



# WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS PDFs

April 2025



A Complete and Comprehensive Current Affairs  
Quick Revision PDFs For Every Aspirants.



## NATIONAL AFFAIRS / GOVERNMENT SCHEME

### 1. President of Chile Gabriel Boric Font Pays First Official Visit to India to Mark 76 Years of Diplomatic Ties and Sign Key MoUs.

The President of the Republic of Chile, Gabriel Boric Font, paid an official five-day visit to India from 1st to 5th April 2025, at the invitation of the Prime Minister (PM) of India, Narendra Modi, to further strengthen the 76 years of diplomatic relations between India and Chile.

- This was his first visit to India, and he was accompanied by a high-powered delegation comprising cabinet ministers, parliamentarians, senior officials, and a large business delegation.
- During his visit, the President of Chile held bilateral discussions with PM Narendra Modi and the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, in New Delhi, Delhi.
- He also held bilateral talks with the Minister of External Affairs (EAM), Dr. S. Jaishankar.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) PM Narendra Modi and President Gabriel Boric Font witnessed the signing of key Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), including on Antarctica cooperation, space, disability, and mineral resources.
- (ii) India and Chile held a Mining Industry Round Table to strengthen cooperation in the mining sector, with a focus on key minerals like copper, lithium, and other critical resources.
- (iii) Chile was the sole nation from the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region to send a Special Envoy to India's Independence Day celebrations in 1947.

### 2. President Droupadi Murmu Gives Assent to Immigration and Foreigners Bill 2025, Making it a Law.

In April 2025, the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, gave her assent to the 'Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025', officially making it a law following its notification in the Gazette of India. The new law focuses on addressing matters related to foreign nationals and immigration control.

- The primary objective of the Act is to strengthen national security, streamline immigration processes, and enforce strict penalties on foreign nationals violating entry or stay regulations in India.
- The new Act repeals four earlier laws that originated during the British colonial era, namely The Foreigners Act, 1946, The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, and The Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The Act explicitly states that any foreigner posing a threat to India's national security, sovereignty, or integrity shall either be denied entry or refused permission to stay within the country.
- (ii) On arrival, foreign nationals must register with a Registration Officer. The law also includes provisions that may restrict their movement, change of name, and entry into protected or restricted areas.
- (iii) Foreigners entering without a valid passport or travel documents may face penalties including up to 5 years imprisonment, a fine up to ₹5 lakh, or both, as per the provisions of the Act.

### 3. PM Narendra Modi Launches ₹8,300 Crore Worth of Development Projects in Tamil Nadu.

In April 2025, the Prime Minister (PM) of India, Narendra Modi, laid the foundation stone and inaugurated several rail and road development projects worth over ₹8,300 crore in Rameswaram,



located in Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu (TN).

- These projects underline the Government of India's (GoI) continued focus on infrastructure modernization and economic growth in Tamil Nadu.
- PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the New Pamban Rail Bridge, India's first vertical lift sea bridge, which connects Rameswaram Island to Mandapam on the mainland.
- This new structure replaces the old British-era bridge and serves as a major milestone in coastal connectivity.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) PM Modi flagged off a new train service between Rameswaram and Tambaram (Chennai), strengthening regional rail connectivity and boosting local mobility.
- (ii) The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone and dedicated completed infrastructure projects under the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) in Tamil Nadu, with a total investment exceeding ₹8,300 crore.

#### 4. NSO Launches New Digital Initiatives to Boost India's Statistical Infrastructure.

In April 2025, the National Statistical Office (NSO), functioning under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), introduced a set of transformative digital initiatives aimed at modernizing India's statistical infrastructure.

- The newly launched tools include the revamped Microdata Portal, the official website of the National Statistical System Training Academy (NSSTA), and an AI/ML-Based Classification Tool.
- These initiatives were unveiled during the 'Conference of State Government Ministers on

Strengthening of Statistical Systems' held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The primary aim is to boost data accessibility, accuracy, and ensure stronger policy relevance.

- These efforts are aligned with the Government of India's vision of building a Viksit Bharat (Developed India) through robust and data-driven governance.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The revamped Microdata Portal is a centralized digital repository offering enhanced access to datasets from national surveys and economic censuses. Developed in collaboration with the World Bank Technology Team (Washington D.C., USA), it overcomes earlier tech limitations and boosts data dissemination. Built on a modern, scalable, and secure tech stack, it features a responsive design and improved data access mechanisms.
- (ii) The National Statistical System Training Academy (NSSTA) website is a centralized platform developed in-house by the Data Informatics & Innovation Division (DIID) of MoSPI. It serves as a hub for capacity-building initiatives, making training and development resources easily accessible to stakeholders in the statistical ecosystem.
- (iii) The AI/ML-Based Classification Tool is a Proof of Concept developed by MoSPI to automate the classification of economic activities using the National Industrial Classification (NIC) system. Leveraging Natural Language Processing (NLP), the tool simplifies the categorization process, reduces manual effort, and enhances data collection accuracy—ultimately supporting more efficient policymaking.

#### 5. MOSPI Unveils 26th Edition of 'Women & Men in India 2024' Featuring Key Selected Indicators and Data.

In April 2025, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) released the 26th edition of its publication titled 'Women and Men in India 2024: Selected Indicators and Data'.

- The publication provides comprehensive insights into India's gender scenario, presenting selected indicators and data across critical sectors such as population, education, health, economic participation, and decision-making. All data has been compiled from various ministries, departments, and organizations.

- The Gender Parity Index (GPI) at the primary level showed a rise from 1.02 (2020–21) to 1.05 (2022–23), followed by a slight dip to 1.03 in 2023–24.

- Meanwhile, GPI at the secondary level has shown a steady increase from 0.99 (2020–21) to 1.02 (2023–24).

#### Key Points:-

(i) According to the publication, the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in usual status for individuals aged 15 years and above has risen significantly from 49.8% (2017–18) to 60.1% (2023–24).

(ii) The data also highlighted that women constitute 39.2% of all bank accounts and contribute to 39.7% of total bank deposits.

#### 6. MoRD Organizes Webinar and Unveils New Initiatives to Boost Rural Women Empowerment.

In April 2025, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) organized a webinar involving Lakhpati Didis and representatives from various State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs) as part of its post-budget consultation series.

- The session emphasized collaborative strategies for the effective implementation of the 2025–26 Union Budget announcements.

- MoRD launched the Entrepreneurship Planning Digital Tool (EPDT), developed on an operating system called LoKOS, to support and empower aspiring Lakhpati Didis.

- A toll-free helpline (0120-5202521) was introduced to provide guidance and assistance to women aiming to become Lakhpati Didis.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Under the Connectivity component of the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN), MoRD sanctioned infrastructure projects for Tripura and Odisha, focusing on the welfare of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

(ii) The MoRD also approved new infrastructure projects under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)-III to enhance rural connectivity and economic development in the states of Manipur, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh (HP), and Uttarakhand.

#### 7. MeitY Unveils First-Ever Digital Threat Report 2024 to Strengthen Cybersecurity in the BFSI Sector.

In April 2025, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) launched the 1st edition of the Digital Threat Report 2024 focused on the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector. The report offers a comprehensive overview of both current and emerging cyber threats along with defense strategies tailored for the BFSI domain.

- The report aims to present adversaries' tactics and playbooks, recommend preventive and detective controls, forecast future attacks, highlight current cybersecurity trends, showcase select case studies, and analyze the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in cyber breaches.

- The Digital Threat Report 2024 was officially launched by M. Nagaraju, Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance (MoF); S. Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY); Dr. Sanjay Bahl, Director General of CERT-In, New Delhi; and Dharshan Shanthamurthy, Founder & CEO of SISA Information Security.

- The 1st edition of the Digital Threat Report 2024 was developed by CERT-In in collaboration with CSIRT-Fin and SISA, a global forensic-driven cybersecurity company specializing in digital payments. The report is aimed at strengthening the cyber defense strategies of the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector by reducing financial risks and building a collective response framework to counter advanced cyber threats.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The report draws from a rich mix of sources, including SISA's digital forensics and incident response (DFIR) investigations, cybersecurity intelligence reports, and key insights from CSIRT-Fin and CERT-In. This blend offers a comprehensive threat landscape view, focusing on key attack vectors, systemic vulnerabilities, and tactics used by rising threat actors targeting BFSI entities.

(ii) A strong emphasis is placed on adopting an integrated cybersecurity approach, which unifies technology, regulatory compliance, and proactive threat intelligence. This strategic alignment is designed to help financial institutions enhance their cyber resilience, anticipate vulnerabilities, and maintain stability in the face of evolving cyber risks.

(iii) With India's digital payments market projected to reach USD 3.1 trillion by 2028, contributing to 35% of total banking revenues, the BFSI sector has become an increasingly attractive target for

cyber-criminals. The report serves as a critical strategic tool, equipping organizations with real-time intelligence and guidance to stay ahead of sophisticated cyber-attacks.

#### 8. Gujarat's Famous 'Amalsad Chikoo' Recently Awarded GI Tag for Its Unique Agricultural Identity.

In April 2025, "Amalsad Chikoo" (sapodilla), a horticultural fruit from South Gujarat, was recently awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, becoming the first agricultural product from the region to achieve this recognition.

- The GI tag was granted by the Chennai (Tamil Nadu)-based GI Registry, under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I).

- The GI tag was awarded to the Valsad Navsari Jilla Fal Ane Shakhbhaji Sahakari Sangh Limited (Gujarat) following a joint application submitted by the Gujarat Council on Science and Technology (GUJCOST), Gandhinagar and Navsari Agricultural University (NAU), Navsari.

- It is the 3rd fruit from Gujarat to receive the GI tag, after the Gir Kesar Mango and Kutchhi Kharek (date).

#### Key Points:-

(i) Amalsad Chikoo, named after Amalsad village in Navsari district, is known for its remarkable sweetness, smooth texture, and extended shelf life. It is cultivated using traditional horticultural practices passed down for generations.

(ii) The GI-tagged region includes 51 villages in Gandevi Taluka, 6 in Jalalpore Taluka, and 30 in Navsari Taluka, collectively producing 30% of Gujarat's chikoo, while Gujarat itself contributes 98% of India's chikoo exports.

(iii) Amalsad Chikoo's premium quality and

extended shelf life make it ideal for both domestic and global markets. The recently granted GI tag is expected to boost exports to the UAE, UK, and Bahrain, while also promoting traditional farming practices and supporting local farmers' livelihoods in Gujarat.

### 9. MoWCD's Palna Scheme under Mission Shakti Ensures Quality Day-Care for Children Aged 6 Months to 6 Years.

The Palna Scheme, integrated within the Samarthya sub-scheme of Mission Shakti, stands as a vital initiative by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) to ensure accessible and quality day-care services for children aged six months to six years.

- To ease the burden on working mothers and ensure proper care and protection for their young children, the Palna Scheme facilitates the provision of day-care crèche services.
- Under the Palna Scheme, key services include day-care facilities with proper sleeping arrangements, early stimulation activities for children below 3 years, and pre-school education for those aged 3 to 6 years. The scheme also ensures locally sourced supplementary nutrition, along with regular growth monitoring, health check-ups, and immunization support.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Palna Scheme Launched in 2022, the Palna Scheme is a restructured and renamed version of the former National Creche Scheme.
- (ii) Its core aim is to offer safe, nurturing, and development-focused crèche services, ensuring child health, cognitive growth, regular monitoring, immunization, and nutrition, in convergence with Mission Poshan 2.0.
- (iii) Palna functions as a Centrally Sponsored

Scheme (CSS) with a funding ratio of 60:40 between the Central and State Governments and Union Territories (UTs) with legislatures. For North Eastern and Special Category States, the funding ratio is 90:10.

### 10. Startup Mahakumbh 2025 Inaugurated in New Delhi by Union Minister Piyush Goyal.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal, Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I), inaugurated the 2nd edition of Startup Mahakumbh, held from April 3 to 5, 2025, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

- Startup Mahakumbh 2025, recognized as the world's largest event for startups and innovation, was organized by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).
- The event was supported by leading industry associations including ASSOCHAM, The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), Indian Venture and Alternate Capital Association (IVCA), and the Bootstrap Foundation.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) During the event, Union Minister Piyush Goyal announced the approval of a Second Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS) with a total corpus of ₹10,000 crore (USD 1.17 billion). He also announced the launch of a dedicated Startup India Desk within the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- (ii) The Startup Maharathi Challenge 2025 was unveiled, aiming to honour outstanding startups contributing to India's innovation ecosystem.
- (iii) The India Fintech Foundation (IFF) was officially launched as a proposed self-regulatory organization (SRO) for the Indian fintech sector. The logo of IFF was unveiled by Amitabh Kant,



India's G20 Sherpa.

### 11. President Droupadi Murmu Approves Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.

On April 5, 2025, President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent to the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025. The Bill was passed by Parliament following three days of intense debate in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

- The main objective of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 is to amend the Waqf Act, 1995, to address existing challenges in the regulation and management of waqf properties across India.
- The amendment aims to enhance transparency, administration, and overall governance of waqf assets.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Waqf refers to properties permanently dedicated for religious or charitable purposes under Islamic law, and their use or sale for any other purpose is strictly prohibited. Once dedicated, the property is considered to be held in the name of Allah.

(ii) A waqf is permanent and irrevocable—once a property becomes waqf, it cannot be taken back, reclaimed, or redirected from its intended religious or charitable purpose.

(iii) India holds the largest waqf property base in the world. The Waqf Board is also the third-largest landowner in the country, after the Indian Armed Forces and the Indian Railways.

### 12. Union Cabinet Approves Rs 1,600 Cr Irrigation Scheme, 6-Lane Zirakpur Bypass & Railway Line Doubling Project.

On April 09, 2025, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, approved the following major proposals and schemes:

- The Union Cabinet approved a new sub-scheme called M-CADWM under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY). It has a financial allocation of Rs 1,600 crore for the year 2025 to 2026. The scheme is aimed at enhancing water use efficiency and strengthening irrigation infrastructure across the country.
- The Cabinet approved the construction of a 6-lane access-controlled Zirakpur Bypass, covering Punjab and Haryana, to be developed under the Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM). This project will decongest traffic and enhance connectivity in the region.
- The Union Cabinet approved the doubling of the 104 kilometre-long Tirupati–Pakala–Katpadi single railway line section. This railway stretch spans across Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The project has an estimated cost of Rs 1,332 crore and aims to enhance rail capacity while improving regional transport efficiency.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The project will not only enhance connectivity to the famous Tirumala Venkateswara Temple in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh but will also provide improved rail access to other major pilgrimage sites such as the Sri Kalahasti Shiva Temple in Sri Kalahasti, Kanipakam Vinayaka Temple in Chittoor district, and Chandragiri Fort in Tirupati. This is expected to attract a large number of pilgrims and tourists from across the country.

(ii) The multi-tracking initiative will significantly improve connectivity to around 400 villages and benefit approximately 14 lakh people living in the region.

(iii) In addition to boosting infrastructure, the project will support India's climate goals by reducing annual oil imports by nearly 4 crore liters

and cutting down Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions by about 20 crore kilograms. This environmental benefit is equivalent to planting 1 crore trees.

### 13. First Ever PAI Baseline Report for FY23 Shows Gujarat and Telangana Leading as Front Runners.

In April 2025, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) launched the first-ever 'Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) baseline report' for the Financial Year 2022-23 (FY23), aimed at localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- This initiative serves as a transformative tool to evaluate the performance of over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) across India using a comprehensive and evidence-based framework aligned with the SDG 2030 Agenda.

- The Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) is a composite index designed to assess Panchayat performance based on 9 themes under the Localized SDGs (LSDGs), such as Good Governance, Poverty-Free and Enhanced Livelihoods, among others.

#### Key Points:-

(i) According to the 2022-23 PAI data, out of 2,55,699 GPs, a total of 2,16,285 GPs submitted validated data. Among them, 699 (0.3%) Panchayats were identified as Front Runners.

(ii) Gujarat led the rankings with 346 Gram Panchayats recognized as Front Runners, followed by Telangana with 270 Gram Panchayats in the same category.

### 14. IEPFA and IPPB Collaborate to Launch Phase 2 of 'Niveshak Didi' Initiative to Enhance Financial Literacy in Rural India.

On April 9, 2025, the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA), headquartered in New Delhi under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA), signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the India Post Payments Bank (IPPB), also based in New Delhi and functioning under the Department of Posts (DoP), Ministry of Communications (MoC).

- This collaboration marks the launch of Phase 2 of the "Niveshak Didi" initiative, which aims to enhance financial literacy among women residing in rural, semi-urban, and underserved regions across India.

- The "Niveshak Didi" initiative is a community-driven financial literacy program that empowers women postal workers and community leaders to become financial educators in their local areas, promoting responsible investing, fraud prevention, savings habits, and the adoption of digital banking tools.

#### Key Points:-

(i) In the first phase of the initiative, over 55,000 individuals took part in IPPB's Financial Literacy Camps conducted across India. Around 60% of the participants were women, mostly from the youth and economically active demographic. Notably, two out of every three beneficiaries came from deep rural regions, ensuring a significant grassroots-level impact.

(ii) In the second phase, more than 4,000 financial literacy camps will be organized nationwide. Nearly 40,000 women postal workers will be trained as Niveshak Didis to lead these camps at the grassroots level, fostering financial awareness within their communities.

(iii) IEPFA is dedicated to educating and safeguarding investors, with a special focus on rural and underserved areas, by enhancing financial literacy and spreading awareness about investor rights and responsibilities.



### 15. Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Inaugurates DFDR and CVR Laboratory at Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB).

On April 10, 2025, Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), inaugurated the state-of-the-art Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR) and Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) Laboratory at the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), located at Udaan Bhawan, New Delhi.

- Commonly referred to as the 'Black Box Lab,' the facility has been established with an investment of Rs 9 crore and supported by Bengaluru-based Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- The Minister also launched the 'Career Guidance Programme' in Aviation at the Indian Aviation Academy, New Delhi.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) This initiative aims to educate Class 11 and 12 students about career prospects in aviation, including roles such as pilots, air traffic controllers, aircraft designers, and airport managers.
- (ii) Additionally, Mahindra Aerostructures Private Limited (MASPL), a Bengaluru-based unit of Mahindra & Mahindra, secured a contract from Airbus Helicopters, a division of France-based Airbus, to manufacture and assemble the main fuselage of the H130 helicopter.

### 16. Union MoS Dr. Jitendra Singh Inaugurates India's First High-Altitude Atmospheric and Climate Research Centre in Jammu & Kashmir.

In April 2025, Union Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge), Dr. Jitendra Singh, Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T), inaugurated India's first-ever and the world's second Himalayan

High Altitude Atmospheric and Climate Research Centre at Nathatop, located at an altitude of 2,250 meters in Mandlote village, Udhampur district, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).

- The centre will primarily focus on climate forecasting, aerosol studies, cloud microphysics, and weather pattern analysis in the North-Western Himalayan region. It supports India's net-zero goals and reinforces the country's position in global climate science efforts.
- The Nathatop site was selected due to its clean air and minimal pollution levels, making it ideal for studying atmospheric processes in free-tropospheric conditions without interference from urban or industrial emissions.
- The research centre is the result of a collaborative effort involving the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), the J&K Forest Department, and the Central University of Jammu (CUJ), with international expertise provided by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

#### Key Points:-

- (i) This high-altitude centre will contribute valuable atmospheric data to the Geneva (Switzerland)-based World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) Global Atmospheric Watch (GAW) Programme, thus helping to refine global climate prediction models.
- (ii) Alongside the inauguration, the Indo-Swiss Joint Research Project titled 'ICE-CRUNCH' (Ice Nucleating Particles and Cloud Condensation Nuclei Properties in the North-Western Himalayas) was officially launched in the Udhampur district.
- (iii) Under the ICE-CRUNCH project, the centre will begin its first measurements focused on understanding how aerosols affect cloud formation, rainfall patterns, and climate variations in the Himalayan region. This study involves

collaboration between Indian researchers and scientists from ETH Zürich, Switzerland, supported by the SNSF.

### 17. PM Modi Inaugurates Navkar Mahamantra Divas and Calls for Nine Resolutions Inspired by Jain Principles on Mahavir Jayanti.

On April 9, 2025, the Prime Minister (PM) of India, Narendra Modi, inaugurated and participated in the Navkar Mahamantra Divas at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi (Delhi). The event served as a global spiritual congregation aimed at fostering peace, non-violence, and inner harmony through the collective chanting of the Navkar Mahamantra, the most sacred chant in Jainism (an ancient Indian religion).

- The celebration coincided with Mahavir Jayanti, honoring the birth of Lord Mahavir, the 24th Tirthankara of Jainism, and witnessed participation of over 25,000 people from 108 countries chanting in unison to spread a message of peace and unity.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) PM Modi described the Navkar Mantra as a deep spiritual reservoir of peace, stability, and mental clarity.
- (ii) He emphasized its role in honoring the Panch Parmeshthi—Arihants, Siddhas, Acharyas, Upadhyayas, and Sadhus—who together represent 108 divine attributes in Jainism.
- (iii) The Prime Minister also urged citizens to adopt nine meaningful resolutions inspired by Jain values to build a sustainable and harmonious future: conserve water, plant a tree in the name of one's mother, actively participate in the cleanliness mission, support local products (Vocal for Local), explore the cultural richness of India, promote and practice natural farming, maintain a healthy lifestyle, incorporate yoga or sports into daily routines, and extend help to the

underprivileged.

### 18. Maharashtra Government Approves Renaming of Khuldabad to 'Ratnapur'.

In April 2025, Maharashtra's Social Justice Minister Sanjay Shirsat announced the government's decision to rename the town of Khuldabad, located in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district, to its historical name Ratnapur.

- This renaming move is part of a wider effort by the state to restore original names of places that were renamed during the Mughal era.

- In tandem with this initiative, the Maharashtra government also unveiled plans to develop a memorial in Khuldabad to commemorate the legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, highlighting the region's cultural and historical significance.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The renaming of Khuldabad to Ratnapur reflects the Maharashtra government's broader mission to revive pre-Mughal place names, reaffirming the state's historical identity and heritage.
- (ii) Khuldabad, located about 25 kilometers from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, holds deep historical importance as the burial site of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, and also houses the graves of his son Azam Shah and Asaf Jah I, the founder of the Hyderabad Nizam dynasty.

### 19. Tata Steel Recognised as Steel Sustainability Champion 2025 by World Steel Association.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Tata Steel Limited (TSL) was recognised as a Steel Sustainability Champion 2025 by Brussels,

Belgium-based World Steel Association (worldsteel) for the eighth consecutive year since 2018.

- This accolade, announced during Worldsteel's Special General Meeting (SGM) held in Sydney, Australia, highlights Tata Steel's leadership in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) excellence and its commitment to sustainable steelmaking.

- To qualify as a Steel Sustainability Champion, Tata Steel endorsed worldsteel's Sustainability Charter, fulfilling rigorous criteria in areas such as environmental management, workplace safety, innovation, and transparency.

- The company also contributed Life Cycle Inventory (LCI) data to worldsteel's global data collection programme, which is essential for evaluating the environmental impact of steel products.

#### Key Points:-

(i) In Financial Year 2024-25 (FY25), Tata Steel achieved several sustainability milestones. It became India's first steelmaker to manufacture hydrogen (H) transport-ready steel pipes, introduced biochar into its blast furnaces, and carried out India's first B24 biofuel-powered raw material shipment, marking notable strides in green steel production and clean logistics.

(ii) Additionally, Tata Steel launched the Carbon Bank, a virtual CO<sub>2</sub> repository designed to promote and track low-carbon products.

(iii) The company has set a target of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2045 and continues to lead in digital transformation, with multiple plants earning the World Economic Forum's Global Lighthouse recognition for their advanced use of smart technologies.

## 20. Meghalaya's Ryndia and Khasi Handloom Products Granted GI Tag for Indigenous Textiles.

In April 2025, Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN)-based Geographical Indications (GI) Registry, under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I), officially granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag to Meghalaya's indigenous textile, 'Ryndia' silk and Khasi handloom products.

- This achievement aligns with the vision of Meghalaya Chief Minister (CM) Conrad Kongkal Sangma and Textiles Minister Paul Lyngdoh to promote the state's indigenous heritage and establish "Brand Meghalaya" on a global platform.

- The GI recognition applies to Ryndia, a handwoven, hand-spun, naturally dyed, organically produced, and ethically sourced fabric, along with other traditional Meghalaya handloom products.

- The initiative was led by the Meghalaya Department of Textiles with support from NABARD and technical guidance from GI expert Dr. Rajnikanth, facilitating joint applications by the Textiles Department and the Meghalaya Ryndia Producers Association. It was further catalyzed by the recognition of Umden-Diwon Village (Ri-Bhoi district) as Meghalaya's 1st Eri Silk Village on February 12, 2021.

#### Key Points:-

(i) "Ryndia" is the Khasi name for Eri silk, derived from the ryndia (castor) plant that feeds the Philosamia ricini silkworms. It is a unique heirloom fabric known for its traditional and sustainable qualities. Ryndia or Eri silk is also referred to as Peace Silk or Ahimsa Silk, as it is extracted without harming the silkworms, preserving Meghalaya's eco-conscious weaving heritage.

(ii) This fabric is primarily produced by the indigenous Khasi, Bhoi, and Jaintia artisans of Meghalaya, with Ryndia weaving being a woman-



centric tradition among the Khasi tribes. The fabric is hand-spun, handwoven, and naturally dyed, reflecting both cultural legacy and ethical craftsmanship.

(iii) A Geographical Indication (GI) tag certifies products from a specific region with unique qualities or reputation. In India, it is governed by the GI Act, 1999 (effective from 15 Sept 2003). The Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoC&I) aims to reach 10,000 GI tags by 2030 to boost local heritage.

## 21. Union Minister Rajnath Singh Flags Off INS Sunayna from Karnataka for Mission SAGAR under Indian Ocean Outreach.

The Indian Navy (IN)'s Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV), Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sunayna, was flagged off as part of the Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) mission from the Karwar Naval Base, Karnataka.

- The flag-off took place on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of SAGAR, which was launched in 2015, and also coincided with National Maritime Day on April 5, 2025.

- Union Minister Rajnath Singh highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) initiative, stating that it will take SAGAR's vision forward through wider and stronger regional cooperation.

- The flagging-off ceremony witnessed the presence of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Secretary of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Rajesh Kumar Singh, along with other senior officials.

### Key Points:-

(i) The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sunayna, as part

of the IOS SAGAR mission, is carrying 44 naval personnel from nine friendly countries — Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Tanzania. During its voyage, the ship will visit Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), Nacala (Mozambique), Port Louis (Mauritius), and Port Victoria (Seychelles), where the international crew will undergo training sessions based on skills learned at naval schools in Kochi, Kerala.

(ii) The training program includes hands-on activities such as firefighting and damage control, Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS), bridge and engine room operations, seamanship and boat handling, and switchboard management, aimed at enhancing regional maritime security cooperation and skill-building under the SAGAR framework.

(iii) As part of his visit, Union Minister Rajnath Singh also inaugurated facilities worth ₹2,000 crore under Project Seabird, India's largest naval infrastructure project, being developed over 11,000 acres at Karwar, Karnataka. The newly unveiled facilities include seven piers, approximately 400 residential units, roads, and bridges, linking different parts of the base. He also participated in Phase 1 of the Naval Commanders' Conference and reviewed the newly developed infrastructure at the site.

## 22. India and Israel Strengthen Strategic Ties to Enhance Agricultural Innovation and Productivity.

In April 2025, the Government of India (GoI) and the Government of Israel signed significant agreements to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture, focusing on enhancing agricultural productivity, innovation, and sustainability.

- The agreements were signed in New Delhi (Delhi) between Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW), and Avi Dichter, Israel's Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, during his first official visit to India in his current role.
- As part of the engagement, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan extended an invitation to the Israeli delegation to participate in World Food India 2025, scheduled to be held from September 25th to 28th in New Delhi.
- The strategic partnership between India and Israel aims to tackle the dual challenges of climate change and population growth impacting agriculture. A key highlight of the discussions was the proposal of a Five-Year Seed Improvement Plan (FYSIP), which focuses on developing high-quality, high-yielding seed varieties. This initiative is expected to significantly enhance food security by increasing productivity.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Both nations emphasized the vital role of technological innovation and capacity building in modernizing agriculture. As part of the agreement, they committed to expanding the use of advanced agricultural technologies such as pest management and post-harvest solutions. Additionally, the plan includes setting clear guidelines for technology transfer, boosting capacity development, and improving market access.
- (ii) To implement the agreement effectively, India and Israel will form a Joint Working Group (JWG). This group will be responsible for preparing a detailed roadmap with specific goals and timelines. Key focus areas will include the enhancement of Centres of Excellence (CoEs) and scaling the Villages of Excellence (VoE) initiative to broaden the outreach of modern

farming practices.

- (iii) A notable contributor to this cooperation is MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation. MASHAV has played a pivotal role in strengthening Indo-Israeli agricultural ties. So far, 43 Centres of Excellence have been set up under this initiative, with 35 of them currently operational, serving as hubs for knowledge sharing, innovation, and capacity enhancement in agriculture.

## INTERNATIONAL

### 1. Hungary Recently Announces Decision to Withdraw from International Criminal Court (ICC).

In April 2025, the Government of Hungary announced its decision to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC), headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands. The move came shortly after the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Hungary, drawing international attention. As per Article 127 of the Rome Statute, which governs the ICC, Hungary's withdrawal will become official one year after it formally notifies the United Nations (UN).

- Hungary, a signatory of the Rome Statute since 1999, is now set to become the first European Union (EU) country to exit the ICC.
- The formal exit process requires Hungary to send a written notice of withdrawal to António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Once this letter is received, the one-year countdown toward official withdrawal begins.
- As of March 2025, only two countries—Burundi and the Philippines—have officially withdrawn from the ICC. Hungary's move adds a new chapter in ICC history, raising concerns about international accountability and the future participation of EU nations in global justice mechanisms.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) In November 2024, the ICC issued an arrest warrant against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for alleged war crimes in Gaza. These charges relate to Israel's military retaliation following the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on southern Israel, which killed about 1,200 people and saw over 250 hostages taken.
- (ii) As an ICC member, Hungary is required to act on ICC warrants, including arresting accused individuals. However, due to its strong political and diplomatic support for Israel, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán declared Hungary would not arrest Netanyahu, creating a direct conflict with ICC obligations.
- (iii) To avoid violating ICC rules while maintaining its alliance with Israel, Hungary announced its decision to withdraw from the ICC in April 2025. Once the formal withdrawal notice is submitted, Hungary will become the first European Union (EU) country to leave the ICC.

## **2. PM Narendra Modi's April 2025 Visits to Thailand and Sri Lanka Strengthen Strategic Ties and Secure Key MoUs.**

In April 2025, Prime Minister (PM) of India, Narendra Modi, undertook official visits to Thailand and Sri Lanka to strengthen bilateral relations and explore cooperation across multiple sectors.

- **PM Narendra Modi visited Thailand on a two-day official visit at the invitation of the Thai PM, Paetongtarn Shinawatra.**
- **He held comprehensive bilateral talks with PM Shinawatra, covering a wide range of cooperation areas such as defence and security, trade and investment, science & technology (S&T), innovation, space, education, health, culture, and tourism.**

- **Key Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed during the visit to boost collaboration in strategic sectors.**

**Key Points:-**

- (i) PM Narendra Modi visited Sri Lanka from April 5–6, 2025, on the official invitation of Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake. This marked his fourth official visit to Sri Lanka, following earlier visits in 2015, 2017, and 2019.
- (ii) During a special ceremony held in Colombo, PM Modi was conferred with Sri Lanka's highest civilian award, the 'Mithra Vibhushana', in recognition of his contribution to strengthening India-Sri Lanka relations.
- (iii) The visit included high-level talks with President Dissanayake and the signing of several MoUs in strategic sectors such as defence, energy, digital infrastructure, healthcare, and trade, aimed at deepening bilateral cooperation.

## **3. India Elected by Acclamation to UN's ISAR for 2025–2027 Term.**

In April 2025, India was elected by acclamation to the United Nations Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting (ISAR) for a three-year term from 2025 to 2027. This reflects India's growing leadership in global financial governance and international standard-setting platforms.

- **As a member of ISAR, India will contribute significantly to shaping global standards in financial reporting. Its participation strengthens efforts to enhance transparency, accountability, and uniformity in both financial and non-financial reporting practices across nations, further reinforcing India's position in international policy-making related to corporate disclosure and sustainability.**



- ISAR was formed in 1983 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is coordinated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), based in Geneva, Switzerland. ISAR conducts annual sessions in Geneva to address emerging global issues in enterprise accounting and corporate reporting frameworks.

- The main mandate of ISAR is to help member states improve the quality and international comparability of financial reporting. It also covers non-financial disclosures, focusing on critical areas like environmental sustainability, corporate governance, and corporate social responsibility (CSR), ensuring that companies provide holistic and transparent reports to stakeholders.

#### Key Points:-

(i) ISAR consists of 34 formal member countries, each serving a three-year term. The representation is regionally balanced with 9 members from Africa, 7 from Asia, 6 from Latin America, 3 from Eastern Europe, and 9 from Western Europe and other states. This structure ensures diverse and inclusive perspectives on global accounting standards.

(ii) ISAR organizes elections twice every three years, usually around April or May. Member countries are selected without financial obligations, making participation accessible and focused purely on knowledge-sharing and global cooperation. India's acclamation reflects its widespread support and respect within the international financial reporting community.

(iii) Current ISAR members include a wide range of countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, China, Russia, Brazil, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Mexico, Philippines, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. This diverse membership enables ISAR to address varied regional issues and contribute to the global harmonization of corporate

reporting standards.

#### 4. UNCTAD Reports that India Ranked 36th in Global Index for Readiness in Frontier Technologies.

In April 2025, the Geneva (Switzerland)-based United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) released the '2025 Technology and Innovation Report', highlighting global readiness for frontier technologies. According to the report, India secured the 36th rank (for the year 2024) among 170 countries on the 'Readiness for Frontier Technologies' Index, marking a significant improvement from the 48th rank in 2022.

- The index evaluates five core indicators: Information and Communications Technology (ICT) deployment, skills, Research and Development (R&D) activity, industrial capacity, and access to finance.

- India's performance on the 'Readiness for Frontier Technologies' Index was mixed across key parameters. It ranked 99th in ICT deployment, 113th in skills, but showed strength in R&D activity (3rd) and industrial capacity (10th).

- In terms of access to finance, India stood at 70th, reflecting areas of both progress and potential improvement.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Among the top 5 countries globally, four were developed nations: the United States of America (1st), Sweden (2nd), Netherlands (3rd), and Switzerland (4th).

(ii) Singapore secured the 5th position, making it the only Asian country featured in the top five rankings.

(iii) According to the 2025 Technology and Innovation Report by UNCTAD, in 2023, only two

developing countries made notable private investments in Artificial Intelligence (AI). China ranked 2nd globally, investing approximately USD 7.8 billion, while India secured the 10th position, with AI investments worth USD 1.4 billion. This highlights the growing emphasis on AI development in emerging economies.

### 5. UNESCAP Warns "Climate Disasters Could Slash GDP by 6% in One-Third of Asia-Pacific Countries".

On April 8, 2025, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) released its report titled "Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2025: Understanding the Macroeconomic Implications of Climate Change." The report sheds light on the significant economic challenges faced by the Asia-Pacific region due to the adverse impacts of climate change.

- According to UNESCAP, climate disasters could result in annual economic losses of at least 6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in one-third of the region's countries.
- Despite contributing 60% to global economic growth in 2024, many Asia-Pacific nations remain underprepared for the potential economic shocks induced by climate change and the transition to greener, more sustainable economies.
- The report highlights key threats to regional resilience, including slower productivity growth, high public debt risks, and increasing trade tensions, while emphasizing the critical need for governments to strike a balance between promoting economic growth and achieving sustainability amidst the growing climate-related challenges.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The survey analyzed 30 Asia-Pacific countries

and identified 11, including Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam, as particularly vulnerable to climate risks. These nations face heightened risks due to their reliance on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, fossil fuels, and coastal economies.

- (ii) India's Real GDP growth is projected to increase to 6.5% in 2025, up from 6.2% in 2024, with inflation expected to ease to 4.3%.
- (iii) By 2026, India's GDP growth is forecast to reach 6.6%, backed by strong macroeconomic fundamentals, while inflation is anticipated to decrease further to 4%.

### 6. India and Russia Hold 8th Working Group Meeting on Priority Investment Projects in New Delhi.

In April 2025, the 8th Session of the India-Russia Working Group on Priority Investment Projects (IRWG-PIP) under the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation was held in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The session was co-chaired by Amardeep Singh Bhatia, Secretary of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoC&I), representing the Government of India (GoI), and Vladimir Ilichev, Deputy Minister of the Ministry for Economic Development, Government of Russia.
- Additionally, the 2nd edition of the India-Russia Investment Forum was organised on the sidelines of the session in New Delhi.

#### Key Points:-

(i) During the WG meeting, India and Russia agreed on 6 new strategic projects to enhance bilateral investment cooperation. The co-chairs of

the session also signed a protocol highlighting these projects' strategic importance and reviewed the outcomes of the 7th session of IRWG-PIP. These initiatives aim to strengthen mutual investments, sector-specific partnerships, and deepen economic ties.

(ii) Both countries discussed initiatives to bolster their bilateral economic ties, reaffirming their commitment to expand investment collaboration across key sectors.

(iii) The India-Russia Investment Forum 2025 was organized by Invest India (Delhi), under the DPIIT (MoC&I), in collaboration with the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) (Kolkata) and the Ministry of Economic Development, Russia. The forum saw strong participation from over 80 stakeholders, including business leaders, financial institutions, logistics firms, trade bodies, and senior officials from both countries.

### 7. Singapore Changi Named World's Best Airport for 13th Time at Skytrax World Airport Awards 2025.

On 9 April 2025, Singapore Changi Airport was awarded the title of World's Best Airport during the Skytrax World Airport Awards 2025, held at the Passenger Terminal Expo at Institución Ferial de Madrid (IFEMA) in Madrid, Spain. This marks the 13th time Singapore Changi Airport has won this prestigious title, setting a record in the history of the awards.

● Doha's Hamad International Airport (HIA) secured the second position, and Japan's Tokyo International Airport (Haneda) ranked third.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in New Delhi was ranked 32nd and was also named the Best Airport in India and South Asia for 2025.

(ii) Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru was ranked 48th. It was also awarded the title of Best Regional Airport in India & South Asia. KIA's T2 terminal received a Skytrax 5-star airport terminal rating, making it the first airport in India to achieve this rating.

(iii) Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Hyderabad was ranked 56th. GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL), which operates RGIA, was honoured with the 'Best Airport Staff in India & South Asia 2025' award for the fourth consecutive time.

### 8. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Represents India at 3rd BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture in Nepal.

In April 2025, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW) and Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), led the Indian delegation at the 3rd BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Agriculture Ministerial Meeting (BAMM) in Kathmandu, Nepal.

● The meeting was attended by agriculture ministers and senior officials from BIMSTEC member countries, including India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Thailand, and Sri Lanka.

#### Key Points:-

(i) During the meeting, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan reaffirmed India's commitment to regional agricultural cooperation and highlighted the alignment of BIMSTEC with India's 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policies.

(ii) India proposed the establishment of a BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Agriculture Cooperation, focusing on accurate farming, natural and organic agriculture, climate



risk mitigation, gender equality, and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in agriculture.

(iii) On the sidelines of the meeting, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Ramnath Adhikari, Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development of Nepal, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance agricultural cooperation, further strengthening the bilateral ties between India and Nepal.

### 9. Mauritius Becomes First African Nation to Sign Partnership Framework with International Solar Alliance (ISA).

In April 2025, Mauritius became the first African country and the fourth globally—after Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Cuba—to sign a Country Partnership Framework (CPF) with the International Solar Alliance (ISA), a treaty-based intergovernmental organization launched by India and France in 2015.

- The CPF was signed during the two-day Global SolarX Accelerator Programme hosted by the ISA in Mauritius. The strategic partnership was formalized in Port Louis by Barakat Ahmed, Regional Programmes Head for Africa at ISA, and Zeenat Guness-Goolbar, Permanent Secretary of Mauritius' Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities.
- The CPF is a renewable three-year strategic framework introduced by ISA to deepen long-term collaboration with its member countries in the field of solar energy and sustainable development.
- Under the recently signed Country Partnership Framework (CPF), a Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) will be formulated to implement solar energy projects specific to Mauritius's requirements. The key focus areas include floating solar, rooftop solar systems, solar-powered water pumps, agrivoltaics, and green hydrogen technologies.

### Key Points:-

- (i) The CPF aims to support Mauritius in its transition to clean energy through a country-specific roadmap aligned with its national development goals. This collaboration will help enhance energy security and sustainability.
- (ii) The CPF also proposes the establishment of a Solar Technology Application Resource Centre (STAR-C) in Mauritius. This centre will serve as a hub for innovation, capacity building, and investment promotion in solar energy technologies.
- (iii) Mauritius has previously partnered with the International Solar Alliance (ISA) under the ISA CARES initiative. A significant outcome of this was the solarisation of Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital in June 2024, improving sustainability in the healthcare sector. The CPF was signed during the Global SolarX Accelerator Programme—an ISA initiative in partnership with Business Mauritius—aimed at accelerating solar startups across Africa and the Asia-Pacific (APAC) regions.

### 10. Bangladesh Signs Artemis Accords with NASA to Promote Peaceful Space Exploration.

In April 2025, Bangladesh became the 54th country to sign the Artemis Accords—non-binding agreements initiated by the Washington, D.C. (USA)-based National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in October 2020. These accords aim to promote peaceful, transparent, and cooperative civil space exploration.

- The agreement was signed by Bangladesh's Defence Secretary Md Ashraf Uddin, in the presence of Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun, Executive Chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), and Tracey Ann Jacobson, Chargé d'Affaires at the USA Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

- The Artemis Accords are based on the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and supported by the Registration Convention and the Rescue and Return Agreement. They provide a framework for ensuring that space activities are safe, sustainable, and aligned with international law.
- NASA collaboration will give Bangladesh access to advanced space technologies, satellite systems, and scientific research tools.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The Dhaka-based Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation (SPARRSO), established in 1980, will benefit from technical aid in developing satellites for disaster management (e.g., cyclones, floods).
- (ii) Students and scientists from Bangladesh will gain global collaboration opportunities and access to NASA training and exchange programs.
- (iii) With this move, Bangladesh joins 53 countries—including the USA, India, Japan, and the UAE—committed to responsible and transparent space exploration.

### 11. Thailand Hosts 6th BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok with Regional Leaders in Focus.

In April 2025, Thailand, the current chair, hosted the 6th Summit of the Heads of State/Government of the member States of BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) in Bangkok under the theme "Prosperous, Resilient, and Open BIMSTEC" (PRO BIMSTEC). The summit was chaired by Thailand Prime Minister (PM) Paetongtarn Shinawatra.

- The summit was attended by the Heads of State/Government of the member States to address their shared security and developmental challenges

through institutional reform, strategic cooperation, and sustainable development.

- Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi represented India at the 6th BIMSTEC Summit.
- The Summit followed the 25th Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) on 2 April 2025 and the 20th Session of the Ministerial Meeting (MM) of BIMSTEC on 3 April 2025 in Bangkok.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) One of the major outcomes of the summit was the launch of the BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030, the first-ever vision document of BIMSTEC, which charts a strategic roadmap to build a "PRO BIMSTEC" (Prosperous, Resilient, and Open BIMSTEC) by 2030.
- (ii) Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed a comprehensive 21-point action plan to boost regional cooperation. Key proposals included a pilot study on Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), linking India's UPI with BIMSTEC payment systems, hosting the BIMSTEC Athletics Meet in 2025, and organizing the first BIMSTEC Games in 2027, coinciding with BIMSTEC's 30th anniversary.
- (iii) Following the Summit, Bangladesh, a founding member of BIMSTEC, took over the Chairmanship of BIMSTEC for a 2-year term, succeeding Thailand.

## BANKING & FINANCE

### 1. SEBI Recently Launches PaRRVA Framework to Curb Misleading Performance Claims in Financial Advertisements.

In April 2025, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, released an operational framework for a performance validation agency named Past

Risk and Return Verification Agency (PaRRVA). The framework is designed to curb misleading claims regarding past financial product performance in advertisements issued by Research Analysts (RAs), Investment Advisors (IAs), and Stock Brokers.

- According to SEBI's circular, a Credit Rating Agency (CRA) can be recognised as a PaRRVA under Regulation 12A of the SEBI (Credit Rating Agencies) Regulations, 1999, read with Regulation 16E of the Intermediaries Regulations.

- Additionally, such CRA, in collaboration with a recognised Stock Exchange (SE), will function as a PaRRVA Data Centre (PDC).

#### Key Points:-

(i) To function as a Past Risk and Return Verification Agency (PaRRVA), a Credit Rating Agency (CRA) must meet specific criteria. These include a minimum of 15 years of operational experience, a net worth of at least ₹100 crore, and a robust investor grievance redressal mechanism with an Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) system. Additionally, the CRA must have provided ratings to at least 250 issuers of debt securities.

(ii) For a recognised Stock Exchange (SE) to serve as a PaRRVA Data Centre (PDC), it must also have a minimum of 15 years of experience, a net worth of ₹200 crore, and a nationwide presence through terminals.

(iii) The SE must further ensure an effective investor grievance redressal system, including an ODR mechanism, to qualify under SEBI's operational framework.

## 2. SBI Report Projects India's Inflation to Remain Below 4% in H1 FY26.

On April 6, 2025, a report released by the State Bank of India (SBI), headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, projected that India's retail inflation may remain between 3.9% and 4.0% during the first half (April to September) of Financial Year 2025-26 (H1 FY26). If realized, this would mark the first time in recent years that inflation remains below 4% for two consecutive quarters.

- Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is expected to fall to 3.8% in Q4 of FY25, with the average inflation for FY25 projected at around 4.6%.

- Core inflation (excluding food and fuel) is forecasted to range between 4.2% and 4.3% in FY26.

- The report also anticipates that India's current account balance could record a surplus in Q4 FY25, driven by rising net service receipts despite a widening merchandise trade deficit.

#### Key Points:-

(i) In Q3 FY25, India's Current Account Deficit (CAD) stood at USD 11.5 billion, or 1.1% of GDP, rising from USD 10.4 billion in Q3 FY24.

(ii) The merchandise trade deficit increased to USD 79.2 billion, up from USD 71.6 billion in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year.

## 3. Bank of Baroda Unveils 'BoB Square Drive Deposit Scheme' Offering 7.15% Interest for 444 Days.

In April 2025, Vadodara (Gujarat)-based Indian Public Sector Bank (PSB), Bank of Baroda (BoB) launched a new Fixed Deposit (FD) scheme titled 'BoB Square Drive Deposit Scheme', a term deposit with a tenor of 444 days.

- As per BoB, the revised FD interest rates, along with the launch of this new scheme, came into effect on April 07, 2025.



- The bank also discontinued its earlier 'BoB Utsav Deposit Scheme', which was introduced in October 2024 and had offered a maximum interest rate of 7.90% for super senior citizens. The revision aims to align BoB's FD offerings with recent market trends.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) The newly launched 'BoB Square Drive Deposit Scheme' is available only under retail term deposit options and applies to deposits below ₹3 crore, offering an interest rate of 7.15% per annum for general citizens.
- (ii) For senior citizens and super senior citizens (aged 80 years and above), the scheme offers interest rates of 7.65% and 7.75% per annum, respectively.
- (iii) These depositors will receive an additional 5 basis points (bps) on non-callable deposits (above ₹1 crore and below ₹3 crore).

**4. Kotak Mahindra Bank Partners with KSUM to Strengthen Kerala's Startup Ecosystem.**

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM)—the nodal agency under the Government of Kerala—to boost and strengthen the startup ecosystem in Kerala.

- This strategic partnership focuses on emerging sectors such as agriculture, medical technology (MedTech), electronics, and space technology, aiming to empower startups through holistic support in innovation and entrepreneurship.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) Under the MoU, KMBL, as a Scheduled Commercial Bank (SCB), will extend tailored banking solutions, including support for export

documentation, fundraising workshops, and masterclasses on financial management for startups.

(ii) The bank will also utilize its international branch network to help Kerala-based startups connect with Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and explore global business opportunities.

(iii) On its part, KSUM will provide a robust framework comprising incubation support, mentorship programs, funding assistance, and access to startup infrastructure. It will further aid startups by facilitating connections with investors, industry experts, and government schemes to accelerate their growth journey.

**5. RBI Grants Certificate of Registration to Piramal Finance to Function as NBFC-ICC.**

In April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) granted a Certificate of Registration (CoR) to Piramal Finance Limited (PFL)—a wholly-owned subsidiary of Piramal Enterprises Limited (PEL) based in Mumbai, Maharashtra—to operate as a Non-Banking Financial Company – Investment and Credit Company (NBFC-ICC) without accepting public deposits.

- The Certificate of Registration (CoR) was issued under Section 45 IA of the RBI Act, 1934.
- With this approval, PFL will transition from its current status as a Housing Finance Company (HFC) and surrender its HFC registration to focus on broader NBFC-ICC operations.
- In March 2025, Piramal Enterprises Limited (PEL) infused ₹600 crore into PFL through a rights issue to support its business operations and corporate expansion.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) PEL has also approved the issuance of secured, rated, listed, redeemable non-convertible debentures (NCDs) on a private placement basis.
- (ii) The issue includes a base size of ₹100 crore, with a green shoe option of ₹200 crore, aggregating to ₹300 crore.
- (iii) These NCDs carry an annual coupon rate of 9.30%, and are redeemable by April 9, 2029. In case of payment defaults, a 1% penalty interest will be applicable. The minimum Net Owned Fund (NOF) required to operate as an NBFC-ICC is ₹5 crore.

## 6. Ministry of Finance Announces Implementation of 'One State, One RRB' Policy from May 1, 2025.

In April 2025, the Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance (MoF), announced the implementation of the 'One State-One Regional Rural Bank (RRB)' policy through an official notification.

- This initiative involves the amalgamation of 26 RRBs across 11 regions (10 States and 1 Union Territory), with effect from May 1, 2025. States affected include Andhra Pradesh (AP) with the highest number of RRBs (4), followed by Uttar Pradesh (UP) and West Bengal (WB) (3 each), and Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan (2 each).
- The merger is executed under Section 23A (1) of the RRB Act, 1976, and marks the 4th round of RRB consolidation, reducing the number of RRBs from 43 to 28 across India.

### Key Points:-

- (i) As per the notification, each newly formed RRB will inherit the properties, powers, rights, obligations, and duties of the previously existing

banks.

- (ii) The goal of this consolidation is to enhance the operational efficiency of RRBs, avoid overlapping functions, and reduce competition among Public Sector Banks (PSBs) that sponsor them.
- (iii) The ongoing consolidation process of RRBs began in 2005, following the recommendations of the Dr. Vyas Committee.

## 7. Resilient Payments, a BharatPe Company Receives RBI Approval to Operate as Online Payment Aggregator.

In April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) granted final authorization to Resilient Payments Private Limited, a New Delhi (Delhi)-based subsidiary of the BharatPe Group, to operate as an Online Payment Aggregator (PA). This follows the in-principle approval given in January 2023.

- With this authorization, Resilient Payments will soon launch its online PA platform under the brand name 'BharatPe X', aiming to expand BharatPe's digital payment services, especially across Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities in India.

### Key Points:-

- (i) The PA license allows companies to facilitate online transactions for e-commerce, bringing them under RBI's regulatory framework. It also enables them to offer early settlements, a form of short-term credit, and partner with NBFCs and banks to provide term loans.
- (ii) BharatPe has become the only fintech company in India to possess a unique combination of financial authorizations—holding an NBFC license through Trillion Loans, a stake in Unity Small Finance Bank (SFB), and now, the Payment Aggregator (PA) authorization from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

(iii) As of April 2025, the RBI has granted PA authorization to 41 companies, while over 28 firms have received in-principle approval to operate as payment aggregators in India.

### 8. Bandhan Bank Introduces 'Elite Plus' Savings Account for High Net-worth Individuals (HNIs).

In April 2025, Bandhan Bank Limited, based in Kolkata (West Bengal), launched the 'Elite Plus' Savings Account, specifically designed for High Net-worth Individuals (HNIs). This premium account offers a range of exclusive benefits such as unlimited monthly cash deposits, complimentary digital transactions, and luxurious lifestyle perks.

- The product was unveiled by Partha Pratim Sengupta, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of Bandhan Bank, alongside former Indian cricket captain Sourav Ganguly.
- The 'Elite Plus' Savings Account provides an enhanced banking experience with unlimited free cash deposits each month, along with complimentary RTGS (Real Time Gross Settlement), NEFT (National Electronic Funds Transfer), and IMPS (Immediate Payment Service) transactions.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The account also offers enhanced debit card insurance coverage, including up to Rs 15 lakh for personal accident cover and Rs 3 lakh for purchase protection.
- (ii) Customers enjoy domestic lounge access, with 2 visits per quarter for the cardholder and 1 for a companion.
- (iii) To qualify for the 'Elite Plus' Savings Account, customers must be Indian residents and meet any of the following balance criteria: a monthly average savings account balance of Rs 15,00,000, a term deposit relationship of Rs

75,00,000, or a Total Relationship Value (TRV) of Rs 15,00,000 or above.

### 9. RBI Announces Highlights of First Bi-monthly Monetary Policy for FY 2025-26.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) conducted its 54th meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) from April 7 to 9, 2025, under the chairmanship of Shri Sanjay Malhotra, Governor of RBI.

- The meeting was attended by MPC members including Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Shri Saugata Bhattacharya, Prof. Ram Singh, Dr. Rajiv Ranjan, and Shri M. Rajeshwar Rao.
- The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth projection for FY 2025-26 (FY26) was retained at 6.5%, matching the estimate for FY 2024-25.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The MPC unanimously decided to reduce the policy repo rate by 25 basis points (bps) to 6.00%, effective immediately.
- (ii) The Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate under the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) was revised to 5.75%.
- (iii) The Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate were both set at 6.25%.

### 10. SEBI Clarifies ₹10 Lakh Minimum Investment Requirement for SIFs Applicable at PAN Level.

In April 2025, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), headquartered in Mumbai (Maharashtra), introduced a regulatory framework for Specialized Investment Funds (SIFs), which came into effect on April 1, 2025.

- Investors are now required to maintain a minimum aggregate investment of ₹10 lakh across all SIF strategies offered by a single Asset Management Company (AMC). This threshold is calculated at the Permanent Account Number (PAN) level and not per scheme.

- Accredited investors and investments made mandatorily by AMC employees are exempted from the ₹10 lakh minimum investment requirement.

- SEBI's revised framework allows investors to opt for Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs), Systematic Withdrawal Plans (SWPs), and Systematic Transfer Plans (STPs) under SIFs. However, if market fluctuations reduce investment value below ₹10 lakh, immediate redemption is required.

#### Key Points:-

(i) SIFs are structured to bridge the investment gap between Mutual Funds (MFs) and Portfolio Management Services (PMS). They are designed for High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNIs), offering tailored strategies such as long-short equity, sectoral rotation, and multi-asset diversification.

(ii) To launch SIFs, AMCs must have at least 3 years of operational history and should maintain an average Assets Under Management (AUM) of ₹10,000 crore or more over the last three years.

(iii) In a related development from March 2025, SEBI revised the minimum investment requirement for Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) instruments listed on the Social Stock Exchange (SSE), lowering it from ₹10,000 to ₹1,000.

#### 11. NaBFID and NDB Sign MoU to Boost Infrastructure Financing in India.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and

Development (NaBFID), India's leading Development Financial Institution (DFI), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Shanghai (China)-based New Development Bank (NDB) to foster a strategic partnership for infrastructure financing and development in India.

- The collaboration aims to establish a robust and sustainable infrastructure financing market in India and develop a supportive ecosystem to enhance its growth.

- The MoU focuses on Clean Energy, with joint efforts in renewable energy projects, sustainable water management, and sewage management initiatives, alongside Transportation, which aims at developing eco-friendly urban mobility solutions.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The MoU outlines initiatives for joint seminars, workshops, and research to build institutional capabilities.

(ii) NaBFID and NDB will work together on research and capacity-building initiatives to promote knowledge sharing and strengthen institutional capabilities in infrastructure financing.

(iii) The New Development Bank (NDB), established in 2015 by the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), supports infrastructure and sustainable development projects in emerging markets and developing countries (EMDCs).

#### 12. Razorpay Collaborates with NBSL & Axis Bank to Launch 'Turbo UPI Plugin' on BHIM Vega Platform.

In April 2025, Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based fintech company Razorpay Software Private Limited collaborated with NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL)—a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)—and Axis



Bank Limited, headquartered in Mumbai (Maharashtra), to launch the 'Razorpay Turbo Unified Payments Interface (UPI) Plugin' on the Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) Vega platform.

- With this launch, Razorpay became the first payment gateway to integrate the new in-app UPI solution, marking a significant milestone in enhancing digital payment experiences.
- The partnership is aimed at reducing friction in online transactions by minimizing payment drop-offs and improving transaction success rates. It streamlines the user experience and onboarding for businesses, offering a faster, seamless payment process.
- BHIM Vega is a next-generation UPI plugin developed by NBSL, built upon the existing BHIM infrastructure to enable smoother in-app payment experiences.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The Razorpay Turbo UPI Plugin offers seamless in-app transactions by allowing users to complete payments without switching to third-party UPI applications. This feature reduces payment drop-offs and provides a smoother, more convenient user experience for customers making online transactions.
- (ii) The plugin is designed with enhanced reliability by using smart routing through multiple banking partners. This ensures higher success rates for transactions, even during downtimes or technical issues with one of the banks, making the payment process more stable and dependable.
- (iii) For businesses, the plugin simplifies onboarding and integration. It enables companies to adopt the solution quickly and go live faster, helping them streamline operations and deliver a better payment experience to their customers.

### 13. Piramal Finance Joins Hands with ICICI Bank to Expand Access to Credit Solutions.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Piramal Finance Limited (formerly known as Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltd.), a leading Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), entered into a co-lending partnership with ICICI Bank Limited, a prominent private sector bank also headquartered in Mumbai (Maharashtra).

- This strategic alliance aims to improve credit accessibility for middle and low-income borrowers, especially across rural and semi-urban regions, with a focus on Home Loans and Loan Against Property.
- The partnership aligns with Piramal Finance's broader strategy to strengthen its footprint in India's semi-urban markets, reaffirming its commitment to offering simple, accessible, and affordable credit solutions to underserved communities.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The collaboration aims to deliver affordable credit solutions to borrowers residing in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, thereby supporting financial inclusion and contributing to economic growth across underserved regions.
- (ii) Piramal Finance brings its innovative 'High Tech + High Touch' model, blending advanced technology with personalized customer service, while ICICI Bank offers its deep financial and banking expertise, enhancing the partnership's overall effectiveness.
- (iii) With a network of over 510 branches covering 13,000+ pin codes and catering to nearly 4.5 million customers across 26 states, Piramal Finance's wide presence will significantly strengthen credit delivery and outreach under this alliance.

#### 14. Axis Bank Rolls Out 'In-App Mobile OTP' Feature to Strengthen Cybersecurity Measures.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Axis Bank Limited launched a new security feature called 'In-App Mobile OTP' on its Open mobile banking platform, aimed at addressing OTP-related frauds such as Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) swap and phishing attacks.

- This feature replaces traditional SMS-based One-Time Passwords (OTPs) with more secure Time-based One-Time Passwords (TOTP) that are generated directly within the mobile banking app.

##### Key Points:-

- (i) The primary objective of this innovation is to combat growing cyber threats related to SMS-based OTPs. By generating OTPs on the user's device, Axis Bank offers a device-bound, time-sensitive solution that enhances protection against cyber fraud.
- (ii) The Mobile OTP feature allows users to log in to internet banking and authenticate transactions securely. It is accessible globally via internet, making it especially useful for seafarers, international travelers, and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) who face OTP delivery issues while abroad.
- (iii) The bank has also introduced instant alerts for login and transaction attempts, giving customers real-time visibility and greater control over their account activities.

#### 15. SEBI Forms High-Level Committee to Review Conflict of Interest Rules for Officials and Members.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based market regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) announced the formation of a 6-member High-Level Committee (HLC) chaired by Pratyush

Sinha, former Chief Vigilance Commissioner (CVC), to review conflict of interest disclosure provisions for SEBI officials.

- The committee will examine current norms and suggest improvements related to the disclosure of personal property, investments, and liabilities by SEBI board members.
- The HLC is expected to submit its report within three months, after which SEBI's board will review and act upon the recommendations.

##### Key Points:-

- (i) SEBI recently relaxed disclosure norms for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) by increasing the asset threshold for granular Beneficial Ownership (BO) disclosures from Rs 25,000 crore to Rs 50,000 crore.
- (ii) Mumbai-based hBits Investment Management Private Limited, a fractional investment platform in commercial real estate, received SEBI's approval to launch a Small & Medium Real Estate Investment Trust (SM-REIT) public issue.
- (iii) hBits plans to raise up to Rs 500 crore through its Initial Public Offering (IPO) by June 2025.

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

#### 1. ADB Lowers India's FY26 GDP Growth Forecast to 6.7% Amid Rising US Tariff Concerns.

In April 2025, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), headquartered in Manila, the Philippines, released its latest report titled Asian Development Outlook (ADO) April 2025: Trade Uncertainty Challenges Resilience in Asia and the Pacific.

- The report revised India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast for Financial Year 2025-26 (FY26) to 6.7%, down from its earlier estimate of 7%.

- This downward revision is attributed to external risks like potential US tariffs, though higher domestic demand, increasing rural incomes, and moderating inflation remain growth drivers.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) The report projects India's GDP growth to rise marginally by 10 basis points (bps) to 6.8% in FY27, backed by supportive fiscal and monetary policies.
- (ii) India's inflation rate is forecasted to ease further, reaching 4.3% in FY26 and 4.0% in FY27, aligning with the RBI's target range.
- (iii) The Developing Asia region's economies are expected to grow at 4.9% in 2025, slightly below the previous year's 5.0%, and are projected to slow down further to 4.7% in 2026.

## 2. Poonawalla Fincorp Unveils Shopkeeper Loan Scheme to Empower Small Retailers.

In April 2025, Pune (Maharashtra)-based Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), Poonawalla Fincorp Limited (PFL) (formerly known as Magma Fincorp), promoted by the Cyrus Poonawalla Group, announced the launch of its Shopkeeper Loan Business.

- The newly launched product is designed to offer tailored financial solutions to small retailers and kirana store owners across India, aiming to enhance their competitiveness and sustainability in the retail sector.
- The product is built on a risk-first and customer-first approach, aimed at empowering small businesses—especially kirana stores—to thrive in a fast-changing retail environment. In its initial rollout, PFL has activated 44 locations, with a strong focus on semi-urban and rural areas, where small retailers form a significant part of the market.

- This initiative aligns with PFL's long-term vision of becoming the preferred financier for the self-employed segment. It also supports the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission by helping small retailers gain access to the formal credit ecosystem, promoting financial inclusion and business growth across underserved regions.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) PFL is registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as a 'non-deposit taking NBFC' and currently operates across 18 states and 2 Union Territories (UTs).
- (ii) Earlier, in March 2025, PFL launched a new Commercial Vehicle (CV) Secured Loan Business to support India's logistics and supply chain sectors.
- (iii) As of March 31, 2025, PFL reported an Asset Under Management (AUM) of nearly Rs 35,550 crore.

## 3. GSL and IIT Hyderabad Join Forces to Revolutionize Shipbuilding Using AI and Digital Twin Tech.

In April 2025, Goa-based Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) and Hyderabad (Telangana)-based Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IIT-H) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Twin technologies into India's maritime sector.

- The collaboration also includes Hyderabad-based Neer Interactive Solutions Pvt. Ltd. and Andhra Mahila Sabha (AMS) Arts and Science College, with the objective of enhancing efficiency, security, and sustainability in shipbuilding processes.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) The MoU leverages Geospatial AI, Object Detection AI, Generative AI, and Digital Twin

solutions to optimize vessel design, enhance shipyard security, and enable 360-degree surveillance systems. It aligns with Industry 4.0 and Quality 4.0 (QA 4.0) principles to modernize shipbuilding, reduce operational costs, and set new global benchmarks.

(ii) The Center for Geospatial AI and Digital Twins (CGDT) at IIT-H, led by Director Prof. B.S. Murty, will be responsible for developing advanced Geospatial Digital Twin models to build virtual replicas of shipbuilding environments for testing and innovation.

(iii) This collaboration marks the launch of Asia's first AI-driven maritime security project and positions India as a global frontrunner in AI-powered maritime technology, significantly boosting indigenous technological expertise and innovation in the shipbuilding sector.

set up an LNG import terminal at Gopalpur port, Odisha.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Additionally, Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISRPL), a Noida (Uttar Pradesh)-based special purpose vehicle (SPV), plans to invest ₹8,743 crore to construct a 4-million-tonne underground oil storage facility at Chandikhol, Odisha.

(ii) These strategic investments are geared toward enhancing India's domestic production capabilities, minimizing dependency on imports, and significantly boosting Odisha's industrial ecosystem.

(iii) India's petrochemical demand is projected to rise sharply from the current 30–35 million tonnes (Mt) to nearly 80 Mt by 2040, underscoring the importance of such infrastructure initiatives.

#### 4. IOC Announces ₹61,077 Crore Investment for Petrochemical Complex in Odisha.

In April 2025, New Delhi (Delhi)-based Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Odisha government to establish a world-class petrochemical complex at Paradip, Odisha, with an investment of ₹61,077 crore.

- The MoU was formalized during the Odisha Investors' Meet in New Delhi, making it IOC's largest-ever single-location investment.
- The proposed petrochemical facility will feature a dual-feed cracker unit along with downstream plants to manufacture key chemicals such as Phenol, Polypropylene (PP), and Isopropyl Alcohol (IPA)—all crucial for India's industrial and manufacturing sectors.
- i. Petronet LNG Limited (PLL), headquartered in New Delhi and recognized as India's largest importer of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), will invest ₹6,500 crore to

#### 5. "Juspay Emerges as India's First Unicorn of 2025".

In April 2025, Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based payments infrastructure company, Juspay became India's 1st Unicorn of 2025 and successfully raised USD 60 million in a Series D funding round through a combination of primary and secondary investments.

- This round was led by Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Kedaara Capital, with participation from existing investors such as: Tokyo (Japan)-based SoftBank Group Corporation and Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN)-based Accel Limited.
- Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Avendus Capital Private Limited acted as the exclusive financial advisor to Juspay for the transaction. Unicorn refers to startups whose valuation exceeds USD 1 billion.
- Juspay, a Bengaluru-based fintech firm, will use its recent funding to enhance Artificial Intelligence (AI)



capabilities, aiming to develop future-ready innovations that boost workforce productivity and improve merchant experiences. It also plans to expand its open-source payment orchestration platform to meet growing market demands efficiently and effectively.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The company has successfully expanded its global footprint, establishing a presence across Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Europe, the United Kingdom (UK), and North America. Notably, in January 2025, Juspay had already begun exploring a USD 150 million Series D funding round, led by Kedaara Capital, with potential support from West Bridge and SoftBank.

(ii) According to market intelligence platform Tracxn, Juspay had previously secured USD 60 million in Series C (2021) and USD 21.6 million in Series B (2020). These consistent funding rounds reflect strong investor confidence in the company's long-term vision and operational resilience.

(iii) In a significant regulatory milestone, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) granted Payment Aggregator (PA) authorisation to Juspay in February 2024. Financially, the company demonstrated robust growth in FY 2023-24 (FV24), with revenue increasing by 49.6%, from Rs 213.39 crore in FV23 to Rs 319.32 crore in FV24.

Financial Services Centre (IFSC) located in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), Gujarat.

- This strategic initiative is aimed at diversifying GAIL's business portfolio beyond its core natural gas and energy infrastructure segments.

- The newly formed entity will operate as a finance company under the regulatory framework of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The key details include the incorporation date as 7 April 2025, with an authorised share capital of ₹17 crore and an initial paid-up capital of ₹8.5 crore. GAIL (India) Limited holds 100% ownership, with shares issued at a face value of ₹10 each.

(ii) The necessary regulatory approvals were received in March 2025 from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) and the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) under the Ministry of Finance (MoF).

(iii) The strategic intent behind setting up GAIL Global IFSC Limited is to undertake global and regional corporate treasury functions, including ship leasing activities. This initiative is aimed at enhancing GAIL's global presence and strengthening its capital management capabilities through structured financial operations within India's premier financial hub at GIFT City.

### 6. GAIL Launches 'GAIL Global IFSC Ltd' to Strengthen International Business Operations.

In April 2025, New Delhi (Delhi)-based GAIL (India) Limited, a Maharatna Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, established a wholly owned subsidiary named GAIL Global IFSC Limited at the International

### 7. GRSE and SDHI Ink MoU to Strengthen Indigenous Commercial Shipbuilding Efforts.

In April 2025, Kolkata (West Bengal)-based Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE) entered into a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Gujarat-based Swan Defence and Heavy Industries Limited (SDHI) to

boost collaboration in commercial shipbuilding and offshore infrastructure, thereby advancing India's maritime self-reliance under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

- The MoU is designed to develop a robust and scalable commercial shipbuilding model by harnessing the core competencies of GRSE and SDHI in design, infrastructure, and project execution to serve both domestic and international markets for ships and offshore assets.
- The partnership enables both entities to share infrastructure and jointly develop standardised vessel platforms, aimed at improving project timelines and ensuring cost-effectiveness.
- The agreement encompasses collaboration in vessel trials, commissioning processes, and comprehensive ship repair services.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) GRSE and SDHI will adopt integrated project management approaches and co-create solutions to minimise operational hurdles.
- (ii) A strong emphasis will be placed on establishing a mutually advantageous vendor and supply chain framework, with joint procurement and sourcing strategies.
- (iii) The agreement includes training initiatives to cultivate skilled manpower, supporting long-term growth of the shipbuilding sector.

## MOUs and Agreement

### 1. MSDE and WEF Partner to Launch 'India Skills Accelerator' Aimed at Bridging Workforce Skill Gaps.

In April 2025, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), in collaboration with the Switzerland-based World Economic Forum (WEF), co-hosted a high-level roundtable at Kaushal

Bhawan, New Delhi. The event marked the official launch of the "India Skills Accelerator", a public-private collaborative platform designed to address India's pressing skilling challenges.

- The initiative aims to tackle workforce skill gaps—identified by 65% of Indian organizations as a critical barrier—through strategic cross-sector partnerships and comprehensive systemic reforms.
- The India Skills Accelerator initiative aims to unite various sectors to develop innovative and sustainable solutions for India's evolving skill development needs. It emphasizes fostering awareness and driving a mindset shift by highlighting the future demand for skills in high-growth sectors such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, energy, cybersecurity, and cloud computing.
- The platform also focuses on strengthening collaborations between the government and industry to promote upskilling, reskilling, and lifelong learning. Additionally, it calls for modernizing institutional frameworks and policies to build a dynamic and adaptive skilling ecosystem across the country.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The India Skills Accelerator initiative will be co-led by key government stakeholders including Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Jayant Chaudhary from the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), and Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, Union MoS for both the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry for Development of North Eastern Region (MDONER).
- (ii) In addition to the government leadership, the initiative will have two private sector co-chairs: Shobana Kamineni, Executive Chairperson of Apollo HealthCo Limited (Hyderabad, Telangana), and Sanjiv Bajaj, Chairman and Managing Director of Bajaj Finserv Limited (Pune,

Maharashtra), ensuring strong public-private collaboration.

## 2. Supreme Courts of India and Nepal Sign MoU to Strengthen Judicial Cooperation.

In April 2025, the Supreme Court (SC) of India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Supreme Court of Nepal to enhance judicial cooperation between the two countries. The agreement was formalized in New Delhi, India.

- The MoU is aimed at fostering structured interactions, exchange visits, training programs, and academic collaborations between judges and judicial officers of both nations, paving the way for stronger legal ties and improved judicial capabilities.

- The event was attended by CJI Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Nepal's CJI Justice Prakash Man Singh Raut, MoS Arjun Ram Meghwal, Attorney General R. Venkataramani, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, and other senior legal officials.

### Key Points:-

(i) A dedicated group will be formed with officials from both the Indian and Nepali judiciaries. This group will be responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing collaborative activities to strengthen judicial cooperation between the two nations. The focus will be on creating structured and goal-oriented partnerships.

(ii) Both countries will adopt digital innovations to streamline judicial processes and improve services. Capacity building will include training, seminars, research, and cross-border visits to enhance judicial knowledge and efficiency.

(iii) The agreement encourages the mutual sharing of information on recent legal trends, judicial reforms, and procedural updates. This

exchange of knowledge is intended to promote continuous learning, modernization of judicial practices, and a deeper understanding of each country's legal frameworks.

## 3. India and Australia Signed MoU to Enhance Bilateral Cotton Trade.

In April 2025, the Cotton Association of India (CAI), headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, and the Australian Cotton Shippers Association (ACSA), based in Queensland, Australia, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in areas including cotton production, trade trends, pricing, and market insights. The MoU was signed at the Cricket Club of India Limited (CCI) in Mumbai.

- This agreement aims to boost bilateral cotton trade and improve market access under the Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (AI-ECTA), which has been operational since 29 December 2022. The MoU was signed by Atul S. Ganatra, President of CAI, and Cliff White, Chair of ACSA, during the visit of an Australian trade delegation to India led by Jules Willis, CEO of ACSA.

### Key Points:-

(i) AI-ECTA enables duty-free access for 51,000 tonnes of Australian cotton annually to India, comprising 50,000 tonnes under an allocated quota and 1,000 tonnes under a first-come, first-served basis.

(ii) According to data from Australia's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), Australia exported 50,719 tonnes of cotton to India in 2024, compared to 50,690 tonnes in 2023.

(iii) As per the latest ACSA Market Report, India was Australia's 3rd largest cotton export market, accounting for 12% of exports, following China

(28%) and Vietnam (26%).

## SPORTS

### 1. USA and UK Selected as Hosts for FIFA Women's World Cup 2031 and 2035 Editions.

In April 2025, Zurich (Switzerland)-based Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) President Gianni Infantino announced that the United States of America (USA) will be the sole bidder to host the 2031 FIFA Women's World Cup, while the United Kingdom (UK) is set to host the 2035 edition.

- The announcement was made during the 49th Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Congress held in Belgrade, Serbia.
- FIFA has also proposed expanding the 2031 Women's World Cup from 32 to 48 teams, aligning it with the current men's tournament format.
- This marks a historic first for the tournament being held in the UK and the third time for the USA, showcasing a major global commitment to the growth of women's football.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The United States of America (USA) is set to host the 11th edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2031, potentially in collaboration with other CONCACAF member nations. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom's (UK) bid, involving England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, remains the only valid submission to host the 2035 edition.
- (ii) The 10th edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup, scheduled to be held in 2027, will be hosted by Brazil, making it the first time the women's tournament will be conducted in South America. This reinforces FIFA's aim to diversify global hosting of major football tournaments.

- (iii) In addition to this, the USA, along with Canada and Mexico, is already confirmed as the co-host for the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup (23rd edition). Furthermore, the UEFA Euro 2028 (18th edition) will be co-hosted by England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, further strengthening collaborative hosting efforts in global football.

## AWARDS

### 1. Padma Shri Awardee Sudarsan Pattnaik Becomes First Indian to Win Fred Darrington Sand Art Award.

In April 2025, renowned Indian sand artist and Padma Shri awardee, Sudarsan Pattnaik became the first Indian to recently receive the Fred Darrington Sand Master Award for Excellence in Art and Culture, recognizing his outstanding contributions to the art of sand sculpting.

- The award and medal were presented to him by Cllr Jon Orrell, Mayor of Weymouth, during the Sandworld 2025 International Sand Art Festival, held in Weymouth, United Kingdom (UK).
- He received the award in the presence of eminent dignitaries, including Mark Andersen, Director of Sandworld; David Hicks, Co-founder of the Sandworld Festival; and Naorem J. Singh, Minister for Culture at the High Commission of India in London, United Kingdom (UK).
- At the Sandworld 2025 International Sand Art Festival, Sudarsan Pattnaik sculpted a stunning 10-foot-high statue of Lord Ganesha, conveying the powerful message of 'World Peace.' This artwork drew immense appreciation from global visitors and contributed significantly to the cultural and spiritual ambiance of the event.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The prestigious Fred Darrington Sand Master Award coincided this year with the 100th birth



anniversary of the legendary British sculptor Fred Darrington. The festival, held at Lodmoor Park, has long been a hub for international sand art, renowned for showcasing massive and intricate sculptures made purely from sand and water.

(ii) The Sandworld exhibition, open till November 2025, features remarkable works from renowned artists across the globe. It has earned global recognition for its artistic excellence, attracting tourists, professionals, and art lovers from various countries, making it a unique platform for creative expression in sand sculpting.

(iii) Hailing from Odisha, Sudarsan Pattnaik has represented India in over 65 international sand sculpture championships. He was conferred the Padma Shri in 2014 for his outstanding contribution to arts. Recently in 2024, he also won the Golden Sand Master Award and a gold medal at the championship in St. Petersburg, Russia.

● ULI, launched as a pilot in August 2023, aims to enable frictionless credit delivery by providing lenders with seamless access to authenticated financial and non-financial data through standardised Application Programming Interfaces (APIs).

#### Key Points:-

(i) In its 12th Annual Innovators Awards 2025, Global Finance honoured the Most Innovative Banks and Fintech Companies globally and regionally.

(ii) The 2025 awards also recognised Nubank (São Paulo, Brazil), REGnosys (London), and Auquan (London) as among the most innovative financial technology companies globally.

(iii) In the regional categories, Taipei Fubon Bank (Asia-Pacific), Bank of America (North America), and Société Générale (Western Europe) were named innovation leaders in their respective geographies.

## 2. RBI Named World's Most Innovative Financial Institution by Global Finance Magazine.

In April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was honoured as the Most Innovative Financial Institution globally in the 2025 Innovators list by Global Finance magazine (United States of America, USA), marking the first time a central bank has received this prestigious accolade.

● In the 2025 Innovators list, Global Finance magazine also recognised HSBC Holdings plc and Standard Chartered plc, both headquartered in London, United Kingdom (UK), for their innovation in the financial sector.

● The award acknowledges the Unified Lending Interface (ULI), a platform developed by the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH), a wholly-owned subsidiary of RBI, headquartered in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

## 3. India Clinches 6 Medals at World Boxing Cup 2025 in Brazil and Hitesh Gulia Secures Gold.

The World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025, the first leg of the World Boxing Cup 2025, was held from 31st March to 5th April 2025 at Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, where India secured 6 medals and finished 2nd in the overall men's medal tally.

● Uzbekistan topped the overall men's medal tally with a total of 7 medals (5 Gold, 1 Silver, and 1 Bronze), followed by India in second place with 6 medals (1 Gold, 1 Silver, and 4 Bronze), while Brazil stood third with 5 medals (2 Gold, 2 Silver, and 1 Bronze).

● The World Boxing Cup 2025 is organised by World Boxing (WB), a Switzerland-based global governing body for Olympic-style boxing. The tournament

witnessed the participation of 130 male and female boxers from 19 countries.

- India was represented by a 10-member men's team, while the women's team did not participate due to the ongoing 8th Elite Women National Boxing Championship in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP).

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The tournament is being held in three legs across different countries — Brazil, Kazakhstan, and India.
- (ii) Boxers will earn ranking points at each leg, which will determine qualification for the season-ending World Boxing Cup Finals.
- (iii) The second leg will be hosted in Astana, Kazakhstan, from 30th June to 7th July 2025, while the finals will be held in New Delhi, India, from 15th to 22nd November 2025.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The National Maritime Varuna Award is presented annually during India's National Maritime Day celebrations to recognise individuals for their sustained and extraordinary contributions to the country's maritime sector. The award commemorates India's rich maritime heritage and the historic 1919 voyage of S.S. Loyalty, the first Indian-owned ship to sail internationally under the Indian flag.
- (ii) The award includes a statue of Lord Varuna and a scroll acknowledging the recipient's significant contributions to the maritime industry.
- (iii) India's first coastal green shipping corridor will be developed between Kandla (Gujarat) and Tuticorin (Tamil Nadu, TN) in collaboration with the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI), Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) in Gujarat, and V. O. Chidambaranar Port Authority (VoCPA) in TN.

#### 4. Rajesh Unni Receives National Maritime Varuna Award 2025 for Outstanding Contribution.

In April 2025, Captain Rajesh Unni, Founder of Singapore-based Synergy Marine Group, was conferred the National Maritime Varuna Award, the highest individual honour in India's maritime sector, by the Government of India (GoI) during the 62nd National Maritime Day (April 5) celebrations held in Mumbai (Maharashtra).

- Rajesh Unni was recognised for his over two decades of transformative contributions in reshaping global ship management and enhancing India's presence in the global maritime sector.
- The award was presented by Shyam Jagannathan, Director General of Shipping (DGS) and Chairman of the National Maritime Day Celebration (Central) Committee (NMDCC) under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW).

#### SUMMITS & CONFERENCE / COMMITTEES & MEETINGS

##### 1. India Global Forum Hosts NXT25 Summit 2025 in Maharashtra.

In April 2025, the India Global Forum (IGF) hosted its flagship event, 'NXT25 Summit 2025 – Leading the Leap', from April 7 to 8 at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

- The summit was supported by the United Kingdom (UK) Government, the Government of Maharashtra, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I), Government of India (GoI).
- During the IGF NXT25 Summit 2025, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) signed five MoUs worth USD 49.02 billion to accelerate infrastructure growth in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). Key agreements include

USD 18.09 billion with HUDCO for housing, transport, and urban development, USD 12.06 billion each with REC Limited and PFC for urban mobility and energy-efficient infrastructure, respectively.

- Additionally, USD 6.03 billion was signed with IRFC to boost transport infrastructure such as metro and suburban rail projects, and USD 843 million with NaBFID for smart infrastructure and urban development initiatives. These investments aim to support long-term, sustainable urban transformation across the region.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The event witnessed participation from key dignitaries including Union Minister Piyush Goyal (MoC&I) and Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, alongside other prominent industry leaders and policymakers.

(ii) During the IGF NXT25 Summit, the Government of Maharashtra signed 5 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) valued at approximately USD 50 billion with leading domestic and international investors to enhance infrastructure, boost economic growth, and promote innovation across the state.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### 1. International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda Observed on 7 April 2025.

The International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda is observed globally on April 7 each year to honor the memory of over 1 million victims who lost their lives during the 100-day mass killings in Rwanda.

- The day also acknowledges the suffering of moderate Hutus and others who stood against the genocide.

- April 7, 2025, marked the 31st anniversary of this tragic event, focusing on remembrance, education, and global efforts to prevent future atrocities and promote unity, tolerance, and peace.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution A/RES/58/234 on 23rd December 2003, officially designating April 7 as the International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda.

(ii) The first observance took place on April 7, 2004, commemorating the 10th anniversary of the genocide.

### 2. World Health Day Observed Globally on 7 April 2025.

The United Nations (UN's) World Health Day is observed annually on April 7 to raise awareness about a global health issue of critical importance. April 7, 2025, marks the 77th anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948.

- The theme for World Health Day 2025 is: "Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures."

- World Health Day has been observed every year on April 7 since 1950, following a proposal by WHO during the First World Health Assembly (WHA) held in 1948.

- The date commemorates the establishment of WHO and serves as a platform to highlight urgent health challenges and promote awareness globally.

#### Key Points:-

(i) On 7 April 2025, the WHO hosted a hybrid global event titled "Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures: Global Action for Women and Newborns"

to mark the observance.

(ii) As part of the celebrations in India, the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY) under the Ministry of AYUSH organized Yoga Mahotsav 2025 at Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, aligning with the theme of holistic health.

### 3. India Observes Prevention of Blindness Week 2025 from April 1 to 7 to Promote Eye Health Awareness.

The Government of India (GoI) annually observes Prevention of Blindness Week from 1st to 7th April (the first week of April) to raise awareness about eye health, encourage regular eye check-ups, and promote preventive measures to reduce blindness in the population.

- In 2025, the week was observed from April 1 to April 7 across India.

- The observance is led by the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness (NSPB) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India (GoI).

#### Key Points:-

(i) Globally, around 2.2 billion people are affected by near or distance vision impairment, highlighting the widespread nature of vision-related issues. Of these, a significant portion can be prevented or treated with timely intervention and access to proper eye care.

(ii) An estimated 1.1 billion people currently live with vision loss, with 90% of these cases considered preventable or treatable. This underscores the urgent need for enhanced awareness, affordable treatment options, and improved healthcare access worldwide.

(iii) There are about 43 million blind individuals across the globe, and approximately 77% of blindness cases are due to conditions that can be

managed or prevented. If global efforts are not strengthened, this number could surge to 60 million by 2050, making it a growing public health concern.

### 4. International Romani Day 2025 Observed on April 8 to Celebrate Romani Culture and Raise Awareness Against Discrimination.

The International Romani Day is observed annually across the globe on April 8 to celebrate Romani culture and raise awareness about the social, political, and economic challenges faced by the Roma community, which is considered Europe's largest ethnic minority.

- International Romani Day commemorates the 1st World Romani Congress held on April 8, 1971, in Orpington, Kent, London, United Kingdom (UK).

#### Key Points:-

(i) It was organized by the UK-based Gypsy Council and the Rome (Italy)-based Comité International Rom (CIR), marking the first global attempt at Romani cooperation.

(ii) The official recognition of International Romani Day occurred on April 8 during the 4th World Romani Congress held in Serock, Poland.

### 5. World Homeopathy Day 2025 Observed on April 10 to Promote Alternative Medicine.

World Homeopathy Day (WHD) is observed annually on April 10 to promote awareness of homeopathy, its guiding principles, and its contribution to global healthcare.

- The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy. In 2025, we mark his 270th birth anniversary.



- Homeopathy, derived from the Greek terms "homeo" (similar) and "pathos" (suffering), is based on the principle that substances causing symptoms in healthy individuals can, when highly diluted, treat similar symptoms in sick individuals.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Since 2016, the Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH) under the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy) has been organizing various events to commemorate WHD, emphasizing the role of research in advancing the global acceptance of homeopathy.

(ii) To celebrate World Homeopathy Day 2025, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Prataprao Jadhav, Ministry of AYUSH, inaugurated a two-day convention from April 10–11, 2025, at the Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

#### 6. National Safe Motherhood Day 2025 Observed on April 11.

National Safe Motherhood Day (NSMD) is observed annually in India on 11 April to highlight the importance of maternal healthcare, encourage safe delivery practices, and work towards reducing maternal mortality rates.

- The observance also marks the birth anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi (born 11 April 1869), the wife of Mahatma Gandhi, symbolizing the nation's commitment to protecting maternal health.
- In 2025, the focus of NSMD was on accelerating efforts to achieve equitable access to quality maternal care.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The day was initiated by White Ribbon Alliance

India (WRA India), a New Delhi-based grassroots organization advocating for women's health rights.

(ii) The Government of India (GOI) officially declared 11 April as National Safe Motherhood Day in 2003, with the first observance taking place that year.

(iii) India is the only country in the world to have a nation-specific day dedicated to motherhood, underlining its unique and focused approach to maternal welfare.

#### 7. World Parkinson's Day Observed on 11 April 2025.

World Parkinson's Day (WPD) is observed globally every year on 11 April to raise awareness about Parkinson's disease (PD) — a chronic, progressive neurological disorder affecting both motor and non-motor functions. The date commemorates the birth anniversary of Dr. James Parkinson, the English surgeon who first described PD as "paralysis agitans" in his 1817 work *An Essay on the Shaking Palsy*.

- The inaugural World Parkinson's Day was held in April 1997, co-founded by the European Parkinson's Disease Association (EPDA), now known as Parkinson's Europe, and co-sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- The 1997 event also marked the launch of the Parkinson's Europe Charter, which aimed to unite patients, families, and healthcare professionals in raising the global profile of Parkinson's disease (PD).
- In December 2003, the WHO established a Working Group on Parkinson's Disease, which led to the development of the Global Declaration on Parkinson's Disease. This declaration was officially launched in Mumbai, Maharashtra, and aimed to transform societal attitudes toward Parkinson's disease.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The red tulip with a white fringe was adopted as the official symbol of Parkinson's Disease (PD) during the 9th World Parkinson's Day Conference held in Luxembourg in 2005. In 2022, global PD organizations launched 'The Spark', a unified logo symbolizing hope and reinforcing international advocacy efforts.

(ii) Parkinson's Disease is a chronic neurological disorder that disrupts dopamine production in the brain, impairing movement control. Symptoms include tremors, rigidity, and balance difficulties. While there is no cure, treatments like levodopa medication, surgery, and lifestyle adjustments can significantly improve quality of life. Over 10 million people currently live with PD globally, a number expected to double by 2050.

(iii) In 2003, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the Global Declaration on Parkinson's Disease, recognizing it as a public health priority and encouraging nations to enhance research and care. According to a report by the Parkinson's Disease Society (UK), more than 10 million individuals worldwide are affected by PD.

### 8. Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Valour Day Observed on 9 April 2025.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Valour Day, also known as Shaurya Diwas, is observed annually on April 9 to honor the bravery of CRPF personnel during the 1965 Battle of Sardar Post in Gujarat. In 2025, India celebrated the 60th anniversary of this historic battle, paying tribute to the sacrifices made by the CRPF soldiers.

- **CRPF Valour Day commemorates the courage of CRPF troops during Operation Desert Hawk on April 9, 1965, when a small contingent of the 2nd Battalion defended Sardar Post in the Rann of Kutch against a full-fledged Pakistani infantry brigade. Despite being heavily outnumbered, the CRPF unit repelled the**

**attack, causing 34 enemy casualties and capturing 4 Pakistani soldiers. Six brave CRPF personnel lost their lives in the confrontation.**

- **Valour Day not only pays tribute to those who laid down their lives in 1965 but also symbolizes the resilience, courage, and unwavering commitment of the CRPF towards national security. It serves as a reminder of the vital role the CRPF continues to play in safeguarding India.**

- **The New Delhi-based CRPF is India's largest Central Armed Police Force (CAPF). It was originally founded on July 27, 1939, as the Crown Representative's Police and was renamed the Central Reserve Police Force under the CRPF Act of December 28, 1949. Over the years, it has grown into a vital force for national security and law enforcement.**

#### Key Points:-

(i) As of 2025, the CRPF consists of 246 battalions, including specialized units such as Mahila Battalions, Rapid Action Force (RAF), and Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA). The force operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and is primarily responsible for internal security, counter-insurgency operations, and disaster response.

(ii) The CRPF's legacy of bravery is reflected in its numerous gallantry awards, including 1 George Cross, 1 Ashok Chakra, 10 Kirti Chakras, 39 Shaurya Chakras, 1 Padma Shri, and over 2,027 Police Medals for Gallantry. So far, 2,255 CRPF personnel have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

(iii) On April 9, 2025, CRPF commemorated its 60th Valour Day with various events, including wreath-laying ceremonies at memorials to honor the martyrs. Additionally, parades and exhibitions were organized, showcasing the operational strength, capabilities, and rich history of the force.

## 9. International Day of Sport for Development and Peace Observed on 6 April 2025.

The United Nations' (UN) International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP) is observed annually on April 6 across the globe to recognize the power of sport in promoting peace, encouraging social inclusion, and contributing to sustainable economic growth.

- The 2025 celebration marks the 12th anniversary of the IDSDP observance.

- The theme for IDSDP 2025 is "Leveling the Playing Field: Sport for Social Inclusion".

### Key Points:-

- (i) The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) officially proclaimed April 6 as IDSDP through Resolution A/RES/67/296 on August 23, 2013.
- (ii) The first-ever observance of IDSDP took place on April 6, 2014.
- (iii) The date commemorates the opening of the first modern Olympic Games, which were held in Athens, Greece, from April 6 to 15, 1896.

## DEFENCE

### 1. Indian Army's White Tiger Division Conducts Air Defence Exercise with OSA-AK-9K33 Missiles in Odisha.

In March 2025, the Indian Army's (IA's) White Tiger Division, under the Southern Command, successfully conducted a live air defence missile firing drill using the OSA-AK (9K33) missile system at the Gopalpur Seawards Firing Ranges, Odisha.

- The exercise demonstrated the operational readiness of the Army Air Defence (AAD) and achieved 100% accuracy against Maneuverable Expendable Aerial Targets (MEAT).

- The drill was organized by the Sudarshan Chakra Corps, based in Pune, Maharashtra, to enhance combat preparedness and test capabilities in modern warfare scenarios.

### Key Points:-

- (i) The OSA-AK (9K33) missile system, also known by its NATO designation SA-8 Gecko, is a low-altitude, short-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) system developed by the Soviet Union and inducted in 1972. It features a length of 9.14 meters, width of 2.75 meters, weight of 17.5 tonnes, and can engage targets up to a maximum range of 12 kilometers, making it highly effective for short-range aerial defense.
- (ii) Accommodates 5 crew members, equipped with NBC (Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical) protection, and uses TELAR (Transporter-Erector-Launcher and Radar) configuration for independent threat detection and engagement.
- (iii) It is fully amphibious, air-transportable, and operational across varied terrains, with a road range of 500 km.

### 2. Indian Army Successfully Showcases Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T) Capability During Exercise SARVSHAKTI.

On April 5, 2025, the Indian Army (IA) successfully demonstrated its Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T) capability during Exercise SARVSHAKTI, conducted by the Trishakti Corps in India's Eastern Theatre.

- The exercise marked a significant step in integrating cutting-edge technologies, including drones, autonomous systems, and AI-enabled platforms, into tactical-level military operations. Its primary objective is to boost interoperability, faster decision-making, and battlefield awareness for Multi-Domain Operations (MDO).

- It involves the seamless coordination between manned platforms (e.g., helicopters, ground vehicles) and unmanned systems (e.g., drones, autonomous platforms) for real-time surveillance, reconnaissance, and target acquisition.
- This capability enhances operational effectiveness by enabling quicker response cycles and improved situational awareness.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) MUM-T significantly contributes to future-ready force structuring by delivering faster decision loops, accurate threat responses, and increased battlefield agility.
- (ii) In March 2025, the IA's Fleur-De-Lis Brigade, in partnership with the Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL) in Chandigarh, Punjab, successfully tested a First Person View (FPV) drone equipped with a kamikaze-style anti-tank munition in Pathankot, Punjab.
- (iii) The drone is intended for precision attacks on armoured targets.

**3. MoD Inks ₹2,385.36 Crore Deal with BEL to Equip Mi-17 V5 Helicopters with Advanced EW Suites.**

In April 2025, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed a ₹2,385.36 crore contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), a Bengaluru-based Navratna PSU under the MoD, for the supply and installation of indigenous Electronic Warfare (EW) Suites and aircraft modification kits for the Mi-17 V5 helicopters of the Indian Air Force (IAF).

- The contract, signed in New Delhi in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, falls under the Buy (Indian-IDDMM) category of the Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP), promoting indigenous defence manufacturing.

- The Electronic Warfare (EW) Suite includes a Radar Warning Receiver (RWR) to detect and identify enemy radar signals, a Missile Approach Warning System (MAWS) to alert pilots of incoming missile threats, and a Counter Measure Dispensing System (CMDs) that automatically deploys defensive countermeasures like chaff to mislead radar-guided missiles and flares to divert heat-seeking missiles, significantly enhancing the aircraft's protection and survivability in combat zones.

- The advanced EW Suite has been indigenously designed and developed by DRDO's Combat Aircraft System Development and Integration Centre (CASDIC), Bengaluru, and will be manufactured by BEL, enhancing India's self-reliance in defence technologies. The advanced EW Suite has been indigenously designed and developed by DRDO's Combat Aircraft System Development and Integration Centre (CASDIC), Bengaluru, and will be manufactured by BEL, enhancing India's self-reliance in defence technologies.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) This integrated system will significantly improve the combat survivability of Mi-17 V5 helicopters by enabling them to operate in hostile environments with better protection against threats.
- (ii) The project will also foster increased participation from Indian electronics and associated industries, especially encouraging contributions from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- (iii) The Mi-17 V5 is a Russian-origin, multi-role military transport helicopter inducted into the IAF in 2012. It can carry personnel and cargo, has a maximum speed of 250 km/h, and a payload capacity of up to 4,000 kg, making it a crucial component of IAF's medium-lift fleet.



#### 4. Tri-Services All-Women Sailing Expedition 'Samudra Pradakshina' Recently Flagged Off from Mumbai.

In April 2025, Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) AK Ramesh, Commandant of the Pune (Maharashtra)-based College of Military Engineering (CME), flagged off India's first all-women tri-services circumnavigation sailing expedition, titled "Samudra Pradakshina", from the Indian Naval Watermanship Training Centre (NWTC) in Colaba, Mumbai (Maharashtra).

- This pioneering initiative is aimed at promoting gender parity in maritime operations and celebrating the unwavering spirit of Nari Shakti (women power).
- Additionally, it serves as a preparatory mission for a more challenging global circumnavigation sailing expedition scheduled for 2026.

##### Key Points:-

- (i) The expedition involves a 55-day sea voyage, covering around 4,000 nautical miles from Mumbai to Seychelles and back, aboard the Indian Armed Services Vessel (IASV) Triveni. The mission is set to culminate with a Flag-In Ceremony in Mumbai on 30th May 2025.
- (ii) The sailing team comprises a 12-member all-women crew, selected from 41 volunteers representing the Indian Army (IA), Indian Navy (IN), and Indian Air Force (IAF). These officers have undergone two years of extensive ocean sailing training.
- (iii) Launched by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), this initiative aims to highlight the resilience, bravery, and leadership of women in the armed forces, while inspiring broader female participation in both maritime and defence sectors.

#### 5. Private Firms Secure ₹25,000 Crore Share in HAL's Mega Deal for 156 Light Combat Helicopters.

In April 2025, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) secured a major deal worth ₹62,500 crore from the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) for the supply of 156 Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) to the Indian Army (IA) and the Indian Air Force (IAF). Following the approval of this mega deal, HAL has planned to allocate approximately ₹25,000 crore (40%) of the contract value to private sector firms.

- This strategic move is expected to boost the defence industrial ecosystem and significantly promote self-reliance in aerospace manufacturing across India at all levels.
- The order for 156 Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) will be split between the Indian Army (90 helicopters) and the Indian Air Force (66 helicopters) for deployment along the China and Pakistan borders. This move marks a significant push towards job creation and aerospace ecosystem expansion within India.
- HAL will manufacture the helicopters at its facilities in Bengaluru and Tumkur, Karnataka. As India's largest aerospace firm, HAL now maintains an order book exceeding ₹2 lakh crore, which also includes 83 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)—10 of which are trainer variants—and 12 Su-30MKI fighter jets.

##### Key Points:-

- (i) The Light Combat Helicopter (LCH), named Prachand, is the only attack helicopter in the world capable of taking off and landing at altitudes up to 5,000 meters (16,400 feet).i. The Light Combat Helicopter (LCH), named Prachand, is the only attack helicopter in the world capable of taking off and landing at altitudes up to 5,000 meters (16,400 feet).
- (ii) This remarkable high-altitude capability makes it ideal for operations in extreme terrains such as the Siachen Glacier and Eastern Ladakh.
- (iii) The Prachand is equipped to launch a wide

range of air-to-ground and air-to-air missiles, allowing it to neutralize enemy air defense systems and conduct precision strike operations effectively.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. Skyroot Aerospace Successfully Conducts Test of Kalam-100 Engine for Upcoming Vikram-1 Rocket.

In April 2025, Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace Private Limited, a leading Indian spacetechnology startup, successfully conducted the static fire test of its Kalam-100 engine. The test was carried out at Solar Group's testbed in Nagpur, Maharashtra, marking a major milestone in the development of Vikram-1, India's first privately developed orbital rocket.

- The Kalam-100 engine, part of Vikram-1's third stage, is named in honour of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, former President and prominent aerospace scientist. The successful static fire test propels Skyroot closer to the maiden flight of Vikram-1, signifying a historic leap for India's private space sector.
- During the test, the Kalam-100 engine fired continuously for over 102 seconds, delivering a peak vacuum thrust of 100 kilonewtons (kN). It features an operating area ratio of 60 in flight, showcasing strong performance and reliability under orbital conditions.
- The engine also integrates an advanced flex nozzle, providing precision in thrust vector control. This feature enables accurate maneuvering in space, enhancing the rocket's capability for deploying payloads to desired orbits.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Kalam-100 is a solid-fuel engine with a carbon composite structure and EPDM-based thermal protection system, combining high strength with lightweight efficiency. It includes a head-mounted

safe arm (HMSA) for enhanced safety, co-developed with ISRO's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC).

(ii) Previously, in March 2024, Skyroot had successfully tested the Kalam-250 engine (stage-2 of Vikram-1) at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. These progressive tests reflect Skyroot's consistent momentum in private launch vehicle development.

(iii) The Vikram-1 launch vehicle is designed to carry up to 480 kg of payload to a 500 km Low Earth Orbit (LEO). It includes four stages—three solid-fuel motors (Kalam-1200, Kalam-250, Kalam-100) and a final liquid-fueled Raman engine. Its first launch is expected by the end of 2025.

### 2. SDAL Develops Third-Stage Propulsion System for Vikram-1 Rocket, Boosting India's Private Space Ambitions.

On April 5, 2025, Nagpur (Maharashtra)-based Solar Defence and Aerospace Limited (SDAL), a subsidiary of Solar Industries India Limited (SIIL), successfully developed the propulsion system—including the igniter and third-stage rocket motor—for the Vikram-1 Satellite Launch Vehicle.

- The third-stage rocket motor plays a vital role in propelling Vikram-1 beyond Earth's atmosphere into space, marking a crucial milestone in India's private space sector.
- To ensure maximum reliability and safety for space deployment, the rocket motor underwent extensive Non-Destructive Testing (NDT), including X-ray imaging, ultrasonic inspection, and magnetic particle testing, at SDAL's state-of-the-art facility in Nagpur.
- The third-stage rocket motor developed by SDAL has a propellant mass of 2,400 kg and delivers a maximum

thrust of 75,000 Newtons (around 7.65 tons). It supports payloads of up to 290 kg into a 500 km Sun-Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO) or 480 kg into a 500 km Low Earth Orbit (LEO). For high-precision space maneuvering, it is equipped with a high-performance igniter and a flex nozzle-based Thrust Vector Control (TVC) mechanism, enhancing control in a vacuum environment.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The Vikram-1 is India's first privately built orbital rocket, currently under development by Skyroot Aerospace Private Limited, based in Hyderabad (Telangana).
- (ii) The project receives strategic support from ISRO (Bengaluru, Karnataka) and IN-SPACE (Ahmedabad, Gujarat), both functioning under the Department of Space, Government of India (GoI).
- (iii) The Vikram-1 rocket features a four-stage configuration comprising the Kalam-1200 solid motor in the first stage, followed by the Kalam-250 solid motor in the second stage, a third-stage solid rocket motor developed by Solar Defence and Aerospace Limited (SDAL), and concludes with a liquid-fueled Raman engine in the fourth stage, which is responsible for precise final orbital adjustments.

### 3. NASA Astronaut Jonny Kim Launches to ISS Aboard Soyuz MS-27 with Russian Crewmates.

In April 2025, NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) astronaut Jonathan Yong Jonny Kim and Roscosmos (Russian Space Agency) cosmonauts Sergey Viktorovich Ryzhikov and Alexey Vitalyevich Zubritsky successfully launched to the International Space Station (ISS) aboard the Soyuz MS-27, a Russian spacecraft.

- The launch took place from the Baikonur Cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, a launch facility leased by Russia.

- This marks the first space mission for Jonny Kim and Alexey Zubritsky, and the third spaceflight for Sergey Ryzhikov.

- In April 2025, Soyuz MS-27 successfully docked with the International Space Station (ISS), initiating an eight-month mission as part of Expeditions 72 and 73. The crew—NASA astronaut Jonny Kim and Roscosmos cosmonauts Sergey Ryzhikov and Alexey Zubritsky—is scheduled to return to Earth in December 2025.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The mission will focus on conducting a wide range of scientific investigations and technology demonstrations. These experiments are designed to support future deep-space exploration and deliver advancements in technology and medicine that benefit life on Earth.
- (ii) The International Space Station (ISS) is a state-of-the-art orbital laboratory located in low Earth orbit, developed through international collaboration. It is jointly operated by five major space agencies: NASA (USA), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada).

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

1. Himachal Pradesh CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu Launches Poetry Anthology 'Buransh: The Fragrance of Words' by Anupama Sharma.

In April 2025, Himachal Pradesh (HP) Chief Minister (CM) Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu officially launched the poetry book 'Buransh: The Fragrance of Words', authored by Anupama Sharma, an educator and poetess.

- The collection was published by Satluj Prakashan, based in Panchkula, Punjab.

#### Key Points:-

(i) This 56-page anthology features 39 poems that explore deep human emotions such as the pain of broken relationships, introspective solitude, and the resilience of hope inspired by the calmness of nature.

(ii) Anupama Sharma, a lecturer by profession, is also a passionate poetess who enjoys bike riding, trekking, and sports. Her poetic works reflect both personal introspection and a strong message advocating mental well-being.

## OBITUARY

### 1. Renowned Publicist and Oscar Honorary Award Recipient Marvin Levy Recently Passes Away.

In April 2025, Marvin Levy, the Oscar-winning American publicist, passed away at the age of 96 in Los Angeles, California, United States of America (USA). Levy became the first and only publicist to receive an Honorary Academy Award in 2018, recognizing his distinguished career and contributions to the film industry.

- Born in 1928, Marvin Levy began his career in the entertainment industry during the golden age of Hollywood, eventually rising to become one of the most respected names in film publicity.
- He started out as a publicist for film studios and TV networks, later joining Columbia Pictures, where he worked on campaigns for classic films like Lawrence of Arabia (1962) and Funny Girl (1968).
- His iconic collaboration with Steven Spielberg began with Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977) and continued with celebrated films like E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (1982), Schindler's List (1993), Saving

Private Ryan (1998), and Lincoln (2012), among many others.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Marvin Levy received the Honorary Academy Award in 2018 from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), recognizing his lifetime achievements and making him the only publicist to ever receive this distinction.

(ii) He was also honored with the Les Mason Award in 1994, the highest accolade presented by the Publicists' Guild.

### 2. Brahma Kumaris Spiritual Leader Dadi Ratan Mohini Passes Away.

In April 2025, Dadi Ratan Mohini, the Chief Administrator of Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya, passed away at the age of 101 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. She was born in 1925 in Hyderabad, Sindh (now in Pakistan).

- She was one of the most prominent spiritual figures in India and served as a guiding light for millions through her long-standing association with the Brahma Kumaris, which is recognised as the world's largest women-led spiritual organisation.
- She was the second chief of the Brahma Kumaris to reach the age of 100, following Dadi Janki, who passed away in 2020 at the age of 104.
- Dadi Ratan Mohini joined the Brahma Kumaris at the age of 13 in Mount Abu, Rajasthan, playing a key role in the organisation's global growth by promoting women's empowerment, youth development, and environmental protection. She became the Chief Administrator of Brahma Kumaris in 2021, following the passing of Dadi Hriday Mohini.

#### Key Points:-



(i) Dadi Ratan Mohini led the youth wing for over four decades, inspiring young people to adopt spiritual and value-based living.

(ii) She represented the Brahma Kumaris at international forums, including the World Peace Conference in Japan (1954) and spiritual missions in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia.

(iii) In 2014, Dadi Ratan Mohini was conferred with an Honorary Doctorate by Gulbarga University, Karnataka, for her contributions to society and spirituality, and in 2006, she led a 31,000 km youth march across India to promote value education, which was recognised in the Limca Book of Records.

### 3. Former Lao PDR President Khamtay Siphandone Passes Away.

In April 2025, General Khamtay Siphandone, the former President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) and former General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, passed away at the age of 102 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Born on February 8, 1924, in Huakhongphayai village, Siphandone province (now Champasack province), he was a prominent figure in the history of Laos.

- He was among the first generation of leaders of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, playing a significant role in leading the Lao people in their revolutionary struggle for national liberation.

- Khamtay Siphandone began his career as a postman and later trained as a telegrapher in Saigon, working in Phongsaly province by 1944. His early career laid the foundation for his later involvement in the revolutionary movement in Laos.

- In 1944, he joined the Lao Issara movement and became a member of the Indochinese Communist

Party in 1954. He further solidified his political path by joining the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party in 1956.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Khamtay Siphandone was elected a member of the Politburo, the highest decision-making body of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, at the 2nd Party Congress in 1972. He later became the Commander-in-Chief of the Lao People's Liberation Army, leading the country's forces during pivotal moments in its history.

(ii) After the successful revolution of 1975, Khamtay was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Minister of National Defence, and Commander-in-Chief of the Lao People's Liberation Army, taking on key leadership roles in the newly established government.

(iii) Khamtay Siphandone was appointed Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on August 15, 1991, by the 6th session of the 2nd Supreme People's Assembly. He was elected President in 1998 and retired from the presidency and as chairman of the party in 2006. In recognition of his contributions to the nation, he received numerous honors, including the Order of José Martí from Cuba and the Gold Star Order from Vietnam.

### 4. Renowned Rai Folk Dancer and Padma Shri Recipient Ram Sahay Panday Passes Away.

In April 2025, renowned folk dance artist Ram Sahay Panday passed away at the age of 92 in Sagar district, Madhya Pradesh (MP). He was born in Sagar district (MP) on March 11, 1933.

- In 2022, he was honoured with the Padma Shri award, India's fourth highest civilian award in the field of Arts, for his contributions to Indian art and culture, particularly for preserving and popularising Rai dance.

- Ram Sahay Panday dedicated over 60 years of his life to promoting Rai, a traditional folk dance form of the Bedia community from the Bundelkhand region in MP, by skillfully blending it with the rhythmic beats of the classical percussion instrument Mridangam.
- Ram Sahay Panday transformed Rai dance from a local tradition into a globally acclaimed cultural heritage, delivering over 100 performances in 18 countries.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Ram Sahay Panday established the Bundelkhandi Lok Nritya Natya Kala Parishad, an organization committed to preserving the rich cultural heritage of the economically marginalized Bundelkhand region.
- (ii) He was appointed as a member of the Tribal Folk Art Council by the Government of Madhya Pradesh in recognition of his lifelong dedication to the art form.
- (iii) He was honoured with the title of 'Nritya Shiromani' in 1980 and "Shikhar Samman" in 1984 by the Government of Madhya Pradesh.

## ENVIRONMENT

### 1. New Land Snail Species 'Theobaldius konkanensis' Discovered in Maharashtra's Konkan Region.

In March 2025, a collaborative team of researchers from India and the United Kingdom (UK) recently discovered a new species of land snail named 'Theobaldius konkanensis' in the Konkan region of Maharashtra.

- The discovery was published in the international journal Molluscan Research (MR), based in New Zealand, highlighting the rich and relatively unexplored biodiversity of the Western Ghats.

- The discovery stems from a 2021 survey conducted across select locations in Ratnagiri and Raigad districts of Maharashtra.
- The new species was observed at Dev Gireswar Temple (Ansure, Ratnagiri), Uttamrao Patil Biodiversity Park (Chikhali, Chiplun-Guhagar Road, Ratnagiri), Kesharnath Vishnu Temple (Shedwai, Ratnagiri), and Phansad Sanctuary (Raigad).

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Theobaldius konkanensis is endemic to the northern Western Ghats, a recognized biodiversity hotspot. It was recorded in evergreen and semi-evergreen forests at altitudes ranging from 80 to 240 meters above sea level.
- (ii) The newly discovered land snail, Theobaldius konkanensis, features a thick, conoidally depressed shell with brown striations and a corneous yellow tint, giving it a distinctive appearance suited to its natural habitat. Its small size, though not precisely measured, sets it apart morphologically from related species.
- (iii) The snail's body is stout and rounded, an adaptation well-suited for survival in the humid, forested ecosystems of the Western Ghats. These features support its ability to thrive in evergreen and semi-evergreen forest environments.