



**WEEKLY**  
**CURRENT**  
**AFFAIRS**  
**PDFs**

**April 2025**



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



## NATIONAL AFFAIRS / GOVERNMENT SCHEME

### 1. Union Minister Piyush Goyal Unveils “The Bharat Project” Aimed at Creating 1 Million Entrepreneurs.

In April 2025, Union Minister Piyush Goyal, Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoC&I), launched the 'Bharat Project', a national initiative by India's leading digital media platform YourStory, during an event held at Radisson Goregaon, Mumbai, Maharashtra.

- This visionary initiative is aimed at empowering entrepreneurs from Tier-II, Tier-III cities and rural India by fostering innovation, mentorship, and access to resources.
- The first pillar of The Bharat Project, Co-Pilot for Entrepreneurs, is an AI-powered, mobile-first platform created to support aspiring entrepreneurs across India by offering comprehensive startup guidance, curated learning resources, mentorship access, and inspirational success stories, all
- State-level and district-level activations will boost awareness and practical training. A WhatsApp-based learning program will help young individuals learn how to start and grow their own businesses.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) A nationwide challenge that aims to discover high-potential business ideas from over 1,000 districts, with mentorship provided to the top emerging founders.
- (ii) BharatSparks a launchpad initiative where selected entrepreneurs from smaller towns will get the chance to pitch to investors, secure grants, and receive long-term support for their ventures.
- (iii) A 7-part web documentary series showcasing real startup journeys from across India. It will feature innovators, investors, and policymakers, highlighting the grassroots startup ecosystem.

### 2. Government Announces 5-Point Action Plan Against Pakistan Following Pahalgam Terror Attack.

In April 2025, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), the highest decision-making body on national security in India, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, took a series of stringent actions against Pakistan in response to a terrorist attack that claimed the lives of 26 people, including a foreign national, in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).

- Following a CCS meeting held in New Delhi (Delhi), the Government of India (GoI) has implemented a 5-point action plan targeting Pakistan's infrastructure, diplomatic presence, and movement across borders. The measures are aimed at strengthening national security and countering terrorism.
- The Resistance Front (TRF), an offshoot of the Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), has claimed responsibility for the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam.
- The Government of India has suspended the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), a crucial water-sharing agreement between India and Pakistan, with immediate effect. This suspension will remain in place until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably halts its support for cross-border terrorism.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The government has decided to close the integrated Attari-Wagah Border, the international border between India and Pakistan, located near Attari, Amritsar, Punjab (India), and Wagah (Pakistan), with immediate effect. As a result, all cross-border movement through this route has been halted indefinitely.
- (ii) The Government of India has announced the suspension of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) for Pakistani nationals.

Additionally, any SVES visa previously issued to Pakistani nationals is now deemed cancelled, and any Pakistani national currently in India under this scheme has been given 48 hours to leave the country.

(iii) The Government of India has decided to expel all Pakistani military, Naval, and Air advisors stationed at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, declaring them 'Persona Non Grata' and giving them one week to leave India. In response, India will also withdraw its own military advisors from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, Pakistan. Additionally, the Government of India has announced a reduction in diplomatic personnel at the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, decreasing the staff from 55 to 30 by May 1, 2025.

### 3. SVAMITVA Scheme Completes 5 Years of Empowering Rural India with Property Rights and Technological Advancements.

The SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) scheme, a game-changer in rural governance, was launched on April 24, 2020, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on National Panchayati Raj Day. After five successful years, the scheme continues to make a significant impact on rural India.

- The scheme is being executed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) with crucial support from Survey of India (SoI), based in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, and the National Informatics Centre Services Inc. (NICSI), based in New Delhi as the technology partner.

#### Key Points:-

(i) SVAMITVA is a Central Sector Scheme (CSS) aimed at providing 'record of rights' in the form of property cards to village household owners in inhabited rural areas across India.

(ii) Initially launched with a budget of Rs 566.23 crore from Financial Year 2020-21 (FY21), the scheme has been extended until FY26 to continue its progress.

(iii) As of January 18, 2025, the Government of India (GoI) had distributed a total of 65 lakh SVAMITVA property cards to households in over 50,000 villages across 10 states, including 2 Union Territories (UTs).

### 4. CCI Approves Key Business Combinations and Acquisitions in Multiple Sectors on April 22, 2025.

On April 22, 2025, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved the following proposals:

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the proposed combination of Bharat Forge Limited (BFL), a global provider of safety and critical forged components and solutions to various sectors such as automotive, railways, and defence, for the acquisition of 100% equity shareholding of AAM India Manufacturing Corporation Private Limited (AAMCPL), which is primarily engaged in the manufacturing and selling of axles for commercial vehicles in India, with voluntary modifications.

- The approval followed BFL's announcement on October 17, 2024, regarding the execution of a Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) to acquire 100% stake in AAMCPL.

#### Key Points:-

(i) On April 22, 2025, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved a joint proposal from 360 ONE Private Equity Fund and Bharti Life Ventures Private Limited (BLVPL) to acquire certain stakes in Bharti Axa Life Insurance Company Limited (BALIC), a private, unlisted limited liability company offering life insurance policies in India. The transaction will be executed in two stages:

first, 360 Fund, through its schemes or affiliates, will acquire equity shares of BALIC from BLVPL.

(ii) Subsequently, both 360 ONE and BLVPL will subscribe to additional equity shares in BALIC. BLVPL is the parent company of BALIC, and both are part of the Bharti Group. 360 Fund, a Category II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), focuses on investing across various sectors globally.

(iii) The CCI approved KGBPL's Rs 2,000 crore acquisition of Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages' operations in North Gujarat and Diu. Supporting Coca-Cola's strategy of franchising regional operations, the deal enables KGBPL—an authorized bottler in Rajasthan—to expand its distribution of non-alcoholic beverages into new markets.

### 5. IWAI Reports Record 145.5 MMT Cargo Movement in FY 2024-25 and National Waterways See Exponential Growth Over a Decade.

In April 2025, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-based The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) reported a record-breaking cargo movement of 145.5 million metric tonnes (MMT) in the Financial Year (FY) 2024-25, up from 18.1 MMT in FY 2013-14, registering a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 20.86 percent.

- Out of the total cargo moved on National Waterways (NWs) during the year, five commodities (i.e., coal, iron ore, iron ore fines, sand, and fly ash) constituted over 68 percent of the total movement.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The IWAI, under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPS&W), has expanded the number of NWs from 5 to 111 under the National Waterways Act, 2016. ii. Simultaneously, the

operational length of NWs has increased from 2,716 km (2014-15) to 4,894 km (2023-24).

(ii) Various digital tools like the Least Available Depth Information System (LADIS), River Information System (RIS), Car-D, Portal for Navigational Information (PANI), and Management Information and Reporting Solution (MIRS) were launched by the IWAI to boost the Ease of Doing Business.

(iii) India aims to increase the Inland Water Transport (IWT) modal share from 2 percent to 5 percent, and raise traffic to 200+ MMT by 2030 and 500+ MMT by 2047 under the Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision.

### 6. Similipal in Odisha Recently Declared as India's 107th National Park.

In April 2025, Mohan Charan Manjhi, Chief Minister (CM) of Odisha, officially declared the Similipal Tiger Reserve (TR), located in Mayurbhanj district, as a National Park (NP). Now, Similipal TR has become India's 107th National Park (NP) and Odisha's 2nd protected area to be declared a National Park after Bhitarkanika (declared as NP in 1998).

- This newly declared National Park is now the largest NP in Odisha, covering an area of 845.70 square kilometers (sq. km).

- The Forest, Environment and Climate Change (FE&CC) Department of Odisha issued a notification exercising powers under Section 35(4) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

- Similipal is divided into two divisions: the Similipal South Wildlife Division, which comprises seven ranges including Pithabata North, Nawana South, Jenabil, among others, and the Similipal North Wildlife Division, which includes four ranges such as Barrehipani, Chahala, Nawan North, and Talabandh

wildlife ranges. The name 'Similipal' is derived from the 'Simul' (Silk Cotton) tree, which is abundantly found in the region.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Similipal hosts rich biodiversity, with more than 360 species of birds, 55 species of mammals including leopards and sambar, 62 species of reptiles, and 21 species of amphibians. It is notably home to around 40 wild tigers, including the world's only population of wild melanistic (black) tigers, and serves as a natural habitat for 25% of Odisha's elephant population.

(ii) The Similipal landscape spreads over 2,750 square kilometers, with approximately 2,306 square kilometers forming the Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS). This vast and ecologically significant area plays a crucial role in wildlife conservation and habitat protection within the state.

(iii) In 2007, the Odisha government notified 1,194.75 square kilometers of the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) as the core critical tiger habitat. Furthermore, since 2009, Similipal has been recognized as part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR), highlighting its global ecological significance.

### 7. RBI Revokes Ajantha Urban Co-operative Bank's Licence Over Capital and Compliance Shortfalls.

In April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cancelled the banking licence of Ajantha Urban Co-operative Bank Maryadit, headquartered in Aurangabad, Maharashtra. The action was taken under the provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, due to the bank's inadequate capital position, poor earning prospects, and continued non-compliance with regulatory requirements.

- The bank failed to meet the requirements under Sections 11(1), 22(3)(a) to 22(3)(e), and Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

- It lacked adequate capital and did not demonstrate any viable earning potential.

- The RBI found that allowing the bank to continue operations would be against public interest, particularly affecting depositors, as the bank was unable to meet its deposit repayment obligations.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Following the bank's liquidation, depositors are eligible to receive insurance coverage of up to ₹5 lakh under the provisions of the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Act, 1961. The DICGC, headquartered in Mumbai, ensures protection of depositors' funds in such cases of bank failure.

(ii) As of April 3, 2025, approximately 91.55% of the depositors qualified to receive the full insured amount of their deposits. In total, the DICGC had disbursed ₹275.22 crore to eligible depositors of Ajantha Urban Co-operative Bank Maryadit.

(iii) As of March 31, 2025, a total of 23 Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) were operating under All-Inclusive Directions (AID), with the highest number in Maharashtra (9), followed by Karnataka (5), and Uttar Pradesh (4).

### 8. Madhya Pradesh Receives Approval for Rs 2,100 Crore PM MITRA Textile Park Project, India's First.

In April 2025, Madhya Pradesh (MP) officially received approval from the Ministry of Textiles (MoT) for the Rs 2,100 crore Prime Minister Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM-MITRA) Park Project. This project will be India's first-of-its-kind state-of-the-art integrated textile park.

- The newly approved project aims to enhance the industrial landscape of Madhya Pradesh while strengthening India's textile sector on a global scale. The approval reflects the growing interest in the state's industrial potential, with investment proposals worth Rs 10,000 crore already received.

- The PM MITRA Park will be located in Bhainsola village, Badnawar tehsil, in Dhar district, Madhya Pradesh. It will span over 21,000 acres, positioned approximately 110 kilometers from Indore, 85 kilometers from the Pithampur industrial cluster, and 50 kilometers from the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway via Ratlam.

- The park will feature various modern facilities including a 20 Mega Liters per Day (MLD) Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) plant, a solar-powered energy facility, and plug-and-play Built-To-Suit (BTS) units. These facilities will help establish the park as a sustainable and energy-efficient textile hub.

#### Key Points:-

(i) In addition to industrial facilities, residential complexes will be built for the workers, ensuring that the workforce has comprehensive infrastructure within the project's vicinity. The construction is expected to be completed within 14 months.

(ii) The PM MITRA Park Project is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), which was announced by Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Union Budget for Financial Year 2021-22. The Government of India (GoI) has allocated Rs 4,445 crore for the implementation of the scheme over seven years (FY22-FY28).

(iii) As part of the PM MITRA initiative, the Government of India has announced the establishment of seven sites across the country for setting up textile parks. These locations include Tamil Nadu (Virudhnagar), Telangana

(Warangal), Gujarat (Navsari), Karnataka (Kalaburagi), Madhya Pradesh (Dhar), Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow), and Maharashtra (Amravati).

#### 9. India Unveils First Indigenous HPV Test Kits for Cervical Cancer Detection.

In April 2025, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Science and Technology (MoS&T), launched India's first Made-in-India Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) test kits for cervical cancer screening.

- The two kits are Truenat HPV-HR Plus by Goa-based Molbio Diagnostics and Patho Detect by Pune (Maharashtra)-based Mylab Discovery Solutions. The kits were developed under the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology's (MoS&T) Grand Challenges India (GCI) initiative, coordinated by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).

- The newly launched HPV test kits are designed for cervical cancer screening, which is the second most common cancer among Indian women. These kits target 7-8 high-risk HPV strains responsible for most cervical cancer cases, making them highly effective in early detection. The kits utilize Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) technology, leveraging India's expanded post-COVID diagnostic infrastructure for more reliable results.

- The kits offer rapid, cost-effective, and point-of-care testing, overcoming challenges posed by traditional methods such as Pap smears and Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA). These traditional methods are often inaccessible and time-consuming, but the new kits provide a faster and more affordable alternative, making cervical cancer screening more accessible, especially in rural areas.

#### Key Points:-

(i) These kits were validated through the "Validation of Indigenous Human Papillomavirus Tests for Cervical Cancer Screening in India" (I-HPV) study, conducted by renowned institutions including All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR), and National Institute for Research in Reproductive and Child Health (NIRRH). Additionally, international collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) ensured that the kits met global standards.

(ii) According to the WHO, India is home to a significant portion of the global burden of cervical cancer, with 1 out of every 5 women suffering from cervical cancer being Indian. Furthermore, 25% of global cervical cancer deaths occur in India, highlighting the urgent need for more effective screening methods.

(iii) The WHO recommends that countries adopt HPV testing to screen 70% of eligible women by 2030, with only two lifetime tests required at the ages of 35 and 45 years. This initiative aims to reduce cervical cancer rates globally, with India playing a pivotal role in achieving this goal.

- With this move, I4C is now empowered to share and receive information with the ED and other law enforcement agencies, enabling improved tracking and identification of cybercrime masterminds.

- Established in 2018 under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) serves as the central agency for coordinating efforts to combat cybercrime across India.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Amid the rising cases of cyber fraud affecting the general public, this initiative will aid in identifying perpetrators behind trans-national cybercrimes.

(ii) These cyber frauds are often executed through fake websites, misleading social media pages, and paid advertisements on search engines. Fraudsters trick victims by sending OTPs (One-Time Passwords) or malicious links via phone or email. Once the unsuspecting user clicks the link or shares the OTP, their devices become compromised.

(iii) The government has urged citizens to report cyber fraud through the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) at [cybercrime.gov.in](http://cybercrime.gov.in) or by calling the cyber helpline 1930.

### 10. Government Brings Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) Under the Purview of PMLA.

In April 2025, the Department of Revenue (DoR) under the Ministry of Finance (MoF) authorized the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), based in New Delhi (Delhi), to exchange information with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) under Section 66 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA).

- This decision is aimed at enhancing the detection of money trails and strengthening efforts to combat cyber fraud.

### 11. "RCS-UDAN Scheme Launched to Boost Regional Connectivity and Bridge Gap Between Metros and Small Cities".

The Regional Connectivity Scheme - Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN), a flagship initiative of the Government of India (GoI), was launched on October 21, 2016, to democratize aviation by making flying accessible and affordable for all citizens. The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA). The first RCS-UDAN flight was inaugurated by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi on April 27, 2017, connecting Shimla (Himachal Pradesh) to New Delhi (Delhi).

- The RCS-UDAN is an essential component of India's National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016. It has a 10-year vision to connect Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities across India through a market-driven model that is financially supported by the government. This vision aims to bridge the gap between metros and smaller cities, thus boosting regional air connectivity.

- The primary goal of the scheme is to enhance infrastructure and strengthen air connectivity in India, especially focusing on remote and underserved regions. It also emphasizes improving airport facilities, constructing new airports, and revitalizing non-operational airports to stimulate regional development.

- RCS-UDAN operates on a market-driven approach where airlines assess passenger demand on specific regional routes and submit proposals during the bidding rounds. Selected airlines receive financial support, such as Viability Gap Funding (VGF), making air travel affordable while ensuring the economic viability of the operations.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The UDAN scheme has successfully operationalized 625 routes, connecting 90 airports, including 15 heliports and 2 water aerodromes, enhancing regional air connectivity across India.

(ii) Over 1.49 crore passengers have benefited from affordable regional air travel, with 3 lakh UDAN flights operated, improving accessibility and convenience for citizens.

(iii) The scheme has contributed to the growth of regional airlines like Flybig, Star Air, and IndiaOne, facilitating air connectivity to key destinations and boosting trade, healthcare, and tourism across

India.

## 12. India Installs 34 Supercomputers with 35 Petaflops Capacity Under National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).

On 28 April 2025, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) announced the successful deployment of 34 supercomputers across India with a combined computing power of 35 Petaflops (10 lakh gigabytes, GB) under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).

- NSM has significantly enhanced access to advanced computational resources for researchers, especially in smaller cities, by providing them with world-class supercomputing infrastructure.

- These 34 supercomputers have been installed at premier academic and research institutions including the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), various Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), C-DAC, and multiple institutions in Tier-II and Tier-III cities.

#### Key Points:-

(i) NSM was launched in 2015 by the Government of India (GoI) with the goal of strengthening India's capabilities in the field of supercomputing and developing indigenous high-performance computing (HPC) systems.

(ii) It is a joint initiative of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and MeitY.

(iii) The mission is being implemented by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune, and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru (Karnataka).

## 13. GoI Forms Interministerial Panel Led by BVR Subrahmanyam to Draft National Monetisation Mechanism (NMM).

In April 2025, the Government of India (GoI) has set up an inter-ministerial committee to design the broad framework of the proposed National Manufacturing Mission (NMM), with an aim to boost the Make in India initiative.

- **The committee will be led by BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog, the Think Tank of India.**
- **The manufacturing sector accounts for 16–17% of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP – Gross Domestic Product), for which the government aims to increase the share through the new mission.**
- **The National Manufacturing Mission (NMM) was announced in the Union Budget 2025–26 with the objective of strengthening the Make in India initiative and significantly enhancing India's manufacturing capabilities. This mission is a strategic move to position India as a global manufacturing hub.**

#### **Key Points:-**

(i) The mission will focus on five key areas: improving the ease and cost of doing business, building a future-ready workforce equipped for emerging job demands, nurturing a vibrant MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) sector, ensuring the availability of advanced technology, and producing high-quality products. It will also comprehensively support the growth of large industries.

(ii) NMM will provide policy support, create implementation roadmaps, and establish a governance and monitoring framework to guide and align efforts at both the central ministry and state levels. This structured approach is aimed at improving coordination, execution, and accountability across all stakeholders involved.

(iii) A strong emphasis will be placed on Clean Tech Manufacturing to boost Domestic Value

Addition (DVA). The mission will help build ecosystems for critical technologies such as Solar PV (Photovoltaic) cells, EV batteries, motors and controllers, electrolyzers, wind turbines, high-voltage transmission equipment, and grid-scale batteries. It will also support design, component manufacturing, and machinery required for non-leather quality footwear production, along with continued support for leather footwear and related products.

#### **14. Coastal States Fisheries Meet 2025 Held in Mumbai Under Chairmanship of Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh.**

On 28th April 2025, the "Coastal States Fisheries Meet: 2025" was held in Mumbai, Maharashtra, under the chairmanship of Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAH&D), and Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR).

- **The event witnessed participation from Union Minister of State (MoS) Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel (MoFAH&D, MoPR), Union MoS George Kurian (MoFAH&D, Ministry of Minority Affairs – MoMA), along with Governors and Fisheries Ministers of 7 coastal States/Union Territories (UTs).**

#### **Key Points:-**

(i) Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for fisheries projects worth Rs. 255.30 crore for 7 coastal States/UTs under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

(ii) He also launched the 5th Marine Fisheries Census (MFC 2025), released Guidelines on Turtle Excluder Device, and introduced the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Vessel Communication and Support System.

(iii) In addition, he distributed tablets enabled with the Digital Application Vyas-NAV (Village Jetty Appraisal NAVigator) and awarded the first-ever Aqua Insurance (One Time Incentive Sanction-cum-Release Order) to beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY).

### 15. MoL&E Partners with Swiggy to Enhance Gig Economy Employment Opportunities through NCS Portal.

In April 2025, the Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoL&E) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Swiggy Limited (formerly Bundi Technologies Pvt. Ltd.), based in Bengaluru, Karnataka, to create more employment opportunities in India's gig and logistics sector through the National Career Service (NCS) portal.

- The MoU was signed in New Delhi, with the presence of Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya (MoL&E) and Union Minister of State (MoS) Shobha Karandlaje (MoL&E).

- This partnership is expected to create over 12 lakh job opportunities within the next 2-3 years through the NCS portal.

- Swiggy will regularly post verified gig and delivery job opportunities on the NCS portal and conduct hiring processes through it, with API-based integration ensuring real-time job postings and seamless application tracking for users.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The collaboration will focus on inclusive hiring, with a special emphasis on providing employment opportunities for youth, women, and individuals seeking flexible work.

(ii) The partnership will also support structured onboarding, digital empowerment, and enhance

awareness about worker welfare schemes.

(iii) As of January 31, 2025, the NCS portal has over 1.25 crore active job seekers and 40 lakh registered employers.

### 16. Central Railway Introduced India's First Onboard ATM Service on Panchavati Express.

In April 2025, the Central Railway (CR), headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, in collaboration with the Pune-based Bank of Maharashtra (BoM), recently launched India's first onboard Automated Teller Machine (ATM) on the Mumbai-Manmad Panchavati Express.

- The initiative was introduced under the New, Innovative Non-Fare Revenue Ideas Scheme (NINFRIS) to enhance passenger convenience and increase Non-Fare Revenue (NFR).

- The ATM has been installed in an air-conditioned (AC) coach of the Panchavati Express, utilizing a space previously occupied by a temporary pantry.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The train operates daily between Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) and Manmad Junction in Nashik district, Maharashtra, covering a journey of approximately 4 hours and 35 minutes.

(ii) The initiative focuses on generating non-fare revenue while offering a practical service to passengers, particularly benefiting senior citizens, women, and those in need of emergency cash during travel.

### 17. Madhya Pradesh Set to Launch 'Krishak Kalyan Mission' Aimed at Enhancing Farmer Incomes.

In April 2025, the State Cabinet of Madhya Pradesh (MP), led by Chief Minister (CM) Mohan

Yadav, approved the launch of the MP Krishak Kalyan Mission (KKM) to consolidate various farmer welfare schemes operating under different departments.

- The mission aims to integrate initiatives from multiple departments to streamline and enhance farmer welfare. These departments include the Farmers' Welfare and Agriculture Development Department, Horticulture and Food Processing Department, and Fisheries Department. Together, they focus on improving core agriculture, value addition, and aquaculture promotion.
- Additionally, the mission involves the Animal Husbandry and Dairy Department, Cooperative Department, and the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department. These departments contribute by supporting livestock-based income, facilitating collective farming and credit access, and ensuring fair pricing and food security for farmers.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The mission aims to boost farmers' income by ensuring fair pricing of agricultural produce, securing nutritional and food security, and offering sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- (ii) It emphasizes climate-resilient agriculture, encourages sustainable farming practices, and seeks to preserve biodiversity and traditional agricultural knowledge.
- (iii) Madhya Pradesh's agricultural productivity rose significantly from 1,195 kg/hectare in 2002-03 to 2,393 kg/hectare in 2024, marking a 200% increase.

#### 18. India Accelerates Cruise Tourism with 'Cruise Bharat Mission' to Boost River and Ocean Travel.

Cruise tourism is a nature-driven travel experience that explores India's rivers, seas, and canals

through themed journeys catering to all budgets. It enables safe and comfortable access to even remote destinations, enhancing inclusivity and ease of travel.

- Cruise tourism in India encompasses four key segments: international ocean cruises; coastal and island cruises, including luxury yachts and smaller ships; cruises along National Waterways (NWs); and tourism centered on island, coastal, and riverbank assets.
- The Cruise Bharat Mission (CBM) was launched by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) on September 30, 2024, from Mumbai Port, Maharashtra.
- The mission aims to double cruise passenger traffic in India within 5 years (by 2029), boosting the nation's cruise tourism sector.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The Government of India's Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030 aims to position India as a major global player in both ocean and river cruising. India's cruise market is expected to grow 8-fold over the next decade, driven by rising demand and disposable income.
- (ii) The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), functioning under the MoPSW, is working to develop navigational channels on select waterways.
- (iii) This includes installation of navigational aids and undertaking dredging operations (removal of sediments) to ensure smooth cruise navigation in NWs.

#### 19. India's DBT System Saves ₹3.48 Lakh Crore, Boosting Welfare Scheme Efficiency.

In April 2025, a new quantitative assessment by the New Delhi-based BlueKraft Digital Foundation revealed that India's Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system has enabled cumulative savings of ₹3.48 lakh crore by reducing leakages in welfare delivery mechanisms.

- **The report, supported by the Ministry of Finance (MoF), shows that subsidy allocations dropped from 16% to 9% of total government expenditure since DBT implementation, demonstrating its effectiveness in streamlining public finances.**

- **The findings highlight DBT's transformative impact on public spending efficiency, better targeting of beneficiaries, and promotion of social inclusion across various sectors.**

- **A core feature of the DBT system is the JAM Trinity—Jan Dhan bank accounts, Aadhaar IDs, and Mobile numbers—which ensures direct and secure fund transfers to beneficiaries. The assessment, based on data from 2009 to 2024, highlights DBT's impact on enhancing budgetary efficiency, promoting subsidy rationalisation, and achieving better social welfare outcomes.**

#### **Key Points:-**

(i) Key findings from the assessment reveal that during the Pre-DBT Era (2009-2013), subsidies accounted for 16% of total government expenditure, amounting to Rs. 2.1 lakh crore annually, but the system suffered from significant leakages.

(ii) In contrast, the Post-DBT Era (2014-2024) saw a reduction in subsidy expenditure to 9% of total expenditure in 2023-24, with beneficiary coverage increasing dramatically by 16 times, from 11 crores to 176 crores. Additionally, there was a COVID-19 Outlier where a temporary spike in subsidies occurred during the 2020-21 fiscal year due to emergency fiscal measures.

#### **20. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Inaugurates India's Largest Cruise Terminal 'Mumbai International Cruise Terminal (MICT)' in Mumbai.**

On April 21, 2025, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal from the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), officially flagged off Cruise Operations from the Mumbai International Cruise Terminal (MICT). Located at Ballard Pier in Mumbai, Maharashtra, MICT is India's largest and first world-class cruise terminal, developed to meet international standards.

- **The event also included the inauguration of several initiatives under the Green Port Initiative: the renovation of heritage buildings, the launch of the Shore-to-Ship Electric Supply system, and the opening of the Sagar Upvan Garden.**

- **Additionally, Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) worth ₹5,700 crores were signed to support infrastructure development at the upcoming VadHAVAN Port.**

#### **Key Points:-**

(i) The ceremony was attended by Union Minister of State (MoS) Shantanu Thakur (MoPSW), Sushil Kumar Singh (IRSME), Chairman of Mumbai Port Authority (MBPA), Adesh Titarmare, Deputy Chairman of MBPA, Unmesh Sharad Wagh, Chairman of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA), and Dhruv Kotak, Managing Director of J.M. Baxi, among other key dignitaries.

(ii) MICT has been built at a total cost of ₹556 crore as part of the Cruise Bharat Mission. The terminal was created to promote cruise tourism across India and is aligned with global benchmarks for design and functionality.

(iii) The project was developed through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, with operational management of the terminal being handled by JM

Baxi & Co. (Mumbai) and Ballard Pier Port Private Limited (Mumbai).

## 21. "MoCA Drives Aviation Modernization Under PM Modi, Fueling India's Viksit Bharat @2047 Vision".

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, has propelled India's aviation sector into a new era of growth, modernization, and global alignment.

- This reflects the emergence of a robust aviation ecosystem, firmly aligned with the Government of India (GoI)'s mission of becoming a developed nation by 2047, under the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

- Protection of Interest in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025: Passed by both Houses of Parliament in April 2025, this landmark legislation aligns India's aircraft leasing and financing regime with global norms under the Cape Town Convention, 2001. It strengthens the legal framework to boost investor confidence in India's aviation finance sector.

- Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhinyam, 2024: Replacing the colonial-era Aircraft Act of 1934, this progressive legislation was passed in 2024 and came into force on January 01, 2025. It marks a major leap in regulatory modernization and streamlining of India's aviation governance structure.

### Key Points:-

(i) The Government of India (GoI) has laid the foundation stones for new terminal buildings at strategically important locations including Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Agra (Uttar Pradesh), Darbhanga (Bihar), and Bagdogra (West Bengal).

(ii) Since 2014, out of 21 'in-principle' approved projects, 12 Greenfield Airports have been operationalised, reinforcing regional connectivity

and infrastructure expansion.

(iii) India witnessed a dramatic surge in domestic air travel, with 22 crore 81 lakh passengers in 2024, more than double the 10 crore 38 lakh passengers recorded over the 65-year period before 2014, highlighting the democratization of air travel across the country.

## 22. MSDE and Microsoft Join Hands to Launch "AI Careers for Women" Initiative.

In April 2025, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Microsoft Corporation, Inc., headquartered in Redmond, Washington, United States of America (USA). The partnership marks the launch of 'AI Careers for Women', a significant skilling initiative focused on empowering women enrolled in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to build careers in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

- The initiative is designed to equip women with industry-relevant AI skills, enabling their active participation in the digital economy. This collaboration aims to position women as key contributors to India's innovation-driven growth and strengthen their role in shaping the country's future tech ecosystem.

- As part of this strategic collaboration, Microsoft will train 20,000 women through a 240-hour training curriculum under the AI Skilling and Innovation Framework for Women. This program is designed in alignment with the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET), based in New Delhi (Delhi), to ensure industry-relevant and globally recognized skill development.

- To create a widespread impact, the program will set up 30 Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in women's colleges across six Indian states. These CoEs will serve as central hubs and will provide mentorship, resources,

and support to an additional 150 spoke institutions located in Tier-II and Tier-III towns, thus expanding the reach of AI education and innovation to semi-urban and rural areas.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The implementation of this transformative program will be led by the Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based Edunet Foundation, a nonprofit organization. The foundation will collaborate closely with academic institutions, government agencies, corporates, and industry leaders to ensure a holistic ecosystem approach that promotes industry-relevant skills and economic empowerment for women in AI.

(ii) This initiative also aims to reshape traditional learning by integrating AI training into credit-linked university curricula, in line with the National Education Policy (NEP). The program promotes a flexible, interdisciplinary, and future-ready education model, fostering an inclusive workforce equipped to thrive in the 21st-century digital economy.

(iii) With a strong emphasis on practical application and innovation, the program will provide access to AI certifications, internships, apprenticeships, fellowships, and career guidance. Special focus will be given to empowering women from rural areas, enabling them to innovate in the field of AI and significantly improve their economic and career prospects.

### 23. Cooperation Ministry Collaborates with Swiggy Instamart to Promote Sale of Cooperative Products Online.

In April 2025, the Ministry of Cooperation (MoC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Swiggy Instamart, a Bengaluru, Karnataka-based quick-commerce platform, to onboard dairy

and other cooperative products. This collaboration aims to help cooperatives connect with a wider consumer base by leveraging digital marketplaces.

- The MoU was signed by Amitesh Jha, CEO of Swiggy Instamart, and D.K. Verma, Joint Secretary, MoC, during a formal event attended by Dr. Ashish Kumar Bhutani, Secretary, Ministry of Cooperation. The partnership is a step forward in modernizing and empowering India's cooperative sector.

- Under the agreement, products from Bharat Organics and other cooperative dairy units will be listed on Swiggy's e-commerce and quick-commerce platforms.

- Swiggy will create a dedicated "Cooperative" category on its app, featuring a range of products including organic items, dairy, millets, handicrafts, and more—sourced from cooperative societies across India.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The collaboration will support cooperative brands in the areas of marketing, promotion, consumer technology, and capacity building.

(ii) The MoU aligns with the United Nations' declaration of 2025 as the 'International Year of Cooperation', further highlighting the global focus on strengthening cooperative systems.

(iii) On 24 April 2025, Dr. Ashish Kumar Bhutani also inaugurated a state-of-the-art packaging facility of the National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL) in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, which will specialize in hygienic packaging of pulses and various organic food products.

### 24. C-DOT and STL Achieve India's First Quantum Key Distribution Over Multi-Core Fibre (MCF) Network.

In April 2025, the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), based in New Delhi (Delhi) and functioning under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications (MoC), in collaboration with Pune (Maharashtra)-based Sterlite Technologies Limited (STL), successfully conducted India's first Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) transmission over a 4-core Multi-Core Fibre (MCF) network.

- **Both C-DOT and STL reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening India's leadership in quantum communication and optical networking technologies on the global stage.**

- **A stable QKD link was established over a distance of more than 100 kilometres, demonstrating reliability even under heavy data traffic. One core transmitted quantum signals, while the remaining three cores handled high-speed classical data.**

- **C-DOT developed and deployed industry-grade QKD systems, which have been approved by the Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) under the DoT.**

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The test validated the coexistence of quantum and classical communication on the same optical fibre, allowing for secure and cost-efficient data transmission.
- (ii) Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) is a method of secure encryption key exchange based on quantum mechanics principles.
- (iii) Multi-Core Fibre (MCF) is an advanced optical fibre featuring multiple cores (channels) within a single cladding, enabling concurrent data transmission through multiple paths.

## INTERNATIONAL

### 1. China Launches Gold ATMs in Shanghai Enabling Instant Gold-to-Cash Conversion.

In April 2025, China launched its first Gold ATM, an innovative financial service developed by Shenzhen Kinghood Holdings Group Company Limited, based in Guangdong, China. This machine offers a fast, fully paperless way for individuals to convert gold items into cash, significantly enhancing the convenience and accessibility of gold monetization.

- **It assesses, melts, and weighs the gold, verifies its purity, and transfers the equivalent value directly to the user's bank account—all within 30 minutes and without requiring any form of identification or documentation.**

- **The Gold ATM accepts gold items weighing more than 3 grams and with a minimum purity of 50%.**

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The machine melts the gold at temperatures above 1,200°C, performs real-time purity analysis, and calculates the payout amount based on the current market price of gold.
- (ii) A service charge of 18 yuan per gram (approximately ₹210) is deducted from the total value before the amount is transferred to the seller's bank account.
- (iii) This initiative marks a major step toward digital financial innovation in precious metals, bringing convenience, speed, and transparency to gold-to-cash transactions in China.

### 2. PM Narendra Modi's Official Visit to Saudi Arabia from April 22-23, 2025, Strengthens Bilateral Ties with Key MoUs and Strategic Discussion.

Prime Minister (PM) of India, Narendra Modi, undertook a two-day official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from April 22-23, 2025, at the invitation of Crown Prince and PM of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. PM Modi received a grand welcome with a 21-gun salute upon his arrival at the airport in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

- This marked PM Modi's third visit to Saudi Arabia, emphasizing the strengthening of bilateral ties between the two nations.

- It also marked his 15th official trip to the Gulf region since assuming office in 2014.

#### Key Points:-

(i) During the visit, PM Narendra Modi and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman held official talks and co-chaired the second meeting of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC).

(ii) The SPC decided to establish a new Ministerial Committee focused on Defence Cooperation, Tourism, and Cultural Cooperation.

(iii) India and Saudi Arabia signed four Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) during PM Modi's visit, aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation across various sectors.

### 3. In THE Asia University Rankings 2025 IISc Tops Among Indian Institutes and China's Tsinghua University Leads Overall.

In April 2025, London, United Kingdom (UK)-based Times Higher Education (THE) released its 13th edition of the Asia University Rankings. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, Karnataka, topped among all the Indian institutes featured on the list. IISc secured the 38th rank with an overall score of 65.2, a drop from its 32nd position in the 2024 list.

- Overall, China retained its dominance by securing the top two spots, with Tsinghua University ranking 1st (score 92.5) and Peking University ranking 2nd (score 92).

- They were followed by the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) from Singapore, ranked 3rd and 4th respectively.

#### Key Points:-

(i) This latest edition ranked 853 universities from 35 countries/territories, up from 739 universities in 2024, evaluating their research, teaching, knowledge transfer, and international outlook.

(ii) Among India's top 10 universities, only two Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) — IIT-Indore (Madhya Pradesh), ranked 131st, and IIT-Guwahati (Assam), ranked 184th — featured on the list.

(iii) Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences, with an overall score of 48.1, ranked 146th (up from 150th in 2024), and emerged as the highest-ranked private university in India for the second consecutive year.

### 4. UNDP Joins Global Network to Support Countries in Tackling Climate Change.

In April 2025, the New York (United States of America, USA)-based United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recently joined the Santiago Network, an international initiative specifically developed to support vulnerable countries and communities in addressing the irreversible impacts of loss and damage caused by climate change.

- This marks a major step in scaling up technical assistance and policy support for countries most affected by climate-induced loss and damage.

- The term 'loss and damage' refers to the harmful effects of climate change that cannot be avoided or adapted to.

#### Key Points:-

(i) A 2023 study showed that between 2000 and 2019, the world suffered at least USD 2.8 trillion in climate-related damages, amounting to nearly USD 16 million every hour.

(ii) Vulnerable countries, despite being least responsible for global greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), are most affected by climate change. For instance, the 2022 floods in Pakistan impacted 33 million people and caused economic damages close to USD 30 billion.

(iii) The Santiago Network was established in 2019 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to bring together organizations, networks, and experts to support the implementation of solutions that avert, minimize, and address loss and damage due to climate change. Its secretariat is co-hosted by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in Geneva, Switzerland.

#### 5. World Bank Report: India's Extreme Poverty Falls to 2.3% and Employment Growth Surpasses Working-Age Population.

In April 2025, Washington DC (USA)-based World Bank (WB) released its latest report titled 'India Poverty and Equity Brief: April 2025'. As per the report, India's extreme poverty (defined as living on less than USD 2.15 per day) has dropped significantly from 16.2% in 2011-12 to just 2.3% in 2022-23.

- The report further revealed that 17.1 crore people have been lifted out of extreme poverty, and 37.8

crore have moved above the broader poverty line during this period.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The report highlighted that India has made significant strides in poverty reduction, with employment growth outpacing the working-age population since 2021-22.

(ii) The report also indicated that the decline in India's extreme poverty rate was highest in rural areas, where it dropped from 18.4% to 2.8%. Urban extreme poverty decreased from 10.7% to 1.1%, narrowing the rural-urban poverty gap from 7.7% to just 1.7%, reflecting a 16% Year-on-Year (Y-o-Y) decrease.

(iii) According to the World Bank's findings, India's employment rates, especially among women, are increasing. Urban unemployment dropped to 6.6% in the 1st Quarter (Q1) of Financial Year 2024-25 (FY25), the lowest since 2017-18.

#### 6. RBI Revokes Imperial Urban Co-op Bank's License Due to Insufficient Liquidity.

In April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cancelled the license of the Jalandhar (Punjab)-based Imperial Urban Co-operative Bank due to the bank's lack of adequate capital and earning prospects.

- With immediate effect, the bank has been prohibited from conducting any banking business, which includes the acceptance and repayment of deposits, as defined under Section 5(b) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Government of Punjab, has been requested to issue an order for the winding up of the bank and

appoint a liquidator for the bank.

(ii) On liquidation, each depositor is entitled to receive a deposit insurance claim up to Rs. 5 lakh under the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Act, 1961.

(iii) According to the data submitted by the bank to the RBI, 97.79% of depositors are entitled to receive the full amount of their deposits from DICGC. As of January 31, 2025, DICGC has already paid Rs. 541 crore of the total insured deposits.

### 7. 'Revive Our Ocean' Global Initiative Launched to Empower Coastal Communities in Marine Protection.

In April 2025, a new global initiative titled 'Revive Our Ocean', a first-of-its-kind programme, was launched to empower coastal communities in establishing and managing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) through localized efforts.

- This initiative is being spearheaded by the United States of America (USA)-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Dynamic Planet, in collaboration with the National Geographic Society (NGS)'s Pristine Seas programme.

- The initiative is supported by renowned British naturalist David Attenborough and is structured around three core pillars: Inspire, Enable, and Equip.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The primary objective of this initiative is to assist coastal communities in creating and managing MPAs by eliminating barriers that hinder their conservation efforts.

(ii) Revive Our Ocean has also formed the Revive Our Ocean Collective, uniting local leaders and successful community organizations to promote collaborative marine protection.

(iii) Initially, the programme will focus on seven countries: United Kingdom (UK), Portugal, Greece, Turkey, Philippines, Indonesia, Mexico.

### 8. Uganda Announces End of Ebola Sudan Virus Outbreak.

In April 2025, the Ministry of Health (MoH) of Uganda officially declared the end of the Ebola Sudan Virus Disease (SVD) outbreak, less than 3 months after it was confirmed in the capital, Kampala.

- The outbreak was officially declared over after the discharge of the last confirmed patient on 14 March 2025, followed by a 42-day countdown, in accordance with the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.

- This marked Uganda's 2nd Ebola outbreak in less than 3 years, which was confirmed on 30 January 2025.

- The Ebola strain involved in this outbreak was the SVD subtype, which, in past outbreaks, has had a fatality rate of 4 in 10 people infected.

#### Key Points:-

(i) SVD is a severe disease caused by the Sudan virus (SUDV), which belongs to the same family as the Ebola Virus (EBOV). SUDV was first identified in southern Sudan in June 1976.

(ii) Prior to this outbreak, there had been 8 previous outbreaks caused by SUDV, with 5 occurring in Uganda and 3 in Sudan. Uganda last reported an SVD outbreak in 2022.

### 9. World Social Report 2025 Highlights Growing Inequality, Economic Insecurity, and Public Distrust and Calls for a New Global Policy Consensus.

In April 2025, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) released its flagship publication "World Social Report 2025: A New Policy Consensus to Accelerate Social Progress."

- The 2025 report was co-produced by the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) and the Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD), UN DESA.

- The report calls for a new policy consensus grounded in three core principles: Equity, Economic Security for All, and Solidarity. These principles are vital to strengthening the social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

- The report reflects on past achievements and key lessons, while charting a path forward to fulfill the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action (1995) and to accelerate progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### Key Points:-

(i) Around 60% of the global population is affected by economic insecurity, while more than 690 million people continue to live in extreme poverty.

(ii) Climate change is causing widespread disruptions and is expected to diminish livelihood opportunities for future generations. While low-income countries bear the brunt of environmental degradation, it is the high-income countries that contribute most to pollution.

(iii) The erosion of social cohesion is weakening societies' ability to take collective action, posing a serious threat to social progress and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### 10. ICIMOD 2025 Report Highlights Decline in Snow Persistence Across Ganga, Indus & Brahmaputra River Basins.

In April 2025, the Kathmandu (Nepal)-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) released the HKH Snow Update Report 2025, highlighting a significant decline in snow persistence across the Ganga, Indus, and Brahmaputra river basins in the Indian subcontinent.

- The report is based on a 23-year time series (2003–2025) analysis of basin-scale snow persistence during the November to March snow seasons. The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region, which sustains these major rivers, recorded its third consecutive below-normal snow year in 2025.

- According to the report, snow persistence was 23.6% below normal, marking the lowest level in the past 23 years. This decline poses serious concerns for water availability in the region.

- Snow Persistence refers to the number of days snow remains on the ground after snowfall. It plays a critical role in maintaining the water supply, river flow, and ecological balance in snow-fed regions like the HKH.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The HKH Snow Update Report 2025 reveals alarming trends in snow persistence across major South Asian river basins. In the Ganga Basin, snow persistence peaked at +30.2% in 2015 but sharply declined to a 23-year low of just 24.1% in 2025, posing threats to early-summer river flows. Similarly, the Indus Basin, which saw a peak of +19.5% in 2020, experienced a drastic drop to -24.5% in 2024 and further plummeted to -27.9% in 2025, marking its lowest in two decades.

(ii) In the Brahmaputra Basin, snow persistence that peaked at +27.7% in 2019 steadily declined to 27.9% in 2025. This trend raises concerns over

the region's water-dependent sectors like hydropower generation and agriculture. Meanwhile, the Tibetan Plateau, known as the source of many North Indian rivers, saw snow levels plunge from a significant +92.4% in 2022 to a worrying -29.1% in 2025, highlighting its growing climate vulnerability.

(iii) Other regional basins have also shown sharp reductions. The Mekong Basin recorded the most severe drop at -51.9%, closely followed by the Salween Basin at -48.3%. The Yangtze River Basin (Vangtze) also showed a notable decline at -26.3%. These findings underscore the regional scale of snow loss and its potential implications for water security, agriculture, and ecosystems across Asia.

### 11. "UNESCO's 2025 Report Reveals Only 60% of Countries Have Food and Beverage Regulations in Schools, Highlighting Health Concerns".

In April 2025, the Paris (France)-based United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) released its latest Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report, revealing that only 60% of countries have implemented legislations or standards regulating food and beverages in schools. This finding raises concerns about the global commitment to ensuring student health and well-being.

- The report, which focuses on the importance of nutrition in education, was released in partnership with the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition.

- It is also supported by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine under the School Meal Coalition, highlighting the ongoing efforts to promote healthy eating in schools worldwide.

- According to the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report, only 93 out of 187 countries have legislation, compulsory standards, or norms regulating school food and beverages. It was further revealed that only 29% of these countries have measures to restrict food and beverage marketing in schools.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The report showed that in 30 low-and middle-income countries (LMICs), food and nutrition education in schools is mainly integrated through extracurricular activities or project-based initiatives rather than as a standalone subject across the curriculum.

(ii) The report highlighted that only 3 out of 28 countries regularly assess changes in attitudes, perceptions, knowledge, and practices related to food and nutrition. It also noted that 72% of countries have some restrictions on food marketing on school grounds, while 52% have national-level restrictions on food permitted near schools. This indicates a need for more comprehensive and consistent policies to promote better student health worldwide.

(iii) India's school meal program, now called PM-POSHAN, was nationalized in 2001 after a Supreme Court order, showing that children who received meals throughout primary school scored 18% higher in reading and 9% higher in math. Tamil Nadu, which pioneered school meals in 1925, introduced a breakfast program in 2022, increasing attendance from 60-70% to 90-95%.

### 12. Japan to Provide Shinkansen E5 and E3 Series Trains for India's Bullet Train Project.

In April 2025, the Government of Japan announced the donation of two Shinkansen train sets, 'E5' and 'E3' series, to India. These high-speed trains will

support the testing and inspection of India's first bullet train project, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor (MAHSRC).

- **The trains, scheduled to be delivered in early 2026, will be equipped with specialized inspection tools to gather vital operational data, particularly focused on India's environmental conditions such as high temperatures and dust.**
- **Shinkansen refers to Japan's renowned high-speed rail technology.**
- **In 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe signed an agreement to manufacture Shinkansen trains in India under the "Make in India" initiative, facilitating the transfer of Japanese high-speed rail technology to India.**

#### **Key Points:-**

(i) The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor (MAHSRC) is being developed by the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL), a subsidiary of Indian Railways. Once completed, the corridor will enable bullet trains to run at speeds of up to 320 km/h, marking India's entry into high-speed rail infrastructure.

(ii) The donated Shinkansen trains include the E5 and E3 series. The E5 Series, introduced by East Japan Railway Company in 2011, is known for its aerodynamic design, advanced safety, and superior ride quality. The E3 Series, an older model used for mini-shinkansen services, is recognized for its efficient performance and reliability.

(iii) The India-Japan collaboration stems from an agreement signed in 2016 between PM Narendra Modi and former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe, promoting high-speed rail technology transfer through the "Make in India" initiative. The trial data from the E5 and E3 series will help in the future indigenous production of the E10 (Alfa-X) series

trains, capable of reaching speeds up to 400 km/h. The project is financially supported by around 80% low-interest yen loans from the Japanese government, and negotiations are underway for further loan frameworks to introduce the E10 trains.

#### **13. India Joins Global League as 17th Nation to Set Up Athlete Passport Management Unit in New Delhi.**

In April 2025, Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, from the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) and the Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoL&E), inaugurated the Athlete Passport Management Unit (APMU) at the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) in New Delhi, Delhi.

- **This milestone establishes India as the 17th country in the world to implement a dedicated system for tracking athletes' biological profiles over time, in accordance with the guidelines of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).**
- **Countries currently hosting APMU facilities include the United States of America (USA), China, Great Britain, Germany, France, Australia, Japan, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Italy, Norway, Poland, Qatar, Spain, and Switzerland.**
- **The APMU functions as a specialized entity that oversees the Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) program.**

#### **Key Points:-**

(i) The ABP program involves continuous monitoring of athletes' biological indicators, such as blood parameters and hormone levels, to identify possible doping practices without directly detecting banned substances.

(ii) The launch of the APMU reflects India's commitment to ensuring clean, fair, and

transparent sporting practices.

(iii) The Athlete Biological Passport Operating Guidelines were introduced by WADA and have been in effect since 1 December 2009.

#### 14. Telangana Partners with Japanese Companies to Develop Eco Town in Hyderabad.

In April 2025, Anumula Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister (CM) of Telangana, signed Letters of Intent (Lols) with multiple Japanese companies to develop an 'Eco Town' in Hyderabad, Telangana. This project emphasizes recycling, waste management, environmental restoration, and supports the vision of a circular economy.

- The agreements were signed during CM Revanth Reddy's official visit to Kitakyushu, Japan, held from April 16 to 22, 2025.

- During this visit, the CM also inaugurated the Telangana Pavilion at the Osaka World Expo in Kansai, Japan, making Telangana the first Indian state to participate in the World Expo 2025.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The Letters of Intent (Lols) were signed with several renowned Japanese companies to facilitate the development of the proposed 'Eco Town' in Hyderabad. The companies involved include EX Research Institute Limited, P9 Limited Liability Company (LLC), Nippon Steel Engineering Co., Ltd., New Chemical Trading Co., Ltd., and Amita Holdings Co., Ltd..

(ii) These collaborations aim to strengthen efforts in environmental restoration, recycling, and waste management through innovative Japanese technologies and practices.

(iii) In addition to these agreements, Toshiba Transmission Distribution Systems (India) Pvt. Ltd. (TTDI), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Toshiba

Corporation (Japan), announced a major investment of ₹562 crore in Telangana. This investment will be used to set up a new manufacturing facility for surge arresters and expand existing infrastructure for transformers and gas-insulated switchgear at the company's plant located in Rudraram, Telangana.

#### 15. SIPRI Report 2024 Reveals Global Military Spending Exceeds USD 2.7 Trillion with India Investing USD 86.1 Billion.

Amid major global conflicts, including the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Palestine conflict, world military expenditure reached USD 2718 billion in 2024, reflecting a 9.4% increase in real terms from 2023, as per a report by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), based in Stockholm, Sweden.

- Military spending rose across all regions, with particularly rapid growth in Europe and the Middle East.

- The United States of America (USA) remained the world's top spender with USD 997 billion, followed by China with USD 314 billion in second place and Russia with USD 149 billion in third.

- India retained its position as the 5th-largest military spender, investing USD 86.1 billion, marking a 1.6% increase from the previous year.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The top five military spenders – USA, China, Russia, Germany, and India – accounted for 60% of global military expenditure, with a combined total of USD 1635 billion.

(ii) Over 100 countries increased their military spending in 2024, with the share of global GDP devoted to military expenditure rising to 2.5%.

### 16. ADB-WEF Report 2025 Highlights Asia-Pacific Lag in Grid Readiness Despite USD 729.4 Billion Clean Energy Investment.

On April 28, 2025, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), headquartered in Manila, Philippines, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum (WEF), based in Cologny, Switzerland, released the report titled "Energy Transition Readiness Assessment (ETRA) for Developing Asia and the Pacific."

- This marks ADB's first initiative to evaluate the readiness of countries in the region to transform their energy systems, using a new framework based on WEF's Energy Transition Index (ETI).

#### Key Points:-

(i) The report highlights the urgent need for large-scale investments to modernize and interconnect power grids across developing nations in Asia and the Pacific, to effectively realize the benefits of the energy transition.

(ii) Clean energy investments in developing Asia grew by over 900% between 2013 and 2023, reaching USD 729.4 billion in 2023 — accounting for 45% of global clean energy investments.

(iii) According to the International Finance Corporation (IFC), an estimated USD 23 billion per year in concessional funding is required for India, ASEAN countries, and other Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs) to unlock private capital for the energy transition.

### 17. Indian Air Force (IAF) Joins Multinational 'Desert Flag-10' Exercise in UAE.

In April 2025, a frontline contingent of the Indian Air Force (IAF) arrived at Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates (UAE), to take part in 'Exercise

Desert Flag-10', a prestigious multinational air combat exercise organized by the UAE Air Force. The exercise is scheduled to take place from April 21 to May 8, 2025.

- Desert Flag is an annual multinational large-force employment warfare exercise hosted by the UAE Air Force, with its inaugural edition held in 2011. The Indian Air Force (IAF) participated in the exercise for the first time in 2021.

- Exercise Desert Flag-10, the 10th edition of this premier multinational aerial warfare exercise, is designed to enhance operational capabilities, interoperability, and strategic cooperation among participating nations. The 2025 edition includes air forces from 12 countries: India, Australia, Bahrain, France, Germany, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), and the host nation UAE.

- This exercise aims to foster better coordination and joint operations, allowing air forces from diverse nations to refine their combat techniques and share valuable insights, strengthening global defense partnerships.

#### Key Points:-

(i) India's participation in Exercise Desert Flag-10 involves the deployment of MiG-29 and Jaguar fighter aircraft from the Indian Air Force (IAF). The primary objectives of India's involvement include conducting complex and diverse fighter engagements in a multinational environment, exchanging operational knowledge and mission planning strategies with global air forces, and enhancing interoperability. Additionally, the exercise provides an opportunity to build mutual trust with partner nations.

(ii) India's strong defence cooperation with the UAE is highlighted through regular engagements such as annual Defence Dialogue and the Joint

Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC). This collaboration also includes naval and military training exchanges, along with regular port calls, strengthening the defense ties between the two nations.

(iii) To facilitate deeper defence engagements, India has posted a resident Defence Adviser (DA) at the Indian Embassy in UAE since March 2013. These efforts align with the shared vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to deepen defence, energy, and security cooperation between India and the UAE.

## BANKING & FINANCE

### 1. RBI Revises Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) Framework to Strengthen Banking Liquidity Management.

On April 21, 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced key amendments to the existing Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) framework.

- These amendments will be applicable to all Commercial Banks, excluding Payments Banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), and Local Area Banks (LABs).
- To ensure a smooth transition, RBI has provided sufficient time for banks to align their systems with the new LCR computation standards. The revised instructions will come into effect from April 01, 2026.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Banks will now be required to assign an additional 2.5% run-off factor on retail deposits enabled with internet and mobile banking (IMB) facilities.

(ii) As a result, the stable retail deposits with IMB facilities shall carry a 7.5% run-off factor (up from

the earlier 5%).

(iii) The less stable retail deposits with IMB shall now carry a 12.5% run-off factor (up from the earlier 10%). These changes aim to enhance the accuracy and resilience of liquidity risk management practices across the banking sector.

### 2. RBI Data Shows 8.2% Decline in Outward Remittances Under LRS During April to February.

Outward remittances under the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) during April 2024 to February 2025 in Financial Year (FY)25 remained lower compared to the same period last year. The remittances recorded a year-on-year (Y-o-Y) decline of 8.21 per cent, falling to USD 27.02 billion from USD 29.43 billion in the previous year.

- International travel, which is the largest component under LRS, saw a marginal drop of about 1 per cent. Remittances under this segment declined to USD 15.84 billion in April–February FY25 from USD 16 billion in the same period last year. Meanwhile, remittances for the maintenance of close relatives registered a sharp fall of nearly 22 per cent, declining to USD 3,300.5 million.
- Funds sent overseas for educational purposes also witnessed a notable drop. Remittances for overseas education fell by 16 per cent to USD 2,758.9 million compared to the same period last year, highlighting a significant reduction in this segment.
- Interestingly, remittances for the purchase of immovable property abroad rose by 28.32 per cent, reaching USD 277.7 million. In addition, investments in equity and debt under the LRS increased by 8.27 per cent to USD 1,392.55 million during the same period.

#### Key Points:-

(i) In February alone, outward remittances fell by 2.44 per cent year-on-year to USD 1.96 billion from USD 2.01 billion in February 2024. This reflects a moderate decline in overall monthly remittance activity under the scheme.

(ii) Despite the overall dip, the international travel segment grew by 3.5 per cent in February 2025, with remittances rising to USD 1.09 billion from USD 1.05 billion a year ago. However, remittances for overseas education declined sharply by 26.19 per cent to USD 182.17 million, and funds for maintenance of close relatives dropped by 11.78 per cent to USD 235 million.

(iii) The Liberalised Remittance Scheme was launched in 2004, initially with a remittance limit of USD 25,000. Over time, the limit has been revised in stages and currently allows all resident individuals, including minors, to remit up to USD 250,000 per financial year for permissible current or capital account transactions, or a combination of both.

**salary accounts, pensions, and Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT).**

**Key Points:-**

(i) SBI offers a wide range of alternate banking channels to enhance customer convenience and reduce branch dependency, including Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), Automated Deposit Cum Withdrawal Machines (ADWMs), self-service kiosks, SWAYAM barcode-based passbook printing kiosks, cheque deposit kiosks, internet banking, mobile banking through the You Only Need One (YONO) application, and WhatsApp banking services—ensuring 24/7 secure and seamless access to banking services.

(ii) As of December 2024, 98.1% of all transactions at SBI were carried out through alternate banking channels, marking a substantial rise from 88.1% in March 2019 and highlighting the bank's successful shift towards digital banking solutions.

### 3. SBI to Appoint 'Grahak Mitras' for Promoting Alternate Banking Channels.

In April 2025, the Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based State Bank of India (SBI), India's largest Public Sector Bank (PSB), announced the deployment of "Grahak Mitras" (Customers' Friends) across 4,500 branches, representing nearly 20% of its total 22,740 branches across India.

- The initiative aims to encourage customers to use self-service banking channels and help reduce congestion at bank branches.
- These Grahak Mitras will be sourced from State Bank Operations Support Services (SBOSS), a wholly-owned subsidiary of SBI, headquartered in New Delhi (Delhi).
- The deployment will focus primarily on high-footfall branches, particularly those handling government

### 4. RBI Directs Banks to Shift to '.bank.in' Domain by October 31, 2025.

In April 2025, the Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a directive mandating all banks to transition their digital operations to the exclusive '.bank.in' domain by October 31, 2025. The directive is part of a broader initiative aimed at strengthening the cybersecurity framework of digital banking services across India.

- The primary goal of this move is to address the rising cybersecurity threats posed by cybercriminals who exploit online vulnerabilities, thereby ensuring safer digital transactions for customers.
- This initiative was officially introduced on February 7, 2025, as a proactive step to bolster cybersecurity standards in the financial sector.

**Key Points:-**

(i) The Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT), based in Hyderabad (Telangana), has been designated as the registrar for the '.bank.in' domain. IDRBT has been authorized by the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

(ii) Banks are required to contact IDRBT at sahyog@idrbt.ac.in to begin their migration. IDRBT will provide technical and procedural guidance for the transition.

(iii) Banks will need to upgrade their IT infrastructure to comply with the new domain requirements, ensuring secure and uninterrupted digital banking experiences for users.

### 5. HDFC Bank Becomes Third Indian Firm to Cross Rs 15 Lakh Crore Market Capitalisation Mark.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based HDFC Bank Limited reached a major milestone by surpassing a market capitalisation (m-cap) of Rs 15 lakh crore, becoming the third Indian company to achieve this feat after Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), both also based in Mumbai.

● **As of 31 March 2025, HDFC Bank's m-cap stood at Rs 15,01,289.37 crore, supported by consistent share price appreciation and robust investor confidence.**

**Key Points:-**

(i) The bank posted a standalone net profit of Rs 17,616 crore in Q4 FY25, marking a 6.7% increase from Rs 16,512 crore in the same quarter of the previous year.

(ii) NII grew by 10.3% year-on-year, reaching Rs 32,070 crore, compared to Rs 29,080 crore in Q4

of FY24.

(iii) The total income for the quarter was Rs 89,488 crore, slightly lower than Rs 89,639 crore recorded during the corresponding period last year.

### 6. NABARD Acquires 10% Stake in 24x7 Moneyworks Consulting.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) acquired a 10% equity stake in Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN)-based agrifintech startup 24x7 Moneyworks Consulting Private Limited.

● **This marks NABARD's first-ever investment in a bootstrapped startup, aiming to enhance digital transformation in rural credit delivery.**

● **24x7 Moneyworks is renowned for its flagship platform, eKisanCredit (eKCC), a fully digital loan origination system tailored for Cooperative Banks, Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs).**

**Key Points:-**

(i) The eKCC platform integrates: Land records, Aadhaar and eKYC (Electronic Know Your Customer), Core banking systems, and ePACS (Digital PACS).

(ii) This enables end-to-end automation of loan disbursements, reducing processing time and enhancing transparency.

(iii) As of March 2025, India has 7.71 crore operational KCC holders, including 1.24 lakh for fisheries and 44.4 lakh for animal husbandry.

### 7. Axis Max Life Introduces AI-Powered 'Bandhan 2.0' for New Hire Onboarding.

In April 2025, Gurugram (Haryana)-based Axis Max Life Insurance Limited (formerly Max Life Insurance Company Limited), the largest non-bank private-sector life insurer in India, launched Bandhan 2.0, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled Augmented Reality (AR) platform.

- This platform is designed to transform the onboarding process for new hires by incorporating immersive storytelling, interactive gamification, and real-time leadership engagement.
- Bandhan 2.0 is available in English and Hindi on both mobile and desktop devices, enabling employees to onboard at their own pace.
- The platform offers virtual interactions with leadership and gamified modules covering company history, values, and culture.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Uniform onboarding is provided for thousands of employees annually, regardless of their location, and modules are accessible for 60 days post-joining for ongoing learning.
- (ii) Real-time HR dashboards track employee progress and reduce onboarding time, resulting in faster employee productivity.
- (iii) Axis Max Life Insurance is a joint venture (JV) between Max Financial Services Limited (MFSL) and Axis Bank Limited.

### 8. RBI Fines Indian Bank, IOB, and Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services.

In April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed penalties on three financial institutions: Indian Bank (Chennai, Tamil Nadu), Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) (Chennai), and Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Ltd (MMFSL) (Mumbai, Maharashtra) for various regulatory non-compliances.

- Indian Bank was fined Rs. 55 lakh for non-compliance with RBI directions on 'Interest Rate on Advances', 'Kissan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme', and 'Lending to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Sector. The penalty was imposed for violating provisions of Section 47A(1)(c) read with Sections 46(4)(i) and 51(1) of the Banking Regulation Act (BR Act), 1949.
- Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) faced a penalty of Rs. 2.2 crore for non-compliance with RBI directions related to 'Credit Flow to Agriculture - Collateral Free Agricultural Loans' and 'Lending to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Sector.
- This penalty was imposed under the provisions of Section 47A(1)(c) read with Sections 46(4)(i) and 51(1) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Ltd (MMFSL) was fined Rs. 6.77 crore for non-compliance with certain provisions of the 'Non-Banking Financial Company - Systematically Important Non-Deposit taking Company and Deposit taking Company (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2016' and Reserve Bank of India (Know Your Customer (KYC)) Directions, 2016.
- (ii) The penalty was imposed under Clause (b) of Sub-section (1) of Section 58G read with Clause (aa) of Sub-section (5) of Section 588 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

### 9. IEPFA Organizes Preparatory Session for Upcoming 'Niveshak Shivir'.

On April 28, 2025, the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA), under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA), organized a virtual preparatory meeting with Nodal Officers of stakeholder companies.

- The meeting aimed to finalize the operational framework for the upcoming 'Niveshak Shivir' initiative.
- The session was chaired by Anita Shah Akella, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of IEPFA and Joint Secretary at MoCA.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) 'Niveshak Shivir' will be conducted in cities where companies hold a high volume of unclaimed dividends for a duration of 6 to 7 years.
- (ii) The pilot phase of the initiative is set to be launched in Ahmedabad (Gujarat) and Mumbai (Maharashtra) in May 2025.
- (iii) During the session, IEPFA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL), headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, to advance investor education and protection via digital outreach efforts.

#### 10. CBDT Grants Income Tax Exemption Status to National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

On April 22, 2025, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, granted income tax exemption to the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), headquartered in New Delhi. This exemption supports the implementation of the Union Government's flagship Namami Gange Programme, launched in 2014.

- With this recognition, NMCG has become eligible for income tax exemption under clause (46A) of Section 10 of the Income Tax Act, 1961, effective from the Assessment Year 2024–25.
- NMCG is the implementation body of the Namami Gange Programme, under the Ministry of Jal Shakti. Its

objectives include effective abatement of pollution, conservation, and rejuvenation of the National River Ganga. The mission undertakes various projects such as sewage treatment, river surface cleaning, afforestation, industrial effluent monitoring, and promoting public participation in Ganga conservation efforts.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The exemption has been granted as NMCG qualifies under sub-clause (a) of clause (46A), which allows exemption for entities established under a Central or State Act and engaged in activities related to environmental conservation, sustainable development, or public welfare.
- (ii) NMCG was initially registered as a society on August 12, 2011, under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, and was later upgraded to an authority on October 7, 2016, under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- (iii) The CBDT also allowed NMCG's application seeking condonation of delay in filing revised returns for Assessment Years 2021–22, 2022–23, and 2023–24, enabling it to avail income tax exemptions for previous years.

#### 11. RBI Pushes Deadline to November 1, 2025, for Implementing BIS-Compliant Note Sorting Machines.

In April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced an extension of the deadline for banks to deploy Note Sorting Machines (NSMs) that comply with the latest Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) norms. The timeline has now been extended by six months, setting the new deadline as November 01, 2025.

- Additionally, the RBI has instructed banks and White Label ATM Operators (WLAOs) to ensure that Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) regularly dispense Rs.100 and Rs.200 denomination notes.

- To enhance the nationwide banknote sorting system, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), in consultation with RBI and other relevant stakeholders, published the Indian Standards for Note Sorting Machines, designated as IS 18663:2024, in the Gazette of India on March 19, 2024.

- It was initially mandated that from May 01, 2025, only NSM models certified by BIS and adhering to the mentioned Indian Standards would be permissible for deployment by banks.

#### Key Points:-

(i) In April 2025, the RBI further directed that banks and WLAOs must ensure their ATMs dispense Rs.100 and Rs.200 denomination notes consistently.

(ii) By September 30, 2025: At least 75% of all ATMs must dispense either Rs.100 or Rs.200 denomination notes from at least one cassette.

### 12. Airtel Payments Bank Unveils RuPay Cards with NCMC Functionality.

In April 2025, Airtel Payments Bank, headquartered in New Delhi (Delhi) and a subsidiary of Bharti Airtel, collaborated with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), based in Mumbai (Maharashtra), to roll out RuPay cards enabled with National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) functionality.

- This launch aligns with the Government of India (GoI)'s 'One Nation, One Card' initiative, aimed at enabling seamless and interoperable digital payments across the country.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The Prepaid Card, linked to a Minimum KYC Wallet, supports both online and offline transactions such as transit payments, PoS

purchases, and e-commerce transactions, while the Prepaid Payment Instrument for Mass Transit Systems (PPI MTS) Card is a standalone prepaid card created exclusively for transit-related payments.

(ii) Airtel Payments Bank has launched three RuPay NCMC card variants to suit different user needs. The Debit Card is linked to a savings account and supports a variety of debit transactions, including transit fares, Point of Sale (PoS) purchases, e-commerce payments, and ATM withdrawals.

(iii) As of April 2025, Airtel Payments Bank has issued over 2.5 million RuPay ON-THE-GO cards integrated with NCMC features. The bank targets expanding this figure to 10 million over the next two years.

### 13. BookMyForex Introduces 'Global Forex Card' Offering Zero Cross-Currency and ATM Withdrawal Charges.

In April 2025, BookMyForex, headquartered in Gurugram (Haryana) and a MakeMyTrip Group entity, launched its 'Global Forex Card', a USD-denominated single currency prepaid card designed to reduce foreign exchange costs for international travelers and students.

- The card addresses the increasing demand for transparent, affordable, and efficient forex solutions, particularly for students and professionals going abroad.

- Cardholders can transact in over 180 global currencies without any currency conversion fees, even though the card is loaded in USD.

- Cash withdrawals from ATMs worldwide are free of additional charges. However, some foreign banks or ATMs may impose their own service fees.

**Key Points:-**

(i) Under the “Crazy Cashback Sale”, users can earn up to ₹7,500 cashback on forex purchases through the card—offering savings of up to 3.3% per transaction.

(ii) The card carries no issuance fee, no reload fee, and no annual maintenance charges. Students can use the card to pay tuition fees to universities abroad without incurring any additional charges.

(iii) The Global Forex Card enjoys wide international acceptance, making it ideal for travel to destinations including Vietnam, Indonesia, Central Asia, and South America.

#### 14. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Unveils BSE Coin, Logo, and Index to Mark 150th Anniversary of BSE.

On April 17, 2025, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a Rs 150 commemorative coin to celebrate 150 years of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai, Maharashtra. BSE, Asia's oldest stock exchange, also saw the launch of the BSE@150 Logo and the BSE 150 Index, a new benchmark index designed to monitor the performance of the top 150 listed companies based on market capitalization and liquidity.

● **Union Minister of State Pankaj Chaudhary and Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), were present at the event.**

**Key Points:-**

(i) During her address, the Union Minister praised BSE's technological advancements and its critical role in India's economic growth, emphasizing that BSE processes orders worth Rs 1,500 crore daily,

highlighting its seamless integration with cutting-edge technology.

(ii) Additionally, the market capitalization of BSE has reached Rs 400 lakh crore, positioning it among the top stock exchanges in the world.

#### 15. PB Fintech Receives RBI Approval to Operate as an Online Payment Aggregator (PA).

In April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) granted in-principle authorisation to PB Pay Private Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Gurugram (Haryana)-based PB Fintech Limited, to operate as an Online Payment Aggregator (PA) under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

● **This approval enables PB Pay to enter the digital payments ecosystem, providing payment processing services and competing with existing players like Razorpay, Cashfree, and CCAvenue.**

**Key Points:-**

(i) In March 2024, PB Fintech's board approved the incorporation of PB Pay Private Limited to carry out domestic and cross-border payment aggregation services, supporting merchants through both offline and digital payment infrastructure.

(ii) The company was incorporated in April 2024 with a proposed authorised share capital of Rs 50 crore and a paid-up share capital of Rs 27 crore.

(iii) The RBI introduced the Payment Aggregator (PA) framework in March 2020, requiring entities to obtain a license to onboard merchants and offer digital payment acceptance services.

#### 16. SEBI Grants Approval to Capitalmind Financial Services to Launch Mutual Fund Operations.

In April 2025, Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based Capitalmind Financial Services, founded by Deepak Shenoy, received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), headquartered in Mumbai (Maharashtra), to commence operations as Capitalmind Mutual Fund under Capitalmind Asset Management Private Limited (Capitalmind AMC).

- This approval enables Capitalmind to expand its financial offerings beyond Portfolio Management Services (PMS) and Alternative Investment Funds (AIF).

#### Key Points:-

(i) Capitalmind AMC plans to launch actively managed equity schemes based on proven quantitative models like Adaptive Momentum and Surge India, which have shown consistent post-fee performance over the past five years.

(ii) Currently, the firm manages over Rs 2,200 crore in assets under management (AUM) for more than 1,400 clients, maintaining a 98% annual client retention rate.

#### 17. RBI Permits Minors Aged 10 and Above to Operate Bank Accounts Independently.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued revised directions regarding the opening and operation of deposit accounts for minors.

- As per the RBI directions, minors aged 10 years and above are now permitted to independently open and operate their own savings and term deposit accounts, subject to terms and limits set by individual banks. These directions came into effect from April 21, 2025.

- Banks including commercial banks, urban co-operative banks, state co-operative banks, and district central co-operative banks have been instructed by the

RBI to frame new or amend existing policies to comply with the updated guidelines by July 01, 2025.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Banks are also allowed to offer additional banking facilities—such as internet banking, debit cards, and cheque book facilities—to minor accounts, depending on their risk management policies.

(ii) RBI has permitted minors below the age of 10 to open accounts as well, only through their natural or legal guardians.

(iii) It has specifically clarified that such accounts can now also be opened with the mother as the guardian.

#### 18. Jharkhand Government and SBI Ink MoU to Offer Insurance Benefits to State Employees.

In April 2025, the Government of Jharkhand and Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based State Bank of India (SBI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide insurance and financial benefits to Jharkhand government employees with salary accounts in SBI.

- The MoU was signed by Rajeshwari B, Special Secretary of the Finance Department, and Devesh Mittal, Deputy General Manager of SBI, in the presence of Hemant Soren, Chief Minister of Jharkhand, and Radha Krishana Kishore, Finance Minister of Jharkhand.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Employees will receive accidental insurance coverage of up to ₹1 crore in case of death or disability due to accidents.

(ii) Additional health and life insurance benefits will be provided at no extra cost.

(iii) Earlier, about 70,000 police personnel were covered under similar benefits (as of September 2024). With this new MoU, an additional 1.05 lakh employees will be included, taking the total coverage to approximately 1.75 lakh state government employees.

### 19. SEBI Extends Automated Trading Window Framework to Include Immediate Relatives of Designated Persons (DPs).

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has decided to extend its automated trading window closure mechanism to include immediate relatives of Designated Persons (DPs) in listed companies. This decision has been taken ahead of the declaration of financial results to further strengthen compliance with insider trading regulations.

- The move aims to prevent inadvertent violations by ensuring that individuals who may have access to Unpublished Price-Sensitive Information (UPSI)—such as quarterly financial results—are restricted from trading during specific periods.
- Designated Depository (DD) must provide portal access to listed companies, which are mandated to upload key details—like PAN, names, and demat account numbers—of Designated Persons (DPs) and their immediate relatives. Depositories must also submit quarterly reports to SEBI in a specified format.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The implementation of the PAN-based trading freeze mechanism will be carried out in two phases—Phase-I will begin on July 01, 2025, for the top 500 listed companies (based on market capitalization), while Phase-II will cover the remaining listed companies starting from October 01, 2025. Listed companies are required to

confirm the submitted data at least two trading days (T-2) before the trading window closure date. Following this, the Designated Depository (DD) will forward the verified information to stock exchanges and depositories at least one day prior to the closure period.

- (ii) Depositories will issue standardized formats and submission timelines to maintain consistency in reporting and compliance.
- (iii) Any discrepancies or disputes in the process will be resolved through coordination among depositories, stock exchanges, and listed companies, as per SEBI.

### 20. AU Small Finance Bank Introduces Personalized Concierge Services for Premium Customers.

In April 2025, Jaipur (Rajasthan)-based AU Small Finance Bank Limited (AU SFB), India's largest small finance bank, has launched 'Concierge Services' for its premium banking programs — 'AU ivy' and 'AU Eternity'.

- This initiative is designed to offer High-Net-worth Individuals (HNIs) personalized lifestyle assistance that goes beyond traditional banking services, enhancing their overall banking experience.
- AU Small Finance Bank's Concierge Services offer a suite of personalized, premium solutions under its elite programs — 'AU ivy' and 'AU Eternity' — catering to High-Net-worth Individuals (HNIs) seeking beyond-banking experiences.
- The service includes international travel planning, airport lounge access, and visa support, making travel smoother and more luxurious for premium clients.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Concierge services help in exclusive event organization, premium stadium seating, dining

reservations, personalized shopping experiences, and even golf bookings for an elevated lifestyle.

(ii) Clients also get access to business-related assistance such as conference updates, courier services, and other professional support solutions tailored to their needs.

(iii) To avail AU SFB's Concierge Services, clients under the AU ivy program must maintain an average quarterly balance of ₹25 lakh in their savings account or have a Total Relationship Value (TRV) of ₹2 crore at the group level. Meanwhile, the AU Eternity program is tailored for individuals seeking high-interest returns and exclusive luxury privileges, with detailed eligibility criteria available on the official AU SFB website.

### 21. Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Launches 'Superwoman Term Plan' Exclusively for Women.

In April 2025, Pune (Maharashtra)-based Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance launched a new women-centric term insurance product called Superwoman Term (SWT). This exclusive offering is designed to provide comprehensive financial protection, health benefits, and child care support for women.

- The SWT plan covers 60 critical illnesses, including breast, cervix, and ovarian cancers, and offers a lump-sum payout to nominees in case of the policyholder's demise.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The product includes complimentary Health Management Services (HMS) worth Rs 36,500 per year, covering regular health check-ups, OPD consultations, pregnancy-related support, and nutrition counseling.

(ii) As of March 31, 2024, the company reported a Claim Settlement Ratio (CSR) of 99.23% and a solvency ratio of 432%, highlighting its financial

strength and reliability.

### 22. RBI Revokes Banking Licence of Shankarrao Mohite Patil Sahakari Bank.

In April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) canceled the Certificate of Registration (CoR) of Shankarrao Mohite Patil Sahakari Bank Limited, located in Indapur, Maharashtra. The cancellation became effective from the close of business on April 11, 2025, thereby prohibiting the bank from conducting any banking activities, including accepting or repaying deposits.

- The bank failed to maintain adequate capital and lacked earning potential, violating regulatory requirements under Section 11(1) and Section 22(3)(d) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

- The bank did not comply with the provisions of Sections 22(3)(a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

- RBI found the bank's continued operations detrimental to depositors, as it was unable to repay its depositors in full.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) has disbursed ₹47.89 crore to eligible depositors under Section 18A of the DICGC Act, 1961.

(ii) Depositors are insured for up to ₹5 lakh per account as per DICGC norms.

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

### 1. IMF Revises India's GDP Growth Forecast Down to 6.2% for FY26 and 6.3% for FY27.

In April 2025, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) released its "April 2025 World Economic

Outlook (WEO): A Critical Juncture-amid Policy Shifts" report. The IMF revised India's GDP growth forecast for Financial Year 2025-26 (FY26) down by 30 basis points (bps) to 6.2%, from its previous estimate of 6.5%. Additionally, the IMF lowered the forecast for FY27 to 6.3% from the earlier projection of 6.5%.

- The report highlighted that the growth rate for FY26 is supported by private consumption, especially in rural areas. However, the growth projection for FY27 is slightly lower due to trade tensions and global uncertainty. The IMF indicated that persistent risks due to trade disruptions and geopolitical tensions are weighing on growth, but factors like enhanced employment, better credit access, and easing inflation are expected to boost private consumption.

- As per the IMF's forecast, India's consumer price inflation is expected to decrease to 4.2% in FY26, down from 4.7% in FY25. The inflation rate is further projected to decrease to 4.1% in FY27, reflecting a positive trend towards price stability over the next two years.

- The report projects India's Current Account Deficit (CAD) at 0.9% of GDP in FY26 and 1.4% in FY27. In terms of employment, the unemployment rate is expected to remain static at 4.9% throughout this period, indicating stability in the labor market.

#### Key Points:-

(i) On the global front, the IMF forecasts the world's GDP to grow by 2.8% in Calendar Year 2025 (CY25) and 3% in CY26. These growth projections have been revised downward from the previous estimate of 3.3% for both years, reflecting a combined downgrade of 80 basis points. This brings global growth below the 2009-19 average of 3.7%.

(ii) Global inflation is expected to decrease more gradually, with projections of 4.3% in CY25 and

3.6% in CY26. This marks an adjustment from the previous forecast, with upward revisions for advanced economies and slight downward revisions for emerging markets. The easing inflation trend is seen as a positive sign for the global economy.

(iii) The IMF further revised the growth projections for emerging and developing economies, estimating growth rates of 3.7% for CY25 and 3.9% for CY26. These projections reflect a decrease in growth expectations for these economies as a whole, primarily driven by ongoing challenges in the global trade environment and geopolitical tensions.

## 2. Telangana Inks ₹10,500 Crore Pact with Japanese Companies to Establish AI Data Center in Hyderabad.

In April 2025, the Government of Telangana signed a tripartite agreement with Japanese Information Technology (IT) firms—NTT (Nippon Telegraph and Telephone) DATA Group Corporation, a global leader in digital transformation and IT services, and Neysa Networks, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-first cloud platform company—to establish an AI Data Center Cluster in Hyderabad, Telangana, with an investment of ₹10,500 crore.

- The agreement was signed in the presence of Anumula Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister (CM) of Telangana, during a high-level investment meeting held in Tokyo, Japan.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The proposed facility will include a 400 MegaWatt (MW) data center cluster, envisioned to host India's most powerful AI supercomputing infrastructure, equipped with 25,000 Graphics Processing Units (GPUs).

(ii) As per the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the partnership will combine the global

data center expertise of NTT DATA with Neysa's AI acceleration platform to co-develop cutting-edge AI-first solutions.

(iii) The facility will operate on a combination of grid and renewable energy sources, with a capacity of up to 500 MW, and will leverage advanced technologies such as liquid immersion cooling to meet Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards.

### 3. World Bank Cuts India's FY26 GDP Growth Forecast to 6.3%.

On April 23, 2025, the Washington D.C. (United States of America, USA)-based World Bank (WB) released its "South Asia Development Update April 2025", in which it lowered India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast for the fiscal year 2025-26 (FY26) to 6.3%, marking a 0.4 percentage point cut from its previous estimate of 6.7%.

- **This downward revision reflects slower private investment, reduced public capital expenditure, and rising global economic challenges and policy uncertainties.**

- **India's GDP growth for FY2024-25 is also projected to slow to 6.3% from 6.5%, due to diminishing positive impacts of lower interest rates and easier business regulations in the face of weakened global economic conditions.**

#### Key Points:-

- The World Bank noted that India's GDP growth declined from 9.2% in FY24 to an estimated 6.5% in FY25, representing the slowest pace in four years.

(i) For the South Asian region, the World Bank projects growth to decelerate to 5.8% in 2025, a 0.4 percentage point drop from its October 2024 estimates. However, for 2026, the region's growth

is expected to recover slightly to 6.1%.

(ii) On April 22, 2025, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) also revised India's GDP growth forecast for FY26 to 6.2%, down from its January 2025 projection of 6.5%.

### 4. LIC Increases Shareholding in Bank of Baroda to 7.05%.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), a state-owned insurance and investment company, increased its stake in Vadodara (Gujarat)-based Bank of Baroda (BoB), a leading Public Sector Bank (PSB), from 5.03% to 7.05%, marking a rise of about 2%.

- **This strategic move is part of LIC's diversified investment approach and reflects growing institutional confidence in the Indian banking sector.**

#### Key Points:-

(i) LIC acquired an additional 10.45 crore shares of BoB through Open Market Purchases (OMPs) conducted over a period of one and a half years, from 20 November 2023 to 16 April 2025.

(ii) With this acquisition, LIC's total shareholding in BoB reached 36,47,58,678 shares, equating to a 7.053% stake in the bank.

(iii) The acquisition did not affect the total voting capital of Bank of Baroda, which remains at 10,34,27,24,358.

### 5. Ambuja Cements Secures 37.8% Stake in OCL, Takes Control from CK Birla Group.

In April 2025, Mumbai-based Ambuja Cements, backed by the Adani Group, officially acquired control of Orient Cement Limited (OCL), which was previously managed by the CK Birla Group and headquartered in New Delhi.

- Ambuja Cements acquired 7.76 crore equity shares, representing 37.79% of OCL's total shareholding, from its promoters. Additionally, it bought 1.82 crore shares (8.87%) from public shareholders, giving it a total stake of 46.66%, thus gaining full operational control over OCL.

- Following the change in ownership, several key figures from the CK Birla Group stepped down, including Chandrakant Birla, Amita Birla, and Desh Deepak Khetrpal. Additionally, four independent directors also resigned, marking a significant leadership shift.

- Ambuja Cements appointed new leadership to steer OCL forward. Vaibhav Dixit was named Executive Director (ED), Vinod Bahety as Chairman and Non-Executive Non-Independent Director, while Sudhir Nanavati, Shruti Shah, and Ravi Kapoor joined as Independent Directors. Kajal Sarma was appointed the new Chief Financial Officer (CFO), replacing Prakash Chand Jain, effective April 23, 2025.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Since its acquisition by the Adani Group in 2022 from Switzerland-based Holcim Group for Rs 51,000 crore, Ambuja Cements has aggressively expanded its footprint in the cement sector through multiple acquisitions and plant upgrades.

(ii) In June 2024, the Adani Group acquired Penna Cement Industries Ltd. (Hyderabad, Telangana) for Rs 10,422 crore, adding 14 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) to its production capacity. In December 2024, it further expanded by purchasing Sanghi Industries Ltd. (Ahmedabad, Gujarat) for Rs 5,185 crore.

(iii) With these strategic acquisitions, the Adani Group aims to reach a cement production capacity of 140 MTPA by FY28. Meanwhile, UltraTech Cement, also backed by the Adani Group and based in Mumbai, continues to lead the market

with a capacity of 183.06 MTPA.

#### 6. India's Retail Inflation Falls to 3.34% in March 2025, Lowest in Over 5 Years.

In April 2025, India's retail inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), fell to 3.34% in March 2025, marking the lowest inflation rate in over five years, since August 2019. The decline from 3.61% in February 2025 is largely due to a substantial reduction in food prices, particularly vegetables, eggs, and pulses.

- India has witnessed a steady fall in inflation over the last three financial years (FY), easing from 6.7% in FY23, to 5.4% in FY24, and further to 4.6% in FY25, reflecting sustained disinflationary momentum.

- In March 2025, food inflation dropped to 2.69%, down from 3.75% in February, marking the lowest level since November 2021. Urban food inflation stood at 2.48%, while rural areas recorded 2.82%, reflecting an overall cooling of food prices.

- Core inflation, which excludes food and fuel components, edged up to 4.1%. This increase was mainly driven by a rise in costs related to gold, transportation, and education, indicating price pressures in essential services.

#### Key Points:-

(i) India's wholesale price inflation (WPI) also eased, falling to a six-month low of 2.05%. This decline points to a broader disinflationary trend in the economy, suggesting price stability across multiple sectors.

(ii) Among items with the highest year-on-year inflation in March 2025, the top five were: coconut oil (56.81%), coconut (42.05%), gold (34.09%), silver (31.57%), and grapes (25.55%).

(iii) On the other hand, the steepest decline in

prices was seen in: ginger (-38.11%), tomato (-34.96%), cauliflower (-25.99%), jeera (-25.86%), and garlic (-25.22%), showing relief in essential kitchen items.

### 7. World Trade Organization (WTO) Forecasts 0.2% Decline in Global Goods Trade for 2025.

In April 2025, the Geneva (Switzerland)-based World Trade Organization (WTO) released its latest Global Trade Outlook and Statistics report, forecasting a 0.2% decline in global merchandise trade volume for 2025 under current tariff and policy conditions. This marks a sharp downward revision from the 3.0% growth forecast made in October 2024, reflecting growing trade tensions, tariff hikes, and policy uncertainty across regions.

- The global commercial services trade is expected to grow at a slower rate of 4.0% in 2025, down from previous projections, due to subdued demand and policy frictions.
- North America is expected to witness the sharpest contraction, with exports declining by 12.6% and imports falling by 9.6%, dragging down global trade growth by 1.7 percentage points.
- Asia is projected to see modest growth in both exports and imports at 1.6%, while Europe anticipates 1.0% growth in exports and 1.9% in imports, reflecting a mixed regional recovery.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The imposition of reciprocal tariffs is estimated to reduce global trade growth by 0.6 percentage points, suggesting a significant impact of protectionist measures.

(ii) Trade policy uncertainty could potentially further depress global trade growth by 0.8 percentage points, underlining the importance of

stable international trade regulations.

### 8. IISR Unveils New Light-Colored Turmeric Variety 'IISR Surya'.

In April 2025, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR), based in Kozhikode (Kerala), developed a new light-coloured turmeric variety named 'IISR Surya'. This new variety features a light-coloured rhizome designed to meet the specific requirements of the modern powdering (masala) industry.

- The new variety has a pleasant aroma, expected to benefit farmers significantly, particularly in the production of high-quality turmeric powder.
- It is a high-yielding variety of turmeric, offering a 20% to 30% increase in yield compared to existing light-coloured local varieties. It can yield up to a maximum of 41 tonnes per hectare.

#### Key Points:-

The turmeric contains curcumin content in the range of 2% to 3%, on par with other light-coloured turmeric varieties.

### 9. Fitch Ratings Revises India's FY26 GDP Growth Forecast Downward to 6.4%.

In April 2025, Fitch Ratings, headquartered in New York (USA) and London (UK), revised India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast for the fiscal year 2025-26 (FY26) downward by 10 basis points (bps) to 6.4%, down from the earlier projection of 6.5%, due to escalating global trade tensions.

- The forecast for FY2024-25 (FY25) has also been trimmed by 10 bps to 6.2%, while the estimate for FY2026-27 (FY27) remains unchanged at 6.3%.

- The downward revision reflects rising risks from a "severe escalation" in global trade conflicts, especially amid uncertainty surrounding US trade policy, which has negatively impacted business investments and equity markets.
- Fitch also downgraded its global growth forecast for 2025 by 0.4 percentage points, with both China and the United States seeing a 0.5 percentage point cut in their respective growth projections.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Global economic growth is now projected to stay below 2% in 2025, marking the weakest pace since the 2009 financial crisis, excluding the pandemic years.
- (ii) In February 2025, Moody's Ratings also revised India's 2025 GDP growth forecast to 5.5-6.5%, down from 6.6%.

### 10. Tata Sons' Agratas Secures USD 990.79 Million Loan to Develop UK's Largest Battery Manufacturing Plant.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Tata Sons Private Limited, through its wholly owned subsidiary Agratas Energy Storage Solutions Private Limited, secured a 750 million Euros (approximately USD 990.79 million) two-year bridge loan to construct the United Kingdom (UK)'s largest battery manufacturing facility.

- This loan marks a significant step in Tata Group's broader 4 billion Euros investment aimed at boosting Electric Vehicle (EV) battery production in the UK. The initiative aligns with Tata's strategy to promote sustainable energy solutions and reinforce the UK's automotive industry.
- This bridge loan, among the top three foreign currency borrowings by Indian companies in 2025, was structured with participation from approximately 15

banks. It features a spread over the Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA).

- The battery manufacturing facility will be located at the Gravity Smart Campus in Somerset, UK, and is scheduled to begin production by 2026.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The facility is expected to contribute nearly 50% of the UK's projected battery manufacturing capacity for the automotive sector by the early 2030s.
- (ii) Jaguar Land Rover, a Tata Motors subsidiary, is anticipated to be the anchor customer. The plant will significantly aid the UK's transition to electric mobility.
- (iii) A bridge loan is a short-term financing option used to bridge the gap between two major financial events, such as buying a new asset before selling an existing one.

### MOUs and Agreement

#### 1. ICAI and CAG Sign MoU to Enhance Capacity Building in Public Sector Audits.

In April 2025, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), through its Committee on Public and Government Financial Management (CPGFM), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) of India to enhance Capacity Building (CB) in areas like commercial accounting, financial auditing, taxation, and other related aspects within the CAG institution in New Delhi.

- The MoU documents were exchanged by K. Sanjay Murthy, CAG of India, and Charanjot Singh Nanda, President of ICAI.

- This collaboration aims to build domain expertise, improve audit quality, and support economic growth through professional development.
- The MoU will strengthen professional capacity in contributing to India's economic growth and development by enhancing the skills of auditors.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The MoU includes a range of training programs aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of auditors. It covers training for recent recruits to help them build a strong foundation in auditing practices. Additionally, advanced programs for experienced officers will be provided to further develop their expertise in specialized areas. The MoU also includes Continuous Professional Education (CPE) programs to ensure that auditors remain updated with the latest industry developments and best practices.

(ii) The training will have a practical, application-oriented approach, covering topics such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, forensic accounting, and fraud investigation.

(iii) The CAG of India, established in 1949, is the Supreme Audit Institution of India, based in New Delhi. It is the sole licensing and regulatory body for the financial audit and accounting profession in India.

## 2. "CSIR-IMMT Signs Pact with Russia to Enhance Critical Mineral Technologies".

In April 2025, Bhubaneswar (Odisha)-based Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT), under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T), signed two Joint Declarations of Intent (JDIs) with leading Russian institutions:

- State Research and Design Institute of the Rare Metal Industry (JSC Giredmet), a premier research and design institute under the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation, Rosatom, Moscow (Russia).

- National University of Science and Technology MISIS, Moscow (NUST MISIS).

- The aim of the collaboration is to strengthen cooperation in critical mineral processing and sustainable resource development.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Two separate JDIs were signed by Dr. Ramanuj Narayan (Director, CSIR-IMMT), one with Dr. Andrei I. Golinei (Director, Chemical Technology Unit, JSC Rosatom Science) and another with Dr. Michael R. Filonov (Vice Rector, NUST MISIS), in the presence of Anoop Kumar Srivastava, Counsellor (Space) from the Embassy of India in Moscow.

(ii) The collaborations are coordinated by Dr. Kali Sanjay, Chief Scientist and Head of Business Development from CSIR-IMMT, and Dr. Konstantin V Ivanovskikh, Deputy Director for Science and Innovation, Griedmet JSC, and Dr. Korotchenko Natalia, Director, MISIS Information and Marketing Centre, NUST MISIS.

(iii) The collaboration focuses on research and development in process metallurgy, especially on technologies for extracting and processing critical minerals.

## 3. India and France Ink ₹64,000-Crore Agreement for Procurement of 26 Rafale-M Fighter Jets.

On 28 April 2025, the Government of India (GoI) and the Government of France officially signed a ₹64,000-crore (approximately USD 7.4 billion) agreement for the procurement of 26 Rafale-

Marine (Rafale-M) fighter jets to enhance the operational capabilities of the Indian Navy (IN).

- The fleet will comprise 22 single-seat fighter aircraft and 4 twin-seat trainer aircraft, which will primarily operate from India's first indigenous aircraft carrier, Indian Naval Ship (INS) Vikrant.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The contract was signed during a virtual ceremony attended by Rajesh Kumar Singh, Defence Secretary, Ministry of Defence (MoD), Government of India, and Thierry Matho, Defence Minister of France.

(ii) The agreement is a Government-to-Government (G2G) deal, meaning it was directly negotiated and concluded between the two governments, without the involvement of private entities.

(iii) Deliveries of the Rafale-M fighter jets are scheduled to begin by the end of 2029 and are expected to be completed by 2031.

## APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

### 1. Captain (Retd.) Jagmohan Named as New CMD of Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).

In April 2025, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved the appointment of Captain (Retd.) Jagmohan as the new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), a premier Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU) based in Mumbai, Maharashtra, under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

- He officially assumed charge as CMD of MDL with effect from 21 April 2025 for a tenure lasting until his superannuation on 30 September 2029, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

- He succeeds Biju George, who was holding the additional charge as CMD of MDL since March 2025, following the superannuation of Sanjeev Singhal in February 2025.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Captain Jagmohan was serving as the Director (Corporate Planning, Projects and Business Development) at Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) prior to this appointment, and brings with him over 25 years of experience in the Indian Navy (IN) and shipbuilding industry.

(ii) Earlier, as Head of Design at Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata (West Bengal), he successfully led key defence projects such as the Advanced Stealth Frigate, P28 Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Corvette, and Fast Patrol Vessels (FPV) for both the Indian Navy (IN) and Indian Coast Guard (ICG).

### 2. Sandeep Singh Named as New CEO of TrillionLoans Fintech.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based TrillionLoans Fintech Private Limited (TFPL), a digital-first Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), appointed Sandeep Singh as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), with immediate effect.

- He succeeds Sabyasachi Senapati, who will now transition to a new role within BharatPe Group, the majority stakeholder in TFPL. Sabyasachi will lead growth initiatives and platform operations at BharatPe, while continuing as a Whole-time Director on the TFPL board to ensure a smooth leadership transition.

- Sandeep Singh previously served as the Head of Digital Loans at Aditya Birla Finance Limited (ABFL),

where he played a significant role in advancing the company's digital lending initiatives.

- He brings over 16 years of cross-industry experience in digital lending, insurance, and enterprise software, with strong expertise in product development, customer service, and distribution.

#### Key Points:-

(i) TrillionLoans Fintech offers a diverse range of financial products, including merchant loans, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) finance, revenue-based lending, consumer credit, and vehicle loans.

(ii) BharatPe, backed by Tiger Global, acquired a 51% stake in TFPL in May 2023, and later increased its shareholding to nearly 60%.

### 3. Klaus Schwab Steps Down as WEF Chairman and Peter Brabeck Named Interim Successor.

In April 2025, Klaus Schwab, founder of the Geneva (Switzerland)-based World Economic Forum (WEF), announced his resignation as Chairman and member of the Board of Trustees with immediate effect.

- Following Klaus Schwab's resignation, the WEF's Board of Trustees held an extraordinary meeting, during which Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Nestlé S.A., was unanimously appointed as interim Chairman.

- Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, an Austrian businessman, has been associated with the WEF as Vice Chairman of the Foundation Board.

- Klaus Schwab, a German engineer and economist, founded the WEF in 1971, aiming to foster dialogue between political, business, and academic leaders to address global challenges.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Under his leadership, the WEF gained recognition for its annual meetings in Davos, Switzerland, where global leaders from various sectors convene to discuss critical international issues.

(ii) Schwab founded the Forum of Young Global Leaders (YGL) and co-founded the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship.

(iii) He has received several accolades for his leadership and humanitarian contributions, including the Guggenheim Humanitarian Award, the Dan David Prize, and the Global Economy Prize.

### 4. Campbell Wilson Resigns as Air India Express Chairman and Nipun Aggarwal Named Successor.

In April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Air India Express (IX), a wholly owned subsidiary of Air India, announced that Campbell Wilson, who had been serving as the Chairman of Air India Express since June 2022, has stepped down from his position. This leadership transition comes amid the Tata Group's ongoing efforts to streamline and restructure its aviation business.

- He will be succeeded by Nipun Aggarwal, the current Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) of Air India. Aggarwal will continue in his CCO role while also taking on the responsibilities of Chairman at the budget airline.

- To further enhance operational efficiency, Air India's Chief Operations Officer (COO), Captain Basil Kwauk, will be appointed to the board of Air India Express, replacing Campbell Wilson, following regulatory approval.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Nipun Aggarwal is a seasoned professional with over 28 years of experience spanning aviation,

finance, and energy sectors.

(ii) He has previously held key roles at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Standard Chartered Bank, and BP PLC, bringing a rich background in banking and energy.

(iii) Before joining Air India, Aggarwal served as Senior Vice President at Tata Sons, where he was instrumental in driving transformation across several Tata Group companies.

### 5. T Rabi Sankar Gets One-Year Extension as RBI Deputy Governor.

In April 2025, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the reappointment of T. Rabi Sankar as Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a one-year term. The extension will commence on May 3, 2025, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

- This marks his second consecutive one-year extension since his initial appointment in May 2021, following the retirement of former Deputy Governor B.P. Kanungo.

- As of April 2025, T. Rabi Sankar continues to oversee several crucial departments within the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), including the Foreign Exchange Department, Currency Management, and the Government Accounts Department. These roles place him at the center of key financial and monetary operations of the central bank.

- Before his appointment as Deputy Governor in May 2021, T. Rabi Sankar served as an Executive Director (ED) at the RBI. Additionally, between 2005 and 2011, he worked as a consultant with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), where he contributed to the development of government bond markets and debt management systems in emerging economies.

### Key Points:-

(i) Beyond T Rabi Sankar core responsibilities at the RBI, Rabi Sankar also holds several leadership positions in affiliated institutions. He serves as the Chairman of Indian Financial Technology and Allied Services (IFTAS), is a Board Member of Reserve Bank Information Technology Pvt Ltd (ReBIT), and sits on the Governing Council of the Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT).

(ii) As of April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India is led by four Deputy Governors: T. Rabi Sankar, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Swaminathan Janakiraman, and Poonam Gupta. Each plays a pivotal role in shaping the monetary policy and operational strategy of India's central banking system.

### 6. Sunil Bharti Mittal Becomes Part of WBG's Private Sector Investment Lab to Support Growth in Developing Economies.

On April 23, 2025, Washington, D.C., the United States of America (USA) based World Bank Group (WBG) announced the next phase of its Private Sector Investment Lab (PSIL), focusing on scaling solutions to attract private investments and generate jobs in developing nations.

- Sunil Bharti Mittal, Chairman of New Delhi (Delhi)-based Bharti Enterprises Limited (BEL), has joined the PSIL alongside global industry leaders, including Bill Anderson, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Germany-based Bayer AG; Aliko Dangote, President and CEO of Nigeria-based Dangote Group; and Mark Hoplamazian, President and CEO of USA-based Hyatt Hotels Corporation.

### Key Points:-

(i) Launched in June 2023, the PSIL is a

collaborative initiative between the WBG and global private sector leaders.

(ii) It is chaired by Shriti Vadera, Chair of Prudential pic based in London, the United Kingdom (UK).

### 7. Government Appoints IAS Officer Jitendra Srivastava as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of REC Ltd.

In April 2025, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, approved the appointment of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Jitendra Srivastava as the Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of New Delhi (Delhi)-based REC Limited, formerly known as Rural Electrification Corporation Limited, under the Ministry of Power (MoP). He assumed charge of the post on April 22, 2025.

- He succeeds Vivek Kumar Dewangan, IAS (Manipur cadre, 1993 batch), whose tenure concluded in March 2025. Following Dewangan's departure, Parminder Chopra, CMD of Power Finance Corporation (PFC), held the additional charge of CMD at REC Ltd.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Jitendra Srivastava is a 2000 batch IAS officer from the Bihar cadre. His career spans significant roles across key sectors, including finance, power, education, public health, and infrastructure.

(ii) Prior to joining REC, he was serving as Joint Secretary in the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) since January 2023.

(iii) He has earlier served as Secretary in the Home Department and the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) in the Government of Bihar.

### 8. Bhuvnesh Kumar Appointed CEO of UIDAI and K.K. Pathak Designated Additional Secretary in Cabinet Secretariat.

In April 2025, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, made major senior-level key bureaucratic changes across ministries and departments, particularly in the Cabinet Secretariat (CS) and Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), with an aim to reinforce administrative efficiency and align governance priorities with emerging challenges and opportunities.

- Senior bureaucrat Bhuvnesh Kumar, a 1995 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Uttar Pradesh (UP) cadre, has been named as the full-time Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of UIDAI.

- He was earlier appointed as the part-time CEO of UIDAI in January 2025. He previously served as Additional Secretary (AS) in the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), a position now replaced by Amitesh Kumar Sinha, a 1997 Indian Railways Account Service (IRAS) officer.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Senior IAS officer Abhishek Singh, a 1995 batch officer from Nagaland cadre, has been appointed as the Director General of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and will also hold the additional charge as Additional Secretary of MeitY.

(ii) Keshav Kumar Pathak, a senior IAS officer from the Bihar cadre, has been appointed as the Additional Secretary (AS) in the Cabinet Secretariat (CS).

### 9. Anant Ambani Appointed Executive Director as Reliance Industries and Becomes First Indian Company to Cross ₹10 Lakh Crore Equity Value.

On 26th April 2025, the Board of Directors of Mumbai, Maharashtra-based Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) appointed Anant M. Ambani as an Executive Director (ED) for a five-year term, effective from 1st May 2025, subject to shareholders' approval.

- **Currently, Anant M. Ambani serves as a Non-Executive Director at RIL and has been actively involved in the group's energy and sustainability initiatives, where RIL aims to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2035.**

- **He plays a key role in leading RIL's energy ventures, with a strong focus on driving green and Renewable Energy (RE) initiatives.**

- **Anant Ambani becomes the first among the Ambani siblings to assume an Executive Director (ED) role at Reliance Industries Limited (RIL); he has also been serving as a Board Member of Jio Platforms Limited (since March 2020), Reliance Retail Ventures Limited (since May 2022), and both Reliance New Energy Limited and Reliance New Solar Energy Limited (since June 2021).**

#### **Key Points:-**

(i) Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has achieved a major milestone by becoming the first Indian company to surpass ₹10 lakh crore in total equity. This landmark follows RIL's earlier achievement in 2024, when it became the first Indian firm to cross ₹20 lakh crore in market capitalization. The company's consistent growth reflects its strong market leadership and strategic expansions.

(ii) The surge in RIL's equity value has been driven by robust performances in its consumer businesses and its oil-to-chemicals (O2C) segment. Demonstrating its financial strength, RIL reported a 2.9% year-on-year (YoY) increase in its annual consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) and share of profit/(loss) from associates and joint

ventures, reaching ₹81,309 crore (approximately USD 9.5 billion).

(iii) Additionally, RIL announced a significant capital expenditure of ₹131,107 crore (around USD 15.3 billion) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025. This investment highlights RIL's commitment to future growth, focusing on strengthening its businesses across energy, digital services, and retail sectors.

#### **10. Amitesh Kumar Sinha Named Chief Executive Officer of Indian Strategic Materials (ISM).**

In April 2025, the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM), operating under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), appointed Amitesh Kumar Sinha, Additional Secretary at MeitY, as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). He succeeds Sushil Pal, a 1999-batch officer of the Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS).

- **As CEO, Sinha will lead the Phase-II implementation of the ISM, with a focus on semiconductor fabrication, advanced packaging, and Design-Linked Incentives (DLI) to accelerate India's semiconductor ecosystem.**

- **Amitesh Kumar Sinha is a 1996-batch officer of the Indian Railway Accounts Service (IRAS).**

- **He previously served as Joint Secretary in MeitY, where he played a pivotal role in formulating and executing Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes for mobile phones, IT hardware, and semiconductors under the Semicon India Programme.**

#### **Key Points:-**

(i) India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) Launched in 2022, ISM aims to transform India into a global hub for semiconductor and display manufacturing.

(ii) It functions under the Semicon India Programme, which was launched with a financial

outlay of ₹76,000 crore to support the development of semiconductor fabs, display fabs, and compound semiconductors.

(iii) According to S. Krishnan, Secretary of MeitY, India's semiconductor demand is expected to rise from USD 45–50 billion in 2024 to USD 100–110 billion by 2030, aligning with the government's efforts under Phase II of ISM.

### 11. Indian-Origin Tejpaul Bhatia Appointed as CEO of Axiom Space.

In April 2025, Axiom Space Inc., headquartered in Texas, United States of America (USA), recently appointed Tejpaul Bhatia, an executive of Indian origin, as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). He replaces Dr. Kam Ghaffarian, co-founder and Executive Chairman of Axiom Space, who had served as interim CEO after Michael Suffredini transitioned to the company's Board of Directors in August 2024.

- **Tejpaul Bhatia, who previously held the role of Chief Revenue Officer (CRO), brings over two decades of experience in tech and business leadership. He has founded three investor-backed startups, two of which were successfully acquired.**

- **He joined Axiom Space in 2021 and has played a vital role in establishing global partnerships and pushing forward commercial space innovation.**

#### Key Points:-

(i) Under Tejpaul Bhatia leadership, Axiom Space plans to intensify investments in advanced space technologies, including spacesuits, orbital infrastructure, and microgravity research and manufacturing.

(ii) The upcoming Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4) to the International Space Station (ISS) is scheduled for launch in May 2025, with Group Captain

Shubhanshu Shukla of the Indian Air Force (IAF) serving as the mission pilot.

### 12. Gunjan Soni Appointed as the Country Managing Director of YouTube India.

On April 28, 2025, YouTube, a subsidiary of the United States-based Alphabet Inc., appointed Gunjan Soni as the Country Managing Director (MD) for YouTube India.

- **She succeeded Ishan Chatterjee, who held the position from November 2022 to October 2024 before moving to JioCinema as Chief Revenue Officer (CRO).**
- **Gunjan Soni brings over 20 years of experience in business, technology, marketing, and e-commerce.**

#### Key Points:-

(i) Gunjan Soni previously served as Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at Singapore-based ZALORA Group for 6 years, driving category expansion and improving user experience.

(ii) Prior to ZALORA, she held key roles in India, including Executive Vice President (VP) at Star India and Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) at Myntra.

(iii) She also serves on the board of Texas-based CBRE Group, Inc., a Fortune 500 company.

## SPORTS

### 1. Indian Grandmaster Koneru Humpy Triumphs at FIDE Women's Grand Prix 2024-25 Held in Pune.

In April 2025, the fifth leg of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) Women's Grand Prix (WGP) 2024-25 was held in Pune, Maharashtra, India, from April 13 to 24, 2025. Indian chess Grandmaster (GM) Koneru Humpy clinched the title

recently on tiebreaks after tying with Chinese GM Zhu Jiner, with both scoring 7/9 points.

- This victory marks Humpy's 8th Grand Prix (GP) title, setting a new record and surpassing the previous joint record she shared with China's Hou Yifan.
- Despite both Humpy and Zhu Jiner finishing with 7.0 points each, Humpy emerged victorious owing to her superior tie-break scores.
- In the final round, Humpy defeated Bulgarian International Master (IM) Nurgul Salimova, while Zhu Jiner secured second place by defeating Russian IM Polina Shuvalova. Indian IM Divya Deshmukh finished third with 5.5 points.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The 5th leg of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix (WGP) 2024-25 was played in a 10-player round-robin format featuring participants from various countries. Both Koneru Humpy and Zhu Jiner earned 117.5 WGP points each for their shared first-place finish.

(ii) After five legs of the series, the cumulative Grand Prix standings are: Aleksandra Goryachkina (Russia) with 308.34 points from 3 events, Koneru Humpy (India) with 279.17 points from 3 events, and Zhu Jiner (China) with 235 points from 2 events.

(iii) The FIDE Women's Grand Prix 2024-25 consists of six tournaments organized by FIDE, with each tournament featuring ten players, and each player participating in three of the six events. The series serves as a qualification pathway for the FIDE Women's Candidates Tournament 2026, which will determine the challenger for the Women's World Chess Championship. The final leg of the WGP series is scheduled to be held in Großgloßing, Austria, from May 5 to 16, 2025.

## AWARDS

### 1. Goldman Environmental Prize 2025: 7 Grassroots Heroes Recognized for Environmental Advocacy.

On April 21, 2025, the California, United States of America (USA)-based Goldman Environmental Foundation announced the recipients of the 36th Goldman Environmental Prize (2025), popularly known as the 'Green Nobel Prize', recognizing seven grassroots environmental activists for their exceptional efforts in protecting the environment across six inhabited continental regions.

- The award ceremony took place in San Francisco, California (USA), celebrating the profound global influence of grassroots environmental leadership.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The 2025 Goldman Environmental Prize was conferred on 7 recipients from six geographical regions, acknowledging their impactful environmental activism at the grassroots level.

(ii) Batmunkh Luvsandash, a former electrical engineer from Mongolia, received the 2025 Goldman Environmental Prize for Asia for his significant contribution to environmental conservation.

### 2. RGIA Attains Prestigious ACA Level-5 Carbon Accreditation for Environmental Excellence.

In April 2025, Hyderabad (Telangana)-based Rajiv Gandhi International Airport Limited (RGIA), operated by GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd. (GHIAL), announced that it has received the Level-5 Accreditation under the globally recognised Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) programme by Airports Council International (ACI).

- With this prestigious recognition, RGIA has become one of the top 4 airports in the ACI Asia-Pacific & Middle East region to achieve Level-5, the highest level

of carbon management certification under the ACA framework.

**Key Points:-**

(i) The ACA programme serves as the industry standard for assessing an airport's initiatives to manage and reduce carbon emissions.

(ii) The Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) programme comprises seven progressive levels that evaluate an airport's efforts to manage and reduce carbon emissions. These levels are: Level-1 (Mapping), where airports measure their carbon footprint; Level-2 (Reduction), which involves actively lowering emissions; Level-3 (Optimization), where airports engage stakeholders to reduce emissions collectively; Level 3+ (Neutrality), which requires offsetting residual emissions to achieve carbon neutrality; Level-4 (Transformation), focusing on aligning carbon management with global climate goals; Level-4+ (Transition), which incorporates long-term emissions reduction strategies; and Level-5, the highest level of carbon accreditation, awarded to airports that demonstrate exceptional performance in carbon management and alignment with net-zero targets.

**3. Indian Filmmaker Payal Kapadia Awarded France's 'Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters' for Her Contribution to Cinema.**

On 24th April 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Indian filmmaker Payal Kapadia was honoured with the "Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres" (Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters), one of France's highest civilian distinctions in the fields of arts and literature. She was recognised for her exceptional contribution to global cinema and her efforts in fostering Indo-French cultural ties. The award was conferred by Jean-Marc Sere-Charlet, Consul General of France in Mumbai, during a

ceremony held at the Residence of France in Mumbai.

- Kapadia is an alumna of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) and is widely known for her innovative and experimental storytelling in cinema.

- ii. Her fiction feature debut, *All We Imagine as Light (2024)*, an Indo-French co-production between France-based *petit chaos* and Mumbai-based *Chalk and Cheese Films*, won the Grand Prix at the 77th Cannes Film Festival (CFF)—making it the first Indian film in 30 years to receive a major award in the main competition. The film was also shortlisted as France's official entry for the Academy Awards (Oscars) in the Best International Feature Film category.

**Key Points:-**

(i) In 2017, her short film *Afternoon Clouds* was selected as the only Indian entry at the 70th CFF.

(ii) Her experimental short *And What Was the Summer Saying* won the Special Jury Prize at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) in 2018, and the Pramod Pati Award at the Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) in 2020.

(iii) In 2021, Payal Kapadia received the Oeil d'Or (Golden Eye) Award at the 74th Cannes Film Festival for her acclaimed documentary *A Night of Knowing Nothing*. In 2025, she further cemented her global reputation with a Golden Globe nomination for Best Director and was ranked 5th in *Cahiers du Cinéma's* prestigious annual list of top filmmakers.

**4. Hubballi Airport Earns Platinum Status in ACI GAR 2025, Among Three Indian Airports Honored.**

In April 2025, Hong Kong (China)-based Airports Council International Asia-Pacific & Middle East (ACI APAC & MID) announced the winners of the

ninth Green Airports Recognition (GAR) 2025 during its Regional Assembly held in New Delhi (Delhi).

- In the Green Category, three Indian airports operated by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) were recognized under GAR 2025 — Hubballi Airport (HBX) (Hubballi, Karnataka), Kempegowda International Airport or Bengaluru International Airport Limited (KIA/BLR) (Bengaluru, Karnataka), and Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) (Kochi, Kerala).

- In the ACI Safety category, Kempegowda International Airport received the Gold Award, and a total of 12 airports across Asia-Pacific and the Middle East were awarded Platinum, Gold, and Silver awards under the Green Airports Recognition (GAR) 2025 initiative.

- This edition, themed "Sustainable Energy at Airports," received a record 39 submissions, reflecting the aviation sector's strong commitment to reducing environmental impact through innovative and sustainable energy solutions.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Hubballi Airport was honoured for implementing an 8 megawatt (MW) solar power plant within its premises, showcasing its commitment to sustainable energy usage.

(ii) Kempegowda International Airport received Silver recognition in the 15–38 million passengers per year category for its project titled "Sustainable Energy for a Greener Perpetuity."

(iii) Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) also received Silver recognition for setting up a 12 megawatt-peak (MWp) solar power plant.

#### 5. "Humanitarian Madhusudhan Sai Receives Fiji's Highest Honour.

On 25th April 2025, Sri Madhusudhan Sai, an Indian spiritual and humanitarian leader, was awarded the 'Companion of the Order of Fiji', the highest civilian honor of Fiji, by Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, the President of Fiji, at the State House of Fiji in Suva, Fiji.

- Previous recipients of the 'Companion of the Order of Fiji' include Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi in 2023 and President of India Draupadi Murmu in 2024.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Sri Madhusudhan Sai was honored for his significant contributions to healthcare and social welfare in Fiji, particularly through his Sri Satya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital, the first state-of-the-art, fully free children's hospital in the South Pacific region, providing treatment to children from all backgrounds.

(ii) He is the founder of 'One World One Family', a global humanitarian mission that operates in over 80 countries, working to improve access to healthcare, nutrition, and education.

(iii) The Companion of the Order of Fiji (CF) is the highest civilian honor awarded by the Republic of Fiji, established on 1st March 1995 under the Fiji Honours and Awards Act. This prestigious award recognizes individuals, both Fijian nationals and non-citizens, for their eminent achievements and merit of the highest degree in service to Fiji or to humanity at large.

#### 6. Simone Biles and Mondo Duplantis Clinch Top Laureus World Sports Awards 2025 Honours.

On April 21, 2025, the Laureus World Sports Awards 2025 was held at the Palacio de Cibeles in Madrid, Spain, marking the 25th anniversary of the prestigious awards ceremony that honors the remarkable achievements of athletes from across the globe.

- Awarded to Armand Gustav Duplantis (popularly known as Mondo Duplantis), a pole vaulter from Sweden, for his outstanding performances in athletics.
- Conferred upon Simone Biles, a legendary gymnast from the United States of America (USA), recognizing her excellence and resilience in gymnastics.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Real Madrid Men's Football Team (Spain) was honoured for their exceptional teamwork and achievements in international football.
- (ii) Awarded to Lamine Yamal, a rising football talent from Spain, acknowledging his breakthrough in the global sports arena.
- (iii) Presented to Jiang Yuyan, a para swimmer from China, for her inspirational performances and accomplishments in para swimming.

#### 7. England's Gus Atkinson, Jamie Smith, and Sophie Ecclestone Named Among Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year 2025.

In April 2025, the 2025 edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack unveiled its prestigious list of Five Cricketers of the Year, recognizing outstanding contributions to the sport. The honorees include England's Gus Atkinson, Jamie Smith, and Sophie Ecclestone, along with Liam Dawson from Hampshire and Dan Worrall, the Australian-born cricketer representing Surrey, England.

- Mitchell Santner of New Zealand received the Wisden Trophy 2024 for his exceptional match performance, claiming 13 wickets for 157 runs against India.
- Indian stars Jasprit Jasbirsingh Bumrah and Smriti Mandhana were honoured as the world's leading male and female cricketers for 2024, respectively, for their stellar displays on the international stage.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Nicholas Pooran, the explosive West Indies batter, was named the Leading T20 Player in the World.
- (ii) Quinn Rooney's photograph, which captures Australia's Nathan Lyon and nearly the entire Australian team appealing for an LBW (Leg Before Wicket) decision against Mohammed Siraj of India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), was awarded the Wisden Photograph of the Year 2024.

#### 8. Bihar Creates History with Two Guinness World Records in Madhubani Art and Singing Bowl Performance.

In April 2025, Bihar made history by setting two Guinness World Records (GWR). The records included the world's largest Madhubani painting on canvas and the largest singing bowl ensemble performed by 375 Buddhist monks in Bodh Gaya. The GWR certificates were officially presented to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar during a ceremony at Patliputra Sports Complex in Patna, Bihar.

- The first world record was achieved with a massive Madhubani painting measuring 18.69 square meters (201.17 square feet). This monumental artwork was created at the Madhubani Painting Institution in Bihar.
- The painting was the collaborative effort of a 50-member team of women artists, guided by Padma Shri Bauaa Devi. It was specially crafted as a tribute to another legendary Madhubani artist, Padma Shri Jagdamba Devi. The team dedicated 50 continuous hours to completing the artwork.
- This record-setting painting is scheduled to be unveiled at the opening ceremony of the Khelo India Youth Games on May 4, 2025. This marks the first time the games are being hosted in Bihar, with events

spread across cities like Patna, Rajgir, Gaya, Bhagalpur, and Begusarai.

### Key Points:-

(i) Madhubani, also known as Mithila painting, is a traditional folk art that originates from the Mithila region in Bihar, particularly the town of Madhubani. The artists used natural colors made from turmeric, beetroot, carbon, and flowers to craft the record-breaking painting.

(ii) The second Guinness World Record was set in Bodh Gaya, where 375 Buddhist monks—aged between five and seventy—came together to perform a singing bowl ensemble. This gathering marked the largest-ever such performance linked to traditional Buddhist rituals and meditation.

(iii) This unique event was organised by the Bihar State Sports Authority (BSSA). Singing bowl performances are deeply connected with Buddhist culture, known for their calming effects and spiritual significance during meditation and ceremonies.

## INDEX

### 1. EMF Unveils India's First BSE Internet Economy Index Fund.

On April 24, 2025, Edelweiss Mutual Fund (EMF), also known as Edelweiss Asset Management Limited (EAML), a subsidiary of Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Edelweiss Financial Services Limited (EFSL), announced the launch of the 'Edelweiss BSE Internet Economy Index Fund'—India's first index fund providing exposure to the BSE Internet Economy Index.

- **The investment objective of the scheme is to generate returns, before expenses, that closely correspond to the total returns of the BSE Internet Economy Total Return Index, subject to tracking errors.**

- Edelweiss adopts a transparent, rules-based approach, specifically excluding traditional Information Technology (IT) and software companies. The fund is designed to reflect the performance of businesses that are part of India's rapidly expanding internet-driven economy.

- Edelweiss BSE Internet Economy Index Fund is an open-ended index fund designed to replicate the performance of the BSE Internet Economy Total Return Index. The New Fund Offering (NFO) opens for subscription on April 25, 2025, and will close on May 9, 2025. This fund offers investors a unique opportunity to participate in India's rapidly evolving digital economy.

### Key Points:-

(i) The underlying index includes the top 20 companies from the BSE 500, selected based on their six-month average market capitalization. It spans 11 sub-industries such as e-retail, internet and catalogue retail, e-learning, digital entertainment, fintech, and other digitally driven sectors, reflecting the breadth of India's internet ecosystem.

(ii) Investors can start with a minimum investment of Rs. 100 and add in multiples of Rs. 1 thereafter. According to the Scheme Information Document (SID), an exit load of 0.10% will be applicable if units are redeemed or switched within 30 days from the date of allotment. No exit load is charged for redemptions made after the 30-day period.

(iii) The fund will be managed by Bhavesh Jain and Bharat Lohoti, Co-Heads of Factors Investing at Edelweiss Mutual Fund. The NFO, or New Fund Offering, represents the initial phase where the Asset Management Company (AMC) sells units of the scheme to investors to raise capital and attract early participation.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### 1. World Malaria Day Observed on 25 April 2025.

World Malaria Day (WMD) is celebrated annually on April 25 across the globe to raise awareness, mobilize resources, and promote actions for the prevention, control, and elimination of malaria.

● **The theme for WMD 2025 is "Malaria Ends With Us: Reinvest, Reimagine, Reignite," which aims to energize efforts at all levels—from global policy to community action—to accelerate progress towards malaria elimination.**

#### Key Points:-

(i) WMD was established by WHO member states during the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 2007.

(ii) The first World Malaria Day was observed on April 25, 2008.

(iii) The concept of WMD originates from Africa Malaria Day, initiated in 2001 by African countries following the Abuja Declaration, which was signed by 44 malaria-endemic countries at the African Summit on Malaria.

### 2. International Delegate's Day Celebrated on 25 April 2025.

The United Nations (UN)'s International Delegate's Day is observed annually on 25th April across the globe to highlight the role of representatives and delegates of Member States to the UN.

● **The 25th April 2025 marks the 6th observance of International Delegate's Day.**

#### Key Points:-

(i) In April 2019, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution A/RES/73/286, officially proclaiming 25 April as International Delegate's Day.

(ii) The first International Delegate's Day was celebrated on 25 April 2020.

(iii) The date commemorates the opening of the San Francisco Conference (also known as the UN Conference on International Organization) held on 25 April 1945.

### 3. World Penguin Day Observed on 25 April 2025.

World Penguin Day is celebrated annually on 25th April across the globe to raise awareness about the environmental challenges faced by penguins and the importance of their conservation.

● **The celebration of World Penguin Day began on 25th April 1972 when researchers observed the migration of Adelie Penguins towards the north. Initially, it focused only on Adelie Penguins but now it honors all 18 species of penguins worldwide.**

● **According to the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC), the date April 25 is linked to the annual migration of Adelie Penguins, first recorded by researchers at McMurdo Station in Antarctica. ASOC, based in Washington, D.C., USA, is a global coalition working to protect the Antarctic region.**

● **A related observance, Penguin Awareness Day, is observed every year on January 20th to celebrate penguins and highlight the environmental threats they face.**

#### Key Points:-

(i) Penguins are captivating flightless birds adapted to aquatic life. They live exclusively in the Southern Hemisphere, from the icy expanses of Antarctica to the temperate coasts of Africa and South America. There are 18 species of penguins, with 11 classified as "Globally Threatened" by the IUCN Red List.

(ii) The Antarctic Treaty System, signed in 1959

and updated in 1991, provides protection for all 18 types of penguins in Antarctica by banning hunting and egg collection activities.

(iii) Other significant conservation efforts include the Pōhātu Marine Reserve in New Zealand, which protects the largest group of little blue penguins, and the establishment of no-fishing zones near six important African penguin breeding sites in South Africa in 2025.

#### 4. World Veterinary Day 2025 Observed on April 26 to Honor Animal Healthcare Heroes.

World Veterinary Day (WVD) is observed annually on the last Saturday of April worldwide to recognize the contributions of veterinarians in ensuring animal health, welfare, and public safety.

- The annual observance is led by the World Veterinary Association (WVA), a global federation of veterinary associations dedicated to advancing veterinary science.

- In 2026, World Veterinary Day will be observed on 25th April 2026.

##### Key Points:-

(i) In 2025, World Veterinary Day was observed on 26th April 2025.

(ii) WVA announced the theme for World Veterinary Day 2025 as "Animal Health Takes a Team."

(iii) In 2000, WVA initiated World Veterinary Day as an annual celebration.

#### 5. International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day 2025 Observed on April 26 to Honour the Victims and Raise Awareness.

The United Nations (UN)'s International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day is annually observed across the globe on 26th April to commemorate the anniversary of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

- The day is observed to honour the victims and survivors of the Chernobyl disaster and to raise awareness about its long-lasting impacts.

- 26th April 2025 marks the 39th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

##### Key Points:-

(i) On 8th December 2016, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution A/RES/71/125 and proclaimed 26th April of every year as International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day.

(ii) The first-ever International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day was observed on 26th April 2017.

#### 6. United Nations Celebrates Chinese Language Day on 20 April 2025.

The United Nations (UN) Chinese Language Day is annually observed across the globe on April 20 to promote multilingualism, cultural diversity, and the equal use of the six official UN languages.

- The theme for 2025, "Chinese Language: A Gift Across Time and Space", emphasizes the deep historical and cultural impact of the Chinese language throughout centuries.

##### Key Points:-

(i) Established in 2010 by the UN Department of Global Communications (DGC) (formerly the Department of Public Information), the day was initiated to celebrate the richness of Chinese heritage and to encourage its broader use across

all UN duty stations.

(ii) The first Chinese Language Day was observed on 12 November 2010. However, from 2011 onward, the celebration is held annually on April 20, to coincide with Guyu, a solar term in the traditional Chinese calendar, and to honour Cangjie, the legendary inventor of Chinese characters.

### 7. World Celebrates Creativity and Innovation Day on April 21, 2025.

The United Nations (UN) annually observes World Creativity and Innovation Day (WCID) on 21 April to raise global awareness about the role of creativity and innovation in promoting human development and achieving sustainable growth.

- **World Creativity and Innovation Week (WCIW) is celebrated from 15th to 21st April 2025, aligning with the birth anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci, who was born on 15th April. This week-long celebration recognizes the importance of creativity and innovation in driving progress and honors one of history's greatest creative minds.**

#### Key Points:-

(i) On 27 April 2017, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution A/RES/71/284, officially designating 21 April as World Creativity and Innovation Day.

(ii) WCID was first celebrated on 21 April 2018 following its UN recognition.

(iii) The day is observed in 50+ countries, including India, the United States of America (USA), and European Union (EU) nations.

In April 2025, the United Nations (UN) observes International Mother Earth Day, or Earth Day, on April 22 to highlight the interdependence between humans and the Earth's ecosystems. This observance stresses the collective responsibility to promote harmony with nature, balancing economic, social, and environmental needs for the present and future generations.

- **Earth Day 2025 holds special significance as it aligns with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), a global initiative aimed at combating environmental degradation. The theme for Earth Day 2025 is "Our Power, Our Planet."**

- **Establishment: Officially recognized in 2009 through UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/63/278, introduced by Bolivia and supported by more than 50 member states.**

#### Key Points:-

(i) The first official observance of the UN's International Mother Earth Day occurred on April 22, 2009.

(ii) Earth Day was first proposed by American peace activist John McConnell during a 1969 UNESCO conference held in San Francisco, United States of America (USA). His vision aimed to dedicate a day to honor the Earth and the concept of peace. This idea laid the foundation for what would become a global environmental awareness movement.

(iii) The inaugural Earth Day was celebrated on April 22, 1970, and is recognized as the beginning of the modern environmental movement. In 2025, the world marks the 55th anniversary of Earth Day, reaffirming its long-standing commitment to environmental protection and sustainability.

### 8. International Mother Earth Day Observed on 22 April 2025.

### 9. International Dance Day 2025 Observed on April 29 to Celebrate the Art of Dance.

In April 2025, International Dance Day, also known as World Dance Day, was recently observed on April 29 across the globe. The day aims to raise public awareness about dance as a vital art form, a means of cultural expression, and an educational tool.

- The observance is promoted by the Paris (France)-based International Dance Council (CID) and the Shanghai (China)-based International Theatre Institute (ITI), in association with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

- In 2025, the International Dance Day message was delivered by Mikhail Baryshnikov, a legendary figure in the world of contemporary dance.

#### Key Points:-

(i) International Dance Day was established in 1982 by the Dance Committee of the ITI in collaboration with UNESCO, to celebrate and honor the art of dance.

(ii) The first International Dance Day was celebrated on April 29, 1982.

(iii) The date April 29 was chosen to commemorate the birth anniversary of Jean-Georges Noverre (1727–1810), a French dancer and choreographer widely regarded as the father of modern ballet.

## 10. India Observes National Civil Services Day 2025 on April 21.

National Civil Services Day is observed annually across India on April 21 to recognize and celebrate the crucial role of civil servants in governance and the nation's overall development.

- April 21, 2025, marks the 17th National Civil Services Day observance.

- The first Civil Services Day was inaugurated in 2006 by then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

- Since then, the day has been commemorated each year with conferences, award ceremonies, and dialogues between senior civil servants and government leaders.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The 2025 Civil Services Day was organized as a full-day conference at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The event brought together top civil servants, government officials, and dignitaries to discuss public administration reforms and governance strategies.

(ii) One of the key highlights of the event was the presentation of the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration 2025. These awards recognize outstanding innovations, initiatives, and reforms carried out by various government departments and officers across the country.

(iii) During the event, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Science & Technology (MoS&T) and the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPPG&P), shared that the IAS 2023 batch includes 74 women officers, the highest number to date, accounting for 41% of the total 180 officers in the batch.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. India Marks 50 Years of Aryabhata and Celebrating the Launch of Its First Indigenous Satellite.

In April 2025, India commemorated the 50th anniversary of its first satellite, Aryabhata, launched on 19th April 1975. This historic milestone marks five decades of India's journey in space exploration

and reflects the achievements of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

- **Aryabhata was launched aboard a Soviet Kosmos-3M rocket from Kapustin Yar in Astrakhan Oblast, Russia, with assistance from the USSR. This international collaboration enabled India's initial steps into the global space arena.**
- **Developed by ISRO under the guidance of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and Prof. U.R. Rao, Aryabhata weighed 360 kilograms. It had a 26-sided polyhedron design with a diameter of 1.4 meters, and its power was derived from 24 solar-panel-covered faces generating 46 watts.**
- **The satellite's primary mission was to conduct scientific experiments in Solar Physics, Aeronomy, and X-ray Astronomy. These studies contributed valuable data for ISRO's early research efforts despite technical setbacks.**

#### **Key Points:-**

- (i) Aryabhata made India the 11th country to launch a satellite into orbit. Although it faced a power failure after five days, it successfully transmitted critical data and stayed in orbit for nearly 17 years, re-entering Earth's atmosphere on 11th February 1992.
- (ii) The satellite was named after the renowned ancient Indian mathematician and astronomer Aryabhata. Then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi selected the name from a shortlist that included Aryabhata, Mitra, and Jawahar.
- (iii) Aryabhata laid the groundwork for India's satellite technology and inspired major missions like Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan. Since 1975, ISRO has developed 131 satellites, with 55 currently operational, showcasing India's strong presence in global space exploration.

## **2. ISRO Develops Indigenous Satellite Nozzle Divergent for PSLV, Reducing Import Costs by 90%.**

In April 2025, ISRO achieved a major milestone by successfully developing and testing an indigenous nozzle divergent for the fourth stage (PS4) of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). This innovation is part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) initiative and marks a significant step towards reducing dependence on foreign components.

- **The new nozzle divergent is made using Stellite (KC20WN), a cobalt-based alloy comprising Chromium, Nickel, Tungsten, and Iron. It replaces the previously imported Columbium (C103) material, enhancing India's self-reliance in advanced space hardware.**
- **ISRO's tests confirmed that the Stellite-fabricated nozzle can withstand extremely high temperatures of up to 1150°C, maintaining its structural strength during intense operational conditions, crucial for the success of the PS4 stage.**

#### **Key Points:-**

- (i) The final hot test of the nozzle divergent was conducted for 665 seconds on 8 April 2025 at the ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu. This test followed three successful qualification tests, ensuring full readiness for operational deployment.
- (ii) This development brings multiple benefits—a 90% cost reduction in nozzle procurement, greater self-reliance in space technology, and increased strategic independence by reducing India's reliance on foreign suppliers for critical rocket components.

## **3. South Korea Launches Fourth Military Spy Satellite via SpaceX Falcon 9 Rocket.**

In April 2025, South Korea (Republic of Korea, ROK) successfully launched its fourth military reconnaissance satellite aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, USA. The launch is part of the country's ongoing efforts to bolster independent surveillance capabilities under the 425 Project.

- This launch is aimed at enhancing South Korea's ability to monitor North Korea's nuclear and missile activities. The satellite is expected to play a critical role in gathering real-time, high-resolution data for national security and strategic defense.
- The newly launched satellite is equipped with Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) technology, which enables it to capture detailed images regardless of weather conditions or time of day, including at night or through cloud cover.
- The satellite was developed by the Agency for Defence Development (ADD) and is being managed by the Defence Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA). These institutions are responsible for advancing South Korea's defense technologies and military capabilities.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Under the 425 Project, South Korea has made steady progress in building its satellite reconnaissance system. Unit 1, an Electro-Optical/Infrared (EO/IR) satellite, was launched on December 1, 2023, providing high-resolution optical and infrared imagery.

(ii) This was followed by the launch of Unit 2, a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellite, on April 7, 2024, and Unit 3, also a SAR satellite, on December 21, 2024. Most recently, Unit 4—another SAR satellite—was successfully launched on April 22, 2025, significantly enhancing South Korea's radar imaging capabilities.

(iii) The fifth and final satellite (SAR) under the

425 Project is scheduled for launch later in 2025. Once deployed, it will complete South Korea's strategic satellite constellation, enabling real-time, round-the-clock monitoring of the Korean Peninsula and surrounding regions.

#### 4. INS Surat Successfully Conducts MR-SAM Test in Arabian Sea.

On April 24, 2025, the Indian Naval Ship (INS) Surat, a P15B Guided Missile Destroyer, successfully test-fired the Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MR-SAM) system, also known as Barak 8, in the Arabian Sea. This test demonstrates India's preparedness to address emerging maritime security challenges.

- The MR-SAM system, developed jointly by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of New Delhi and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), has a range of up to 70 kilometers and is designed to counter sea-skimming threats.
- It is an extension of the Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LR-SAM) system and can be launched from both ship-based vertical launch systems (VLS) and land-based mobile launchers.
- The missile is 4.5 meters long, weighs approximately 275 kilograms (including a 60 kg warhead), and has a diameter of 22.5 cm at the missile body, expanding to 54 cm at the booster stage. First tested in 2016, MR-SAM has undergone several successful trials, proving its effectiveness against high-speed aerial targets.

#### Key Points:-

(i) INS Surat is the fourth and final ship of the Project 158 Visakhapatnam-class stealth guided missile destroyers of the Indian Navy (IN), ranking among the world's largest and most advanced destroyers.

(ii) The ship is equipped with state-of-the-art

weapon-sensor systems and network-centric warfare capabilities, with 75% of its components being indigenously manufactured, in line with India's Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) initiative.

(iii) The ship measures 164 meters in length, has a displacement of approximately 7,400 tons, and can achieve speeds exceeding 30 knots (around 56 km/h).

### 5. China Launches Shenzhou-20 Crewed Mission to Tiangong Space Station.

On April 24, 2025, China successfully launched the Shenzhou-20 crewed mission to the Heavenly Palace, also known as the Tiangong Space Station, aboard the Long March-2F carrier rocket. Launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Base in northwest China, the mission carried three astronauts who will spend six months aboard the station.

- This marks China's ninth crewed mission to Tiangong and aligns with its goal to establish a permanent lunar base by 2030.

- The primary objective of the Shenzhou-20 crewed mission is to conduct experiments in various scientific fields, including physics, life sciences, and regenerative biology, using planarians (aquatic flatworms). Additionally, the crew will install space debris protection systems on the Tiangong Space Station, perform spacewalks, conduct equipment maintenance, and replenish supplies for the station.

- The crew of Shenzhou-20 will also replace the Shenzhou-19 team, who are scheduled to return to Earth on April 29, 2025. This mission is an important step in advancing China's space capabilities and furthering the scientific research aboard the Tiangong Space Station.

### Key Points:-

(i) The crew members of the Shenzhou-20 mission include Commander Chen Dong, a veteran astronaut and former fighter pilot, who holds the record for the longest cumulative stay (200+ days) in space by a Chinese national. This marks his third spaceflight. Joining him is Chen Zhongrui, a 40-year-old former Air Force pilot who is embarking on his first space mission. The team is also joined by Wang Jie, a 35-year-old former space technology engineer, making his debut as an astronaut.

(ii) The Tiangong Space Station, where the crew will be stationed, is a permanently crewed orbital facility constructed and operated by the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA). The station became fully operational in October 2022 and is designed with a T-shape structure consisting of three core modules: Tianhe (Harmony of Heavens), Wentian (Quest for Heavens), and Mengtian (Dreaming of Heavens).

(iii) With a total mass of around 100 metric tons, Tiangong orbits the Earth at an altitude ranging from 340 to 450 kilometers in Low Earth Orbit (LEO). It serves as a key milestone in China's space exploration efforts, providing a platform for long-term research and development in space science and technology.

### 6. ISRO Assumes Lead Role in 'International Charter on Space and Major Disasters'.

India, through its national space agency — the Bengaluru, Karnataka-based Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) — has assumed the lead role of the "International Charter: Space and Major Disasters" for a period of six months starting from April 2025. This leadership role officially began during the 53rd Charter meeting, hosted by ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC)

from April 14 to 17, 2025, in Hyderabad, Telangana.

- The 53rd Charter meeting witnessed participation from major global space agencies involved in space-based disaster management activities, with 22 foreign delegates attending in person. This gathering highlighted ISRO's growing stature in the global space and disaster management community.
- India is a signatory to the International Charter, which marks its 25th anniversary in 2025. The Charter serves as a critical global framework for providing Earth Observation Satellite (EOS) data and collaborating with experts to support disaster relief efforts, helping save lives, property, and infrastructure during major disasters worldwide.
- The International Charter operates as a collaborative initiative involving 17 member organizations. These members voluntarily supply Earth observation data and value-added products to assist in managing disasters across the globe. The Charter's services extend to more than 120 countries, ensuring even nations with limited space capabilities can access vital satellite-based information.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Assuming the lead role places India at the strategic core of coordinating global disaster response efforts through space-based assets. ISRO's responsibilities include managing activation requests, ensuring the rapid delivery of satellite products, leading strategic planning activities, supervising the delivery of satellite imagery from partner agencies, and promoting training, outreach, and capacity-building efforts.
- (ii) Since 2021, ISRO has actively contributed to the Charter by responding to 153 activation requests and delivering nearly 700 Earth observation products. These contributions include flood extent maps, landslide assessments,

infrastructure damage evaluations, and aiding in post-disaster recovery planning efforts across various affected regions.

- (iii) Not only has India contributed significantly to Charter operations, but it has also benefited from Charter activations during times of natural calamities within the country. This two-way engagement reinforces India's role as both a benefactor and a beneficiary within the global disaster management community.

#### 7. DRDO-DRDL Successfully Completes 1,000-Second Scramjet Engine Test for Advancing Hypersonic Missile Technology.

In April 2025, the Hyderabad, Telangana-based Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), a unit of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), successfully conducted a 1,000-second ground test of an Active Cooled Scramjet Subscale Combustor at its newly established Scramjet Connect Test Facility (SCPT) in Hyderabad.

- This achievement represents a major milestone in India's Hypersonic Cruise Missile Development Programme, following an earlier 120-second successful test conducted in January 2025.
- The success of this test paves the way for full-scale, flight-worthy combustor testing, an essential step toward the operational deployment of hypersonic missiles.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) A Hypersonic Cruise Missile (HCM) is capable of sustained flight at speeds exceeding Mach 5 (>6,100 kilometers per hour), powered by air-breathing scramjet engines that utilize supersonic combustion for extended performance.
- (ii) A Scramjet (Supersonic Combustion Ramjet) is

an air-breathing propulsion system without any moving parts, designed to sustain combustion at supersonic speeds.

(iii) It employs a unique flame stabilization technique that allows combustion even when air enters the engine at speeds greater than 1.5 kilometers per second (km/s).

### 8. ISRO and SCTIMST Forge MoU to Accelerate Advances in Space Medicine.

In April 2025, the Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Department of Space (DoS), and the Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala)-based Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology (SCTIMST), Department of Science & Technology (DST), Ministry of Science & Technology (MoS&T), signed the 'Framework Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in Space Medicine'.

- The MoU was signed by Dr. Sanjay Behari, Director of SCTIMST, and M. Ganesh Pillai, Scientific Secretary at ISRO, in the presence of Dr. V Narayanan, Chairman of ISRO, in Thiruvananthapuram.

#### Key Points:-

(i) This strategic partnership marks a significant milestone in the advancement of space medicine. The collaboration will support India's human space flight missions, particularly the Gaganyaan program, and enhance healthcare both in space and on Earth.

(ii) The MoU aims to accelerate innovations in areas such as human physiological research, behavioral health studies, biomedical support systems, radiation biology, and medicine, among others.

(iii) The collaboration will also promote research

opportunities in space medicine and lead to the development of new technologies that could benefit national priorities.

### 9. Fali S. Nariman Unveils His New Book 'Beyond the Courtroom.'

In April 2025, "Beyond the Courtroom: Reflections on Law, Constitution, and Nationhood," authored by the late Fali Sam Nariman, was released. The book presents a curated collection of Fali S. Nariman's most impactful speeches, groundbreaking articles, and enlightening lectures, showcasing the wide-ranging depth of his legal and constitutional expertise.

- The book is published by New Delhi (Delhi)-based Hay House Publishers India Private Limited.

- Divided into five sections — Nation, Judiciary, Constitution, Law, and Arbitration — the book also offers advice for young lawyers and addresses critical ethical questions.

- Fali Sam Nariman, born on 10 January 1929, was an eminent Indian jurist and senior advocate at the Supreme Court of India. He served as a nominated member of the Upper House of India's Parliament from 1999 to 2005.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Fali Sam Nariman was appointed as the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Geneva, Switzerland, from 1995 to 1997.

(ii) He also served as a member of the ICC International Court of Arbitration, Paris, and later became its Vice-President from 1998 to 2005. Additionally, he was elected President of the International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA) from 1994 to 2002.

(iii) Fali S. Nariman was honored with the Padma Bhushan in 1991 for distinguished service in jurisprudence and the Padma Vibhushan in 2007 for exceptional contributions to public affairs.

### 10. Amazon Launches First 27 Satellites into Orbit for 'Project Kuiper' Internet Constellation.

On April 28, 2025, Washington, D.C., the United States of America (USA)-based Amazon.com, Inc. successfully launched the first 27 satellites of its 'Project Kuiper' broadband internet constellation. The launch took place from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, USA. This marks a major milestone for Amazon's ambitious plan to provide global internet coverage through satellite technology. The mission was officially designated as Kuiper Atlas 1 (KA-01).

- The 27 satellites were delivered into Low Earth Orbit (LEO) using an Atlas V rocket, developed by the United Launch Alliance (ULA) — a joint venture between Boeing Company and Lockheed Martin Corporation, both based in the USA. The Atlas V rocket is known for its reliability and precision, making it a strategic choice for deploying Amazon's initial satellite fleet.

- The satellites were initially deployed at an altitude of 280 miles (450 kilometers) above the Earth's surface. They are expected to ascend further to their operational orbit of 393 miles (630 kilometers) using their onboard propulsion systems. This step is essential to position the satellites correctly within the broader Project Kuiper constellation aimed at delivering high-speed, low-latency internet connectivity worldwide.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Project Kuiper is a USD 10 billion global broadband initiative launched by Amazon with the goal of delivering high-speed, low-latency internet to underserved and remote regions around the

world. It aims to bridge the digital divide by providing reliable internet access where traditional infrastructure is limited or unavailable.

(ii) The full satellite constellation will comprise 3,236 satellites deployed across three orbital shells, positioned between 590 km and 630 km above Earth's surface. The system is designed to seamlessly integrate with Amazon Web Services (AWS), enhancing data processing capabilities for advanced applications such as satellite imagery analysis, cloud computing, and weather forecasting.

(iii) In October 2023, Amazon conducted initial test missions by launching two prototype satellites — KuiperSat-1 and KuiperSat-2 — to validate the system's core technologies. Following successful testing, both prototypes were intentionally deorbited and safely burned up in Earth's atmosphere. The final satellite design includes upgraded subsystems based on insights gained from these early missions.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

### 1. Amarjit Singh Dulat Unveils His Book Titled "The Chief Minister and the Spy".

In April 2025, Amarjit Singh Dulat, former chief of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), launched his latest book titled "The Chief Minister and the Spy" in New Delhi, Delhi. Published by Juggernaut Books, the book provides a personal and political narrative of Dr. Farooq Abdullah, the former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), through the lens of a top intelligence official.

- Amarjit Singh Dulat, born in 1940, is a seasoned Indian bureaucrat, former spymaster, and served as the Special Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB).

#### Key Points:-

(i) After retiring, he served as an Advisor on

Jammu and Kashmir in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) from 2000 to 2004.

(ii) Dulat is also the author of the widely discussed book Kashmir: The Vajpayee Years (2015) and co-authored The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Peace (2018) with Asad Durrani, the former chief of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

## OBITUARY

### 1. Former ISRO Chief and Padma Awardee K. Kasturirangan Passes Away Recently.

On 26th April 2025, Dr. Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Padma awardee, passed away recently at the age of 84 in Bengaluru, Karnataka. He was born on 24th October 1940 in Ernakulam, Kerala.

- Dr. Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan began his professional career in space science in 1969 as a researcher at the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. His early research laid a strong foundation for his future contributions to India's space journey.

- He served as the Chairman of ISRO from 1994 to 2003. During his tenure, he oversaw the successful development and launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV), and initiated India's planetary exploration efforts, which eventually led to the Chandrayaan-1 mission.

#### Key Points:-

(i) For his immense contributions to the field of science and engineering, he was honoured with several of India's highest civilian awards: Padma Shri in 1982 (India's fourth-highest civilian award), Padma Bhushan in 1992 (India's third-highest

civilian award), and Padma Vibhushan in 2000 (India's second-highest civilian award).

(ii) Dr. Kasturirangan's legacy continues to inspire generations of scientists and researchers, leaving an indelible mark on India's advancements in space exploration and technology.

### 2. Recently Former Australia Batter Keith Stackpole Passes Away.

In April 2025, Former Australia vice-captain and opener, Keith Raymond Stackpole, passed away at the age of 84 in Melbourne, Australia. Born on July 10, 1940, in Victoria, Australia, Stackpole was named one of Wisden's 'Cricketers of the Year' in 1973.

- Keith Stackpole made his international debut in 1966 and played 43 Test matches and 6 One Day Internationals (ODIs) between 1966 and 1974, accumulating a total of 2,807 runs in Tests at an average of 37.42, including seven centuries.

- Batter Keith Stackpole excelled in the Ashes series, averaging 50.6 in 13 Tests, with a high score of 207 against England at the Gabba in 1970. He led the scoreboard during the 1972 Ashes as vice-captain under Ian Chappell.

#### Key Points:-

After retiring from cricket in 1974, Stackpole had a long and distinguished career in media and broadcasting.

### 3. Pope Francis, First Latin American Head of the Roman Catholic Church, Passes Away.

In April 2025, Pope Francis, the first Latin American leader of the Roman Catholic Church, passed away at the age of 88 in Vatican City. Born Jorge Mario Bergoglio on December 17, 1936, in Buenos

Aires, Argentina, he was the first non-European pope in over 1,000 years and the first Jesuit pope.

- He also became the first to adopt the name Francis, in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi.
- He was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1969 and later served as the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits in Argentina from 1973 to 1979.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) In 1992, he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires and became Archbishop in 1998. He was elevated to the rank of cardinal by Pope John Paul II in 2001.
- (ii) In 2013, following the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, he was elected Pope at the age of 76.
- (iii) As Pope, he introduced several Vatican reforms, promoting transparency, financial accountability, and inclusivity. He was known for appointing diverse leaders to high-ranking roles within the Church.

#### 4. Padma Shri Awardee and Renowned Filmmaker Shaji N. Karun Passes Away.

In April 2025, eminent filmmaker and cinematographer Shaji Neelakandan Karunakaran, popularly known as Shaji N. Karun, passed away at the age of 73 in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. He was born in 1952 in Kandanchira, located in the Kollam district of Kerala.

- He gained national and international acclaim for his directorial debut film, *Piravi* (1988), which won him the National Film Award for Best Director and the Camera d'Or – Mention d'honneur at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival.
- Shaji N. Karun began his illustrious journey in cinema as a cinematographer. Over a career spanning

five decades, he directed only six films but worked as a cinematographer on nearly 30 others. His technical expertise and aesthetic sensibility significantly shaped Indian parallel cinema.

- His 1994 film *Swaham* became the second Indian film ever to be selected for the competition section at the Cannes Film Festival. Another major directorial achievement, *Vanaprastham* (1999), premiered at Cannes and went on to win National Awards for Best Feature Film, Best Actor, and Best Editing.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Shaji N. Karun played a pioneering role in the development of India's film infrastructure by becoming the founding Chairman of the Kerala State Chalachitra Academy—the first film and television academy in India. His leadership laid the foundation for many initiatives to support filmmakers.
- (ii) He also led the Kerala government's efforts to launch its OTT platform, C-Space, which aimed to protect, promote, and archive films of cultural and artistic importance. This was a landmark step in preserving India's rich cinematic heritage.
- (iii) Shaji N. Karun received several prestigious awards throughout his career. He was conferred the Padma Shri in 2011 for his contribution to the arts. In 2019, he was awarded the Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government. In 2023, he was honored with the JC Daniel Award, Kerala's highest recognition for lifetime achievement in cinema.

#### 5. Former Brazilian Football Legend Jair da Costa Passes Away.

In April 2025, Jair da Costa, former striker of Brazil's national football team and a member of the 1962 FIFA (International Federation of Association Football) World Cup-winning squad, passed away

at the age of 84 in Osasco, near São Paulo, Brazil. He was born on July 9, 1940, in Santo André, São Paulo.

- **Jair da Costa began his professional football career in 1960 with Portuguesa, a Brazilian football club based in São Paulo.**
- **In 1962, he joined Inter Milan (Italy), where he became an integral part of the legendary "Grande Inter" team under coach Helenio Herrera. He was instrumental in Inter's European success, including scoring the winning goal in the 1965 European Cup final against Benfica.**

#### **Key Points:-**

- (i) During his time with Inter, Jair da Costa won four Serie A titles, two European Cups, and two Intercontinental Cups, solidifying his legacy as one of the top Brazilian exports to European football.
- (ii) He returned to Brazil to play for Santos FC, where he joined forces with football icon Pelé. Together, they led Santos to victory in the 1973 Campeonato Paulista (São Paulo State Championship).
- (iii) Jair da Costa concluded his football career in 1976 with Canada's Windsor Star, leaving behind a remarkable legacy in both Brazilian and international football.

### **6. Padma Shri Awardee and Renowned Cardiologist Dr. Mathew Samuel Kalarickal Passes Away.**

In April 2025, Padma Shri awardee Dr. Mathew Samuel Kalarickal, a renowned cardiologist and widely known as the 'Father of Angioplasty' in India, passed away at the age of 77 in Chennai. He was born on January 6, 1948, in Kottayam, Kerala. Dr. Kalarickal was honored with the Padma Shri,

India's fourth-highest civilian award, in 2000 for his significant contributions to the field of medicine.

- **In 1986, Dr. Kalarickal performed India's first coronary angioplasty, a pioneering achievement in interventional cardiology.**
- **He was instrumental in setting up angioplasty facilities across various countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, as well as multiple nations in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.**
- **He founded the National Angioplasty Registry of India (NARI) to promote standardization in cardiac procedures and foster innovation, and also served as the President of the Asian-Pacific Society of Interventional Cardiology from 1995 to 1997.**

#### **Key Points:-**

- (i) Dr. Mathew Samuel Kalarickal received the prestigious Dr. B.C. Roy Award in 1996 for excellence in the field of medicine.
- (ii) In 2003, Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University in Chennai conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa).
- (iii) He was also recognized with the "Rashtriya Samman" in 2000, awarded to top taxpayers in the country.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. ICAR-NBFGR's PAGR Centre Discovers Two New Freshwater Fish Species in Western Ghats.**

In April 2025, the Centre for Peninsular Aquatic Genetic Resources (PAGR), located in Kochi (Kerala), a regional unit of the Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)-based ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBFGR), identified two new freshwater fish species: 'Labeo uru' and

'Labeo chekida' from the rivers of the Western Ghats.

- The findings, published in the Indian Journal of Fisheries, emphasize the urgent need for conservation efforts against threats like dams and habitat destruction.
- The research team, led by V.S. Basheer, resolved a 150-year-old taxonomic confusion surrounding *Labeo nigrescens* (Rohu), first described in 1870, through detailed morphological analysis of historical specimens and fresh samples from rivers in Kerala and Karnataka.

**Key Points:-**

(i) *Labeo uru* was discovered in the Chandragiri River (Karnataka). The species was named after a traditional wooden dhow ('uru'), due to its sail-like elongated dorsal fin.

(ii) *Labeo chekida*, a small, dark-bodied fish, was identified in the Chalakudy River (Kerala) and is locally known as "kaka chekida".

(iii) Both species are endemic to their respective river systems, highlighting the unique aquatic biodiversity of the region.