused experience in line with modern insurance trends.

#### 4. Generali Group & Central Bank of India Unveil New Joint Venture Brand Identity as 'Generali Central'.



In August 2025, Generali Group and the Central Bank of India (CBI) unveiled a refreshed brand identity for their life and general insurance joint venture, now rebranded as 'Generali Central', marking a strategic move to boost their presence in India's insurance sector.

- The rebranded joint venture introduces two new entities under the 'Generali Central' brand:

#### 5. PolicyBazaar Fined ₹5 Crore by IRDAI for Misleading Promotions and Regulatory Breaches.





On 4 August 2025, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) imposed a ₹5 crore penalty on PolicyBazaar Insurance Brokers Pvt Ltd (formerly operating as an insurance web aggregator) for multiple violations under the Insurance Act, 1938, and the IRDAI (Insurance Web Aggregators) Regulations, 2017. The order also included directions, advisories, and cautions to ensure compliance with regulatory norms.

- IRDAI's remote inspection revealed 11 distinct violations, including biased and misleading product promotions, conflict of interest involving key managerial personnel holding unauthorized directorships, delays in remitting premium collections to insurers, and shortcomings in governance frameworks.

- The regulator flagged instances where PolicyBazaar labeled certain insurance products as "Top" or "Best" without disclosing objective evaluation criteria or third-party validation. The platform displayed a limited set of Unit Linked Insurance Plans (ULIPs) and health policies, giving selective visibility and influencing consumer choice in absence of transparency.

#### Key Points:-

(i) PolicyBazaar was found to have delayed transferring collected premiums to insurers

by several days—well beyond the 24-hour remittance requirement mandated by Section 64VB of the Insurance Act. This misuse of premium holding through its own payment gateways raised serious compliance concerns.

(ii) Violations included non-disclosure of key managerial personnel holding directorships in other companies without prior IRDAI approval. Additional flagged issues comprised ambiguous outsourcing arrangements, improper tagging of policies to authorized verifiers, and lack of call-recording systems.

(iii) IRDAI has mandated that PolicyBazaar pay the ₹5 crore fine within 45 days. The watchdog also issued formal directions, advisories, and cautions, and allowed the company the option to appeal to the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT). PB Fintech (PolicyBazaar's parent company) confirmed the action and stated an "action taken report" would be presented to its board.

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

**1. JSW Steel and Japan's JFE Steel Approve ₹5,845 Crore Investment to Expand Grain-Oriented Electrical Steel Capacity.**



In August 2025, India's JSW Steel and Japan's JFE Steel Corporation jointly approved a ₹5,845 crore expansion package through their joint venture—JSW JFE Electrical Steel—to boost production of cold-rolled grain-oriented electrical steel (CR-GOES) at two Indian plants.

- The Nashik facility's annual production capacity is set to increase fivefold, from 50,000 to 250,000 tonnes per annum (TPA), with an investment of ₹4,300 crore. The Vijayanagar plant in Karnataka will expand from 62,000 to 100,000 TPA, backed by an additional investment of ₹1,545 crore.

- The total investment of ₹5,845 crore (≈ US\$669 million) includes equity of ₹1,966 crore funded equally by JSW Steel and JFE Steel. The remainder is sourced via debt and internal funds.

- Upon completion, the joint venture will deliver a combined cold-rolled grain-oriented electrical steel capacity of 350,000 TPA, with phased commissioning expected from FY2028 to meet growing domestic demand.

### Key Points:-

(i) GR-GOES is a high-efficiency steel used in transformers, generators, and electric vehicle motors. The expansion supports India's clean energy transition, decarbonization goals, import substitution strategy, and infrastructure development in power and data center segments.

(ii) JSW JFE Electrical Steel is a 50:50 joint venture formed in 2023 when JSW acquired the Nashik facility (formerly Thyssenkrupp Electrical Steel India). It combines JFE's advanced CRGO technology with JSW's domestic scale to strengthen India's specialty steel ecosystem.

## MOUs and Agreement

### 1. India and Philippines Elevate Ties with Nine Strategic MoUs.



In August 2025, during a state visit by Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to New Delhi, India and the Philippines formalized their elevated diplomatic relations by signing nine Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). These agreements, witnessed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, mark the official upgrade of bilateral relations to a Strategic Partnership, strengthening cooperation across diverse sectors.

- Among the agreements exchanged was a Declaration on the Establishment of Strategic Partnership and a Plan of Action (2025–2029) to guide the enhanced India–Philippines cooperation, laying out a structured roadmap for future engagement.

- Defence and security received a major boost through Terms of Reference signed for Air Staff Talks (Air Forces), Army Staff Talks, and Navy Staff Talks, deepening high-level military consultations.

- Justice and legal collaboration were strengthened through a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in Criminal Matters and a Treaty on the

Transfer of Sentenced Persons, enhancing judicial linkages between the two nations.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The two countries also entered into cooperation across emergent and high-tech domains, such as Science & Technology, Digital Technologies, Tourism, and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, including a Statement of Intent between ISRO and Philippine Space Agency.
- (ii) Cultural diplomacy and maritime collaboration received greater emphasis through MoUs on maritime cooperation between coast guards and a Cultural Exchange Programme, along with enhanced tourism ties.

## APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

**1. IndusInd Bank Appoints Rajiv Anand as MD & CEO for 3-Year Term, Succeeding Sumant Kathpalia from August 25, 2025.**



In August 2025, IndusInd Bank Limited officially announced the appointment of Rajiv Anand as the new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for a tenure of three years, starting 25th August 2025, following approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

● Rajiv Anand succeeds Sumant Kathpalia, who resigned as MD & CEO on 1st May 2025 after completing his term. Anand was previously serving as the Deputy Managing Director (DMD) at Axis Bank, a role he held from 2021 until 3rd August 2025.

● At present, the bank is being managed by its Executive Committee (EXCO) comprising Soumitra Sen, Head of Consumer Banking, and Anil Rao, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), until Rajiv Anand takes charge officially.

● Rajiv Anand brings 35+ years of experience in the banking and financial services sector. A Chartered Accountant, he began his notable leadership journey by joining Axis Asset Management Company Limited in 2009 as founding MD & CEO. He later took over as President of Retail Banking at Axis Bank in 2013 and led the division for five years, contributing to key milestones in retail banking innovation and expansion.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) From 2018 onwards, Rajiv Anand led Wholesale Banking at Axis Bank, with a strong focus on sustainable growth and institutional lending. His strategic vision also shaped long-term corporate partnerships.
- (ii) Beyond corporate leadership, Rajiv Anand holds influential roles on national platforms. He is a member of the National Committee on Banking of CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) and serves as Senior Vice President at the Bombay Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCI).
- (iii) He is also on the Boards of Axis Bank UK Limited, Axis Max Life Insurance Company Limited, and the BCCI, further highlighting his leadership across banking



and insurance domains.

## INDEX

### 1. NITI Aayog Launches India Electric Mobility Index 2024 to Track State Progress in EV Transition.



To accelerate the shift towards electric vehicles (EVs) across India, the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog launched the India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) 2024 in August 2025. This index is a first-of-its-kind tool developed to benchmark and monitor the performance of States and Union Territories (UTs) in achieving their EV adoption goals under the broader clean mobility agenda.

- The India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) was officially released by Rajiv Gauba, Member of NITI Aayog, in the presence of B.V.R. Subrahmanyam (CEO, NITI Aayog), Kamran Rizvi (Secretary, Ministry of Heavy Industries – MHI), P.O. Agarwal (Distinguished Fellow, NITI Aayog), and Shubhendu Sinha (Programme Director – E-Mobility, NITI Aayog), highlighting a high-level commitment to drive EV progress across the nation.

- The IEMI 2024 evaluates all Indian States and UTs based on 16 core indicators across 2

thematic areas and scores them on a scale of 1000. The scoring system places the states into three categories: Frontrunners (65–99), Performers (50–64), and Aspirants (0–49) based on their EV ecosystem readiness and policy execution.

- The ‘Frontrunners’ category (score: 65–99) includes Delhi, Maharashtra, and Chandigarh, which have demonstrated advanced readiness in EV infrastructure, ecosystem, and policy implementation.

#### Key Points:-

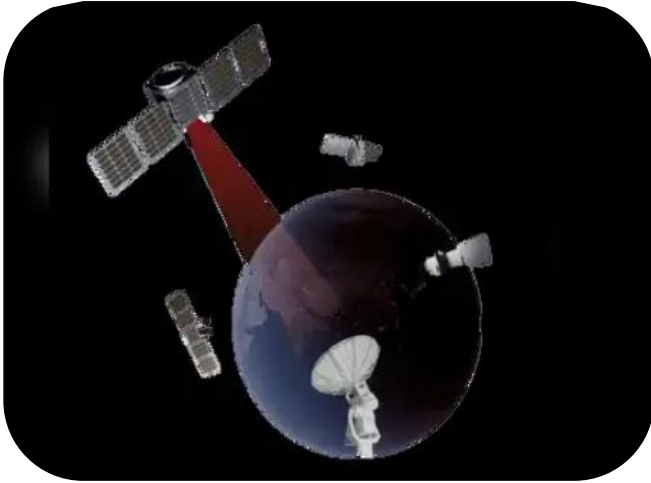
(i) The ‘Performers’ category (score: 50–64) includes Karnataka, Tamil Nadu (TN), and Haryana, which are making steady progress in electric mobility development with ongoing efforts toward infrastructure and adoption.

(ii) The ‘Aspirants’ category (score: 0–49) consists of Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh (UP), Ladakh, and Andhra Pradesh (AP), which are lagging in implementation and need increased investment and strategic intervention to scale their EV initiatives.

(iii) The IEMI is intended as a dynamic benchmarking framework to help policymakers, investors, and stakeholders identify strengths and gaps in state-level EV ecosystems, thereby enabling targeted improvements and policy reforms.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. Dhruva Space to Launch First Commercial Satellite Aboard SpaceX Falcon 9 under LEAP-1 Mission in August 2025.



On August 4, 2025, Hyderabad-based Dhruva Space will launch its first-ever commercial satellite mission, titled LEAP-1 (Launching Expeditions for Aspiring Payloads-1), using SpaceX's (Space Exploration Technologies Corporation) Falcon 9 rocket. The mission will carry two international payloads—Nexus-01 and OTR-2 (Orbital Test Ring-2)—and marks a milestone in India's private space sector advancement.

- Dhruva Space's LEAP-1 mission will utilize the P-30 (Platform-30) satellite platform to carry international payloads onboard the Falcon 9 rocket.
- This platform, which earlier flew on ISRO's (Indian Space Research Organisation) PSLV-C58 (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle-C58) mission in January 2025, can accommodate payloads of 10–15 kg and supports diverse remote sensing and Earth observation functions.
- The mission includes two foreign payloads: Nexus-01 by Akula Tech and OTR-2 by Esper Satellites. Nexus-01 is an advanced on-orbit AI/ML (Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning) based payload for fire detection, anomaly detection, and spectral analysis. OTR-2, a hyperspectral imager, will deliver high-

resolution Earth observation data using its ability to provide detailed spectral imaging.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The operations and data management of the mission will be conducted through Dhruva Space's ISOCS (Integrated Space Operations and Command Suite). The GSaaS (Ground Station-as-a-Service) platform will support real-time payload control, uplink, and downlink mission operations to ensure smooth coordination from launch to data collection.
- (ii) The LEAP-1 mission features international collaborations between India, Australia, and the United States. It is designed to enhance global access to satellite services and will showcase Dhruva Space's capabilities in artificial intelligence (AI)-driven satellite functions and remote sensing applications across geographies.
- (iii) This mission signifies India's growing role in the global private space launch ecosystem. Dhruva Space, through this commercial debut, will provide scalable infrastructure and satellite platforms to support small payload launches and expand satellite accessibility for industries, academia, and government research agencies.

## 2. ISRO Launches HOPE Mission in Ladakh to Simulate Astronaut Life for Gaganyaan.



On 31 July 2025, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) inaugurated the HOPE (Himalayan Outpost for Planetary Exploration) analogue mission in Ladakh's Tso Kar Valley—a high-altitude, Mars- and Moon-like desert environment. Running from 1 to 10 August 2025, the mission tests crew readiness and spaceflight systems in extreme conditions as part of ISRO's preparations for Gaganyaan, India's human spaceflight program.

- The HOPE mission is being conducted at Tso Kar Valley, located at an elevation of 4,530 meters in Ladakh. Chosen for its resemblance to Martian terrain—characterized by high ultraviolet radiation, low atmospheric pressure, extreme cold, and saline permafrost—it serves as an ideal testbed for human spaceflight simulation.
- Designed as a Mars-like habitat simulation, HOPE aims to rigorously test the physiological, psychological, and operational challenges that astronauts may face in space. It supports ISRO's broader roadmap for human missions to Low Earth Orbit (LEO), the Moon, and Mars.
- The mission utilizes a compact habitat layer consisting of an 8-meter-diameter crew module and a 5-meter utility module, both interconnected to imitate real-life workflows on

extraterrestrial surfaces. Two crew members will live in isolation inside this habitat for 10 days to simulate life in space.

#### Key Points:-

- HOPE will carry out a range of studies, including biomedical and psychological monitoring, surface operational protocols, microbial sampling, circadian rhythm analysis, and health-monitoring evaluations. Participating institutions include IIST (Trivandrum), RGCN (Trivandrum), IIT Hyderabad, IIT Bombay, and the Institute of Aerospace Medicine, Bengaluru.
- This high-fidelity simulation serves as a crucial "rehearsal for the future," fully aligned with India's human spaceflight ambitions, including Gaganyaan, a planned crewed orbital mission, and next-generation goals like a crewed lunar landing by 2040. The findings will directly inform astronaut training, mission protocols, and life-support system design.
- HOPE marks a new era of collaboration between ISRO's Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) and the private sector, with Protoplanet developing the habitat. This mission builds upon earlier analogue exercises like Ladakh Human Analog Mission (LHAM) in November 2024 and the isolation study 'Anugami' in July 2025, reinforcing India's leadership in space research.

## OBITUARY

**1. Former Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik Passes Away at 79.**





On 5th August 2025, Satya Pal Malik, former Governor of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), passed away at the age of 79 in New Delhi. Born on 24th July 1946 in Hisawada village, Baghpat district, Uttar Pradesh (UP), he was a prominent political leader who held several high-profile gubernatorial and parliamentary roles during his career.

- **Satya Pal Malik began his parliamentary career as a Member of Parliament (MP) in the Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh, serving between 1980 and 1989. He later represented Aligarh, UP, as a Lok Sabha MP from 1989 to 1991. His early political career marked him as a leader with strong grassroots connections and a deep involvement in national politics.**

- **He served as the Governor of five Indian states during his tenure. Malik was appointed the 27th Governor of Bihar in 2017, and in 2018, he briefly held additional charge as Governor of Odisha. His most notable assignment came as the 10th Governor of Jammu & Kashmir from 2018 to 2019, during a politically sensitive period.**

#### Key Points:-

(i) From 2019 to 2020, he served as the 18th Governor of Goa, where he continued his administrative responsibilities.

Subsequently, he was appointed as the 19th Governor of Meghalaya, a role he held from 2020 to 2022. These assignments showcased his adaptability in handling diverse regional governance challenges across India.

(ii) In 1990, Satya Pal Malik was appointed as the Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism in the government led by Vishwanath Pratap Singh. His administrative acumen was further recognised when he was appointed as the National Vice President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2012, and he was reappointed to the same position in 2014.

(iii) A key moment in Malik's career was his tenure as the last Governor of Jammu & Kashmir before the abrogation of Article 370 and the reorganisation of the state on 5th August 2019. Following the change, the Governor's post was abolished, and G.C. Murmu became the first Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory. This period marked a turning point in J&K's political and constitutional history.

## Static GK

<b>National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB)</b>	CEO : Dr. Mahesh Kumar Dadhich	Headquarters : New Delhi
<b>Ministry of External Affairs of India(MEA)</b>	Union Minister : S. Jaishankar	Headquarters : New Delhi
<b>NITI Aayog</b>	CEO : Shri BVR Subrahmanyam	Headquarters : New Delhi
<b>Moldova</b>	Capital: Chişinău	President: Maia Sandu
<b>Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)</b>	Chairperson : Sivasubramanian Ramann	Headquarters : New Delhi
<b>IDFC FIRST Bank Ltd.</b>	MD & CEO: V. Vaidyanathan	Headquarter : Mumbai
<b>Central Bank of India</b>	CEO: Matam Venkata Rao	Headquarter : Mumbai
<b>IndusInd Bank Limited</b>	Established : 1994	Headquarter : Mumbai
<b>Philippines</b>	Currency: Philippine peso	President: Bongbong Marcos
<b>Dhruva</b>	CEO : Sanjay	Headquarters

<b>Space</b>	Srikanth Nekkanti	: Hyderabad, Telangana
<b>ISRO</b>	Chairman : V. Narayanan	Headquarter : Bengaluru
<b>World Health Organization (WHO)</b>	Deputy Director General : Michael Ryan	Headquarters : Geneva, Switzerland