

Weekly One Liners 18th to 24th May, 2026

India-Italy Special Strategic Partnership Explained: Key Outcomes from PM Modi's Italy Visit

Honorable Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni announced the Special Strategic Partnership. This announcement came as PM Modi's visit to Italy. This move marks the one of the biggest diplomatic upgradation to the India's ties with the major European nation in the recent years.

India and Italy Upgrade Bilateral Ties to Special Strategic Partnership

The major announcement from the visit was the elevation of the India-Italy relations to a Special Strategic Partnership.

This diplomatic upgrade reflects the growing political trust, stronger economic cooperation and expanding strategic alignment between New Delhi and Rome.

The two leaders also agreed to hold annual leadership meetings including during the multilateral summits, to maintain momentum in bilateral engagement.

Also a Foreign Ministers-led review mechanism will monitor the implementation of the India-Italy Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-2029.

This creates the more structured long-term diplomatic framework.

Trade Target Set at €20 Billion by 2029

Also the economic cooperation between both nations emerged as a major pillar of the declaration.

India and Italy have set an ambitious goal to expand bilateral trade to around €20 billion by 2029.

Both countries have identified priority sectors for stronger investment and industrial cooperation, including the,

- Semiconductors
- Clean technologies
- Automotive manufacturing
- Pharmaceuticals
- Digital technologies
- Tourism
- Medical technology
- Steel
- Infrastructure
- Critical raw materials
- Ports

The leaders has also encouraged closer engagement between stock exchanges, banks, venture capital funds and financial institutions.

Critical Minerals and Supply Chain Cooperation

A major outcome was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Critical Minerals.

This is strategically important as the global competition for lithium, rare earths, cobalt and other critical minerals continues to intensify.

Both countries also agreed to build resilient supply chains and promote sustainable extraction and recycling, including recovery from the,

- Electronic waste
- Mine tailings
- Circular economy sources

This aligns with the India's growing manufacturing and clean energy ambitions.

IMEC and Maritime Connectivity Move Forward

India and Italy has also reaffirmed the support for the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) and described it as a transformative connectivity initiative.

The leaders encouraged the first IMEC ministerial meeting to make concrete progress in the year 2026.

An MoU on maritime transport and ports was also signed during visit.

Also joint working group will now be formed for the implementation of the signed agreements.

This could improve the logistics, trade routes and shipping connectivity between Asia and Europe.

Big Push in AI, Innovation and Technology Cooperation

India and Italy has announced the launch of INNOVIT India which is a new innovation hub designed to connect startup ecosystems, research institutions, universities and industry.

Key focus sectors includes the,

- Artificial intelligence
- Quantum computing
- Fintech
- Healthcare innovation
- Agritech
- Logistics
- Semiconductor research
- Energy technologies

Both countries also reaffirmed support for the human-centric and trustworthy AI governance. Supercomputing cooperation was mainly highlighted.

Test Prime

ALL EXAMS ONE SUBSCRIPTION

IBPS, IAS, UPSC, SSC, and a globe icon.

Defence Partnership Expands Significantly

Both the countries has expanded the cooperation in the defense sector also.

The two countries adopted the,

- A Joint Declaration of Intent
- A Defence Industrial Roadmap

Key defence collaboration areas includes the,

- Helicopters
- Naval platforms
- Marine weapons systems
- Electronic warfare
- Technology co-development
- Co-production partnerships

Both sides will also explore the annual high-level military dialogue.

Strong Counterterrorism Message

Both the leaders have strongly condemned terrorism, violent extremism and cross-border terrorism.

Italy specifically condemned the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack which marks the important diplomatic signal.

The two countries agreed to strengthen the cooperation at the,

- United Nations
- FATF
- Counterterrorism working groups
- Financial intelligence platforms

New agreements involves the financial crime enforcement and police cooperation are also progressing.

Space, Science and Higher Education Cooperation

India and Italy will also deepen the cooperation in the areas like,

- Space exploration
- Earth observation
- Heliophysics
- Scientific research
- Renewable energy
- Green hydrogen
- Blue economy research

Also the collaboration between ISRO and the Italian Space Agency is expected to expand.

Cultural Diplomacy and Tourism Year in 2027

Culture was identified as the major pillar of the bilateral engagement.

Both the countries plan to celebrate the 2027 as the Year of Culture and Tourism between India and Italy.

Major initiatives includes the,

- India's participation in the Venice Art Biennale
- Cooperation at the National Maritime Heritage Complex in Lothal
- UNESCO heritage site twinning program.
- Film and audiovisual collaboration

This will adds the strong soft-power dimension to the partnership.

National Affairs

- **India's jaggery (gur)** is emerging as a global substitute for **refined sugar** due to its nutritional benefits and strong export growth. India produces over **70% of global jaggery**, with **20–30% of sugarcane output** used in its production, supporting nearly **2.5 million rural livelihoods**. Exports rose from **USD 197 million (2015-16)** to **USD 406.8 million (2024-25)**. Rich in **iron, calcium, magnesium, and potassium**, jaggery is viewed as a healthier "**medicinal sugar**." Government support through **PMFME, PM Kisan SAMPADA, ODOP, AGMARK, and GI tagging** has strengthened the sector.
- **Tata Electronics** has partnered with **ASML** for India's first commercial **300 mm semiconductor fabrication plant** in **Dholera, Gujarat**, a major step in India's semiconductor mission. ASML will provide **advanced lithography systems, technical support, skill development, and supply-chain planning**. The **US\$11 billion project** will manufacture chips for **smartphones, automobiles, AI systems, industrial electronics, and consumer devices**. Tata's earlier collaboration with **PSMC for 28nm–110nm chip technology** strengthens technical capacity, helping India reduce import dependence and build a competitive electronics manufacturing ecosystem.
- The return of the historic **Anaimangalam (Leiden) Copper Plates** from the **Netherlands** marks a major cultural achievement for India. Dating back to the **11th-century Chola Empire**, the collection includes **24 copper plates** from the reigns of **Rajaraja Chola I and Rajendra Chola I** containing **Tamil and Sanskrit inscriptions** on governance, taxation, land rights, and religious grants. India pursued their return since **2012**, raising the issue before **UNESCO's ICPRCP in 2023**. These artefacts highlight India's rich medieval administrative heritage and Chola influence across **Southeast Asia**.
- President **Droupadi Murmu** approved an ordinance increasing the **Supreme Court's judge strength from 34 to 38**, including the **Chief Justice of India**, to improve judicial efficiency. Implemented through **The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026**, the move aims to reduce case backlog, speed hearings, and improve timely justice delivery. Under **Article 124(1)**, Parliament determines Supreme Court strength. The number has gradually increased from **10 judges in 1956** to the present level, reflecting rising litigation and increasingly complex constitutional and legal matters.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi's visit** to the **Afsluitdijk Dam** in the Netherlands highlights India's interest in advanced **climate-resilient water infrastructure**. The **32-km Dutch mega dam** protects low-lying regions from sea flooding while supporting **freshwater storage, navigation, renewable energy, and ecological conservation**. India is studying this model for Gujarat's proposed **₹85,000 crore Kalpasar Project**, planned across the **Gulf of Khambhat**. With increasing threats from **sea-level rise, salinity intrusion, drought, and flooding**, India seeks Dutch expertise in sustainable multi-purpose water management systems.

- Union Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia** launched the **₹175 crore “Coffees of Nagaland” Mission** to develop Nagaland into a premium **specialty coffee hub** for domestic and international markets. The initiative focuses on the complete **coffee value chain**, including cultivation, processing, branding, exports, tourism, farmer training, and traceability systems. Pilot clusters have been established at **Tuophema for Arabica coffee** and **Ghotovi for Robusta coffee**. Aligned with PM Modi’s **“Viksit North East”** vision, the mission aims to improve farmer incomes, enhance quality standards, and build the global **“Coffees of Nagaland”** brand.
- India unveiled the first proposed design for the **Mumbai–Ahmedabad Bullet Train**, the country’s first **high-speed rail corridor**, showcased at the **Ministry of Railways** in New Delhi. The train is expected to operate at **320 kmph** with an initial **8-coach configuration**, reducing travel time between Mumbai and Ahmedabad to nearly **two hours**, offering airline-like speed and efficiency. The **508-km corridor** will connect key stations including **Sabarmati, Surat, Vadodara, Vapi, Thane, and Mumbai**. The first operational stretch between **Surat and Bilimora** is expected before full launch by **15 August 2027**.
- The **Central Information Commission (CIC)** ruled that the **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** is not a **“public authority”** under the **RTI Act, 2005**, keeping it outside the scope of Right to Information obligations. The **18 May 2026** decision reverses the CIC’s own **2018 ruling**, following legal review after a Madras High Court challenge. The commission held that BCCI, registered under the **Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act**, is a financially independent private body funded through **IPL, sponsorships, and media rights**. It also clarified that **Justice Lodha Committee recommendations** cannot override statutory law.
- Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla** constituted the **Committee on Empowerment of Women**, an important parliamentary panel overseeing women’s welfare policies and implementation of government programmes related to empowerment. Senior BJP leader **Daggubati Purandeswari** has been appointed chairperson of the **28-member committee**, which includes **18 Lok Sabha women MPs** and **10 Rajya Sabha members**. Prominent members include **Hema Malini, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Sudha Murty, P. T. Usha, and Swati Maliwal**. The committee will examine policy effectiveness, gender-focused schemes, and broader issues concerning women’s socio-economic and political empowerment.
- The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has proposed significant amendments under the **draft Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026**, modifying the **Citizenship Rules, 2009** to strengthen citizenship verification and transparency. Applicants must declare whether they currently hold or previously held passports from **Pakistan, Bangladesh, or Afghanistan**, and such passports must be surrendered within **15 days** after obtaining Indian citizenship. The reforms also introduce **e-OCI cards, digital citizenship systems, and stricter rules for minors with dual passports**. These changes are linked to the implementation framework of the broader **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)**.
- **Indian Railways** has approved a **₹238 crore safety and rehabilitation project** for the **Jammu–Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra rail section** under **Northern Railway** to improve passenger safety and operational reliability. The project includes **slope stabilisation, tunnel rehabilitation, seepage treatment, and bridge strengthening** to tackle risks posed by the fragile mountainous terrain of **Jammu & Kashmir**. This rail route is crucial as a major **pilgrimage corridor to Vaishno Devi shrine** and also strategically important for regional connectivity. Supported by **Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw**, the initiative strengthens long-term infrastructure resilience.
- **Project Cheetah** has achieved a major conservation breakthrough as India’s cheetah population has risen to **53**, including **33 cubs born in India**, marking strong progress in species revival. The programme began with the translocation of cheetahs from **Namibia, South Africa, and Botswana**, aiming to restore a species declared extinct in India in **1952**. **Kuno National Park** has shown encouraging adaptation, with successful hunting, breeding, and stable behaviour patterns. Future expansion to **Gandhisagar, Nauradehi, and Banni Grasslands** aims to establish a sustainable **metapopulation conservation model** for long-term biodiversity restoration.
- The Government of India launched the **Ayush Anudan Portal** under the broader **Ayush Grid initiative**, modernising grant management in the traditional healthcare sector. Introduced by Union Minister **Prataprao Jadhav**, the platform enables fully **online applications, document verification, approvals, and real-time tracking**, replacing slow paper-based processes. Integration with **NGO Darpan** improves institutional verification and transparency for organisations working in **Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy, and Sowa-Rigpa**. The initiative supports India’s push for **digital governance, paperless administration, and stronger AYUSH healthcare infrastructure** through integrated technology-driven systems.
- The **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** has notified standards for higher ethanol-petrol blends including **E22, E25, E27, and E30**, signalling India’s next phase of biofuel adoption. **E30 fuel**, containing **30% ethanol and 70% petrol**, aims to reduce **crude oil imports, transport emissions, and fossil fuel dependence**. This aligns with India’s accelerated **ethanol blending programme**, which already advanced the **E20 target to 2025–26**. Higher ethanol blends may require **flex-fuel vehicles and engine upgrades**, while policymakers are also exploring future **E85 fuel systems** as part of India’s clean energy transition strategy.

- The **Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya** has launched its third **AI-powered HoloBox**, featuring a life-like **3D virtual Mahatma Gandhi avatar** that allows visitors to interact through **AI-driven conversations and holographic technology**. The initiative combines **artificial intelligence, immersive storytelling, and digital displays** to make museum learning more engaging, especially for younger audiences. Earlier AI HoloBox exhibits featured **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** and **Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam**, with **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** expected next. This reflects India's growing use of **AI in heritage preservation, education, and interactive cultural storytelling**.
- The Government of India launched the '**Arunachal Kiwi: The USP of Arunachal Pradesh**' Mission with a **₹167 crore outlay** to transform the state into a premium **organic kiwi production hub**. Led by Union Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia**, the initiative focuses on **cluster-based cultivation, cold-chain infrastructure, branding, export promotion, and farmer producer organisations (FPOs)**. The mission aims to increase farmer incomes by **4–6 times**, reduce distress sales, and build the premium "**Arunachal Organic Kiwi**" brand. Major post-harvest infrastructure will be developed in **Ziro Valley, Dirang, Kalaktang, Shi Yomi, and Dibang Valley**.
- The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** launched the **JEEVAN app** and **SHATAYU Geriatric Caregiver Dashboard** to strengthen India's elder care ecosystem through digital technology. Launched by Union Minister **Virendra Kumar**, the platforms aim to improve **healthcare access, emergency assistance, caregiving support, welfare scheme awareness, and social inclusion** for senior citizens. The **SHATAYU dashboard** helps families locate trained **geriatric caregivers** across districts and states, improving caregiver coordination. The initiative reflects India's growing focus on a **technology-driven care economy**, combining public welfare delivery, digital governance, and community-based elderly support systems.
- India faced an extreme **heatwave crisis in 2026**, with reports showing **97 of the world's 100 hottest cities** located in the country on a single day, with temperatures crossing **48°C** in parts of **Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh**. The crisis is driven by a **heat dome**, a high-pressure weather system trapping hot air and blocking cooling rainfall and winds. Factors like **climate change, El Niño, weak Western Disturbances, deforestation, shrinking water bodies, and urban heat islands** have worsened the situation, severely affecting **public health, agriculture, electricity demand, and water security**.
- India has accelerated **Chenab River infrastructure projects worth nearly ₹2,600 crore**, including the **₹2,352 crore Chenab-Beas Link Tunnel** in Himachal Pradesh and the **Dulhasti Stage-II hydropower project** in Jammu & Kashmir. Executed by **NHPC**, these projects aim to improve **water utilisation and hydropower generation capacity**. The move

comes after India paused engagement under the **Indus Waters Treaty** following the **Pahalgam terror attack**, giving the decision geopolitical significance. India is also fast-tracking major Chenab basin projects including **Kiru, Kwar, Ratle, Pakal Dul, and the 1,856 MW Sawalkote hydropower project**.

States in the News

- **V. D. Satheesan** took oath as **Kerala Chief Minister** on **18 May 2026**, leading the **Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF)** back to power after ten years of Left rule. The ceremony at **Central Stadium** was historically notable because the entire **21-member Cabinet** took oath simultaneously, a rare event in Kerala's political history. Senior leaders including **Rahul Gandhi** attended. The cabinet includes leaders from **Congress, Indian Union Muslim League, RSP, and Kerala Congress factions**, reflecting a broad coalition government aimed at stable governance.
- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister **N. Chandrababu Naidu** announced a new population incentive policy offering **₹30,000 for a third child** and **₹40,000 for a fourth child** to address declining fertility rates. The announcement reflects a shift from earlier population-control thinking toward encouraging larger families amid demographic concerns. Many countries including **Japan, South Korea, China, and Italy** face similar low-birth challenges. Since **replacement fertility level** is around **2.1 children per woman**, the policy aims to prevent future workforce shortages, ageing population pressures, and long-term economic slowdown.
- Deputy CM **Pravati Parida** inaugurated **Nimapara Patha Utsav 2026** in **Puri district, Odisha**, under the **Utkarsha Nimapara 2.0 initiative**. The festival promotes **Odia folk traditions** including **tribal dance, Sankirtan, Pala, Dasakathia, street theatre, and storytelling**, blending culture with public awareness campaigns. Youth-focused activities such as **sports events, marathons, debates, music, and dance competitions** encourage civic participation and talent development. Symbolic launches including the official **jersey, mascot "Utkarsha Ghoda," and medals** reflect efforts to combine heritage preservation with community development.
- The **Sikkim government** will implement the **Anand Marriage Act, 1909** from **1 June 2026**, enabling Sikh couples to legally register marriages conducted under the traditional **Anand Karaj ceremony**. This became possible after notification of the **Sikkim Anand Marriage Registration Rules, 2026**. Earlier, many Sikh marriages were registered under the **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955** due to lack of separate state rules. The move strengthens recognition of Sikh religious identity and follows the **Supreme Court's 2025 observations** in the **Amanjot Singh Chadha case** regarding administrative gaps.

- Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** launched an upgraded **AI-powered Dial 112 emergency response system** in **Chhattisgarh**, significantly strengthening public safety infrastructure. The initiative expands emergency services coverage from **16 districts to all 33 districts**, integrating police, fire, medical, and disaster response under a unified emergency number. The rollout includes **400 emergency response vehicles, 33 surveillance vehicles, 60 highway patrol units, and forensic mobile vans**. With **AI-based location tracking**, the system enables faster distress-call identification and quicker on-ground action, greatly improving emergency response efficiency, accident management, and law enforcement coordination.
- Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** chaired the **Central Zonal Council Meeting** in **Jagdalpur**, bringing together Chief Ministers and senior officials from **Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand** to strengthen cooperative federalism. Discussions focused on **internal security, infrastructure development, border coordination, inter-state cooperation, governance, and economic planning**. The **Central Zonal Council** is one of five statutory councils created under the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956**, aimed at resolving regional issues through consultation. The Home Minister serves as chairman, while Chief Ministers act as rotating vice-chairpersons.
- The **Uttarakhand government** has approved a **₹450 crore ropeway project** connecting **Rishikesh to Neelkanth Mahadev Temple**, dramatically reducing travel time from **three hours to just 15 minutes**. Starting from **Tapovan**, the ropeway will boost **religious tourism, improve accessibility for senior citizens and families, and ease traffic congestion**. Since the route passes near the **Rajaji Tiger Reserve and Ganga ecosystem**, environmental safeguards and wildlife protection measures have been included. The temple, located at **1,330 metres altitude**, attracts thousands of pilgrims during **Shravan and Mahashivratri**, supporting Uttarakhand's tourism economy.
- Delhi's **Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI)** will develop a **₹4,000 crore Air Train Project**, creating India's first **automated airport people mover system**. The **7.7 km transit network** will connect **Terminal 1, Terminal 2, Terminal 3, Aerocity, and Cargo City**, improving passenger transfers and airport mobility. Developed by **Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL)**, the system will offer **free travel for transit passengers**, with possible charges for others and express services during peak hours. Drawing expertise from countries like **South Korea, Italy, Switzerland, and Indonesia**, the project modernises India's airport infrastructure.
- The **West Bengal government** has approved implementation of the **7th Pay Commission**, benefiting lakhs of **state employees and pensioners**, though the crucial **fitment factor** remains pending. The fitment multiplier, expected between **2.0 and 2.5**, will determine the exact salary revision and could significantly increase basic pay. The revised structure may also improve **pensions, provident fund contributions, gratuity, retirement benefits, and loan eligibility**. While the decision strengthens employee finances and purchasing power, economists caution it may increase the **state's fiscal deficit, borrowing burden, and long-term budgetary pressure**.
- **Karnataka** has become India's first state to introduce an **Alcohol-in-Beverage (AIB)-based excise taxation system**, replacing the traditional bulk-litre model with a more scientific alcohol-content-based structure. Tax slabs have been reduced from **16 to 8**, changing liquor pricing significantly. **Premium scotch whiskies and mild beers** may become **20–25% cheaper**, while several budget liquor brands could become **20–30% costlier**. The reform aims for transparency and rational taxation, but industry groups warn that higher taxation on mass-market brands may affect **consumer demand, retail sales, and excise revenue collections**.
- The **Madhya Pradesh government** has partnered with **Google Cloud India** to deploy **AI-driven solutions** for **Simhastha Kumbh 2028 in Ujjain**, one of India's largest religious gatherings. Artificial intelligence will support **crowd management, traffic prediction, emergency response, congestion control, and pilgrim assistance**, improving safety and efficiency. A proposed **Centre of Excellence in Indore** will focus on AI research, innovation, and digital governance skill development. The initiative reflects Madhya Pradesh's push toward **technology-enabled governance**, ensuring smoother management of millions of devotees during the mega spiritual event.
- Union Civil Aviation Minister **Ram Mohan Naidu** inaugurated new passenger facilities at **Birsa Munda Airport, Ranchi**, including a **Bhagwan Birsa Munda statue, UDAN Yatri Café, Kids Zone, Flybrary, and AVSAR Counter**. The installations honour **Birsa Munda**, the iconic tribal freedom fighter and symbol of indigenous resistance against British colonial rule. The **UDAN Yatri Café** aims to provide affordable food, supporting the **Ease of Flying initiative**. The minister also announced expansion plans under the **Modified UDAN Scheme**, targeting development of **100 new airports and 200 heliports** to strengthen regional air connectivity.
- **Kerala** has become India's first state to create a **dedicated cabinet-level Artificial Intelligence (AI) portfolio**, formally recognising AI as an independent governance domain. The portfolio has been assigned to senior leader **P. K. Kunhalikutty** under the **Industries and Commerce Department**, alongside IT, startups, and industrial development. The move reflects Kerala's ambition to leverage **AI in governance, healthcare, education, manufacturing, economic growth, and startup innovation**. By institutionalising AI at the cabinet level, the state aims to accelerate **technology-driven public service reforms, industrial modernisation, and innovation-led economic transformation**.

- The **Haryana government** launched the **ShramMitra app**, a digital labour market platform designed to directly connect workers and employers while replacing the traditional **labour chowk system**. Introduced by Labour Minister **Anil Vij**, the app enables **skill-based worker registration, online job matching, direct wage negotiations, multilingual access, and mobile hiring**. Developed by the **Haryana Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board**, it already includes data for nearly **75,000 registered workers**. The platform improves **transparency, accessibility, and employment opportunities** for both daily wage and skilled workers through digital labour market reforms.
- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister **Joseph Vijay** expanded the state cabinet by inducting **23 new ministers**, increasing total cabinet strength to **32 members**. Vijay retained major portfolios including **Home, Police, Youth Welfare, Urban Development, and General Administration**, reflecting his emphasis on governance and law enforcement. A key reshuffle saw **K. A. Sengottaiyan** moved from **Finance to Revenue and Disaster Management**, while **N. Marie Wilson** took charge of **Finance, Planning, and Development**. Political observers note that further inclusion of alliance partners like **Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK)** and **Indian Union Muslim League (IUML)** may reshape cabinet dynamics.
- The **Delhi government** plans to raise the annual income eligibility limit for ration cards from **₹1.2 lakh to ₹2.5 lakh**, expanding subsidised food benefits to more **lower middle-income households** affected by rising living costs. The move reflects inflation-driven pressure from **housing, transport, healthcare, education, and food expenses**, aiming to improve food security for genuinely needy families. Simultaneously, Delhi cancelled around **7.72 lakh ration cards** during a verification drive targeting **duplicate records, ineligible beneficiaries, Aadhaar mismatches, migration cases, inactive users, and document errors**, strengthening database accuracy and welfare targeting.

- The **Delhi Forest Department** is developing **“Vaman Van,”** an interactive biodiversity zone designed as a **living ecological classroom** to promote environmental awareness and nature education. The project will feature **dwarf and miniature plant species**, allowing students and visitors to closely experience biodiversity in an engaging educational setting. Planned in Delhi’s **western forest range**, the initiative will teach concepts like **forest ecosystems, biodiversity conservation, ecological balance, and sustainable living**. The project also aims to bridge the disconnect between urban life and nature by encouraging public participation in conservation and hands-on ecological learning.
- India is developing its first **underwater museum** near **Sindhudurg, Maharashtra**, centred around the decommissioned naval warship **INS Guldar**. The vessel will be submerged around **22 metres underwater near Nivati Rocks**, serving as both a **marine tourism attraction and an artificial reef supporting biodiversity conservation**. The project will offer activities including **scuba diving, wreck diving, submarine sightseeing, and speedboat access**, boosting experiential tourism along the **Konkan coast**. Developed with environmental studies by the **Maharashtra Maritime Board** and **CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography**, the initiative promotes sustainable coastal development and employment generation.

International Affairs

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** declared the latest **Ebola outbreak** a **Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)** after over **300 suspected cases** and **88 deaths** in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** and **Uganda** raised fears of wider spread. The outbreak involves the rare **Bundibugyo strain**, for which vaccine protection remains limited. Ebola spreads through **direct contact with infected blood or body fluids**, causing **haemorrhagic fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, organ failure, and high fatality rates**. WHO chief **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus** called for urgent coordinated international response.
- Legendary climber **Kami Rita Sherpa**, known as the **“Everest Man,”** created history by summiting **Mount Everest for the 32nd time**, extending his own world record for the most Everest ascents. The **56-year-old Nepali climber**, who began his mountaineering journey in **1994**, achieved the feat while guiding climbers during the spring expedition season. On the same day, **Lhakpa Sherpa** climbed Everest for the **11th time**, extending her own record as the woman with the most Everest ascents. Their achievements highlight Nepal’s extraordinary mountaineering legacy surrounding the **8,849-metre world’s highest peak**.

Test Prime

ALL EXAMS ONE SUBSCRIPTION

- India and Norway elevated bilateral relations to a **Green Strategic Partnership** during PM **Narendra Modi's historic visit to Oslo**, marking a major expansion in cooperation. The partnership focuses on **clean energy, climate action, digital innovation, artificial intelligence, green shipping, blue economy, and maritime collaboration**. A key development is enhanced **ISRO–Norway space cooperation** and Norway's stronger Indo-Pacific engagement. Both nations also signed a **Triangular Cooperation Agreement** to support development initiatives in the **Global South** using India's **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** model, strengthening sustainable diplomacy and international development cooperation.
- The **Kremlin** has confirmed that Russian President **Vladimir Putin** will visit India for the **BRICS Summit 2026**, scheduled in **New Delhi in September**. The summit will bring together **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa** to discuss **trade, energy security, geopolitics, and global governance reforms**. Putin's visit underscores the strength of the **India–Russia strategic partnership**, especially in **defence, nuclear energy, technology, and economic cooperation**. As BRICS expands its influence in shaping the global political and economic order, the summit is expected to attract major international diplomatic attention.
- India has surpassed the **United States** to become **Bangladesh's second-largest trading partner**, accounting for **8.47% of Bangladesh's total trade**, according to recent **Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)** data. **China** remains the largest partner with over **21% trade share**, driven by machinery and industrial exports. India's rise reflects stronger **regional economic integration, geographic trade advantages, and cross-border commercial connectivity**. Bangladesh depends heavily on India for **food commodities, cotton, yarn, industrial goods, and essential imports**, strengthening bilateral economic interdependence between the neighbouring countries.
- India and Italy elevated bilateral relations to a **Special Strategic Partnership** during Prime Minister **Narendra Modi's visit** and talks with Italian PM **Giorgia Meloni**, marking a major diplomatic upgrade. Both countries set a target of **€20 billion bilateral trade by 2029**, focusing on **semiconductors, artificial intelligence, defence, infrastructure, clean energy, and critical minerals**. Cooperation will expand in **IMEC connectivity, maritime transport, counterterrorism, defence manufacturing, and space research**, alongside innovation platforms like **INNOVIT India**. Both nations also announced a **Year of Culture and Tourism in 2027**, strengthening cultural diplomacy and people-to-people ties.
- India has assumed the **chairmanship of the Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA) for 2026** under the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**, reinforcing its leadership in peaceful nuclear cooperation. The announcement came during the **48th Meeting of National Representatives in Navi Mumbai**, attended by delegates from Asia-Pacific and African countries. The RCA promotes collaboration in **healthcare, cancer treatment, agriculture, water management, environmental sustainability, and radiation technology** using nuclear science. India has been closely associated with the RCA since early discussions at **Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) in 1964**, highlighting its longstanding regional scientific role.
- India is hosting the **68th Session of the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) Governing Body** at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, from 20–22 May 2026**, bringing together policymakers and experts from across the Asia-Pacific. Discussions focus on **APO Vision 2030, productivity-led economic transformation, governance reforms, budget planning, and leadership elections**. More than **60 delegates from 20 member economies**, along with observers from **Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Bhutan**, are participating. The event also includes the **APO National Awards**, recognising achievements in **productivity innovation, technical excellence, and sustainable socioeconomic development**.
- India has postponed the inaugural **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit**, originally scheduled for **1 June 2026 in New Delhi**, following the rescheduling of the **Fourth India-Africa Forum Summit**. The decision was taken after consultations with the **African Union** to ensure stronger participation, especially from African nations central to global big cat conservation. African countries are crucial for protecting species such as **lions, leopards, and cheetahs**. Through initiatives like **Project Tiger, Asiatic lion conservation, snow leopard programmes, and Project Cheetah**, India continues positioning itself as a global leader in wildlife diplomacy and biodiversity conservation.
- India and **Ethiopia** signed a bilateral **WTO accession protocol in Geneva**, supporting Ethiopia's long-running effort to join the **World Trade Organization**. The agreement reflects India's support for integrating **developing and least-developed countries** into the global trading system through fair market access and stronger economic cooperation. Ethiopia's accession requires reforms in **trade regulation, tariffs, customs administration, and market access commitments**. India already remains one of Ethiopia's major trading partners and investors, with economic engagement across **manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, infrastructure, and education**, strengthening broader India–Africa strategic and economic relations.
- India and **Cyprus** upgraded bilateral ties to a **Strategic Partnership** during the visit of President **Nikos Christodoulides** to New Delhi. The two countries signed **six agreements** covering **defence, cybersecurity, innovation, education, maritime cooperation, culture, and counterterrorism**, including a **Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism**. A **Defence Cooperation Roadmap (2026–2031)** and maritime rescue collaboration were also announced, while Cyprus joined India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative**. Additional plans include the **first India-Cyprus Space Day** and a **Cyprus Trade Center in Mumbai**, aimed at boosting investment, connectivity, and strategic engagement.

- **Kevin Warsh** has officially become the new **Chair of the US Federal Reserve**, replacing **Jerome Powell** after a politically contested Senate confirmation. He takes office during a challenging economic period marked by **inflation concerns, interest rate uncertainty, and scrutiny over central bank independence**. The **Federal Reserve** plays a crucial role in shaping global financial conditions through **monetary policy, inflation control, banking regulation, and financial stability**, influencing worldwide markets. A former Fed governor during the **2008 global financial crisis**, Warsh brings strong academic and policy experience from institutions like **Stanford, Harvard Law School, and the Hoover Institution**.
- **Saudi Arabia** has officially joined the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)**, the India-led global initiative for big cat conservation, taking total membership to **26 countries** with **five observer nations**. Launched by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2023**, the alliance works to protect seven major big cat species—**tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar, and puma**—through **knowledge sharing, habitat conservation, capacity building, and joint wildlife programmes**. Saudi Arabia's entry strengthens global biodiversity partnerships and reflects growing international recognition of India's leadership in environmental diplomacy and wildlife conservation.
- A devastating explosion at the **Liushenyu Coal Mine in Shanxi, China**, reportedly killed at least **90 people** and injured over **100 workers**, making it one of China's deadliest recent mining disasters. Around **247 workers** were inside when the blast occurred, prompting a massive rescue operation involving **345 emergency personnel, medical teams, ambulances, and evacuation units**. Preliminary reports suggest dangerous gas conditions, possibly involving **carbon monoxide accumulation**, as the likely cause, though investigations continue. President **Xi Jinping** ordered intensive rescue efforts, medical care for survivors, and strict accountability for those responsible.
- India has postponed the **Fourth India-Africa Forum Summit**, originally scheduled for **May 2026**, following consultations with the **African Union** amid the worsening **Ebola outbreak in Africa**. The decision follows the **World Health Organization's declaration of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)** over the crisis affecting countries like the **Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda**. The **Ministry of External Affairs** stated the move prioritises health safety and responsible international diplomacy. India reaffirmed support through potential **health assistance, Africa CDC coordination, and capacity-building cooperation**, maintaining its commitment to India-Africa strategic relations.
- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** inaugurated the **Indian War Memorial at Imjingak Peace Park, South Korea**, alongside minister **Kwon Oh-eul**, strengthening bilateral defence and diplomatic relations. The memorial honours Indian military contributions during the **Korean War**, including the **60 Parachute Field Ambulance unit** and the

Custodian Force of India, which treated over **222,000 patients** and supervised prisoner-of-war repatriation. The visit also saw signing of an **MoU on veterans welfare, cultural exchanges, memorial projects, and historical preservation**, adding a humanitarian and historical dimension to the growing India–South Korea strategic partnership.

Banking/Economy/Business News

- India's **gems and jewellery exports** fell by **9.07%** in **April 2026**, dropping to **\$2.23 billion (₹20,825 crore)**, mainly due to the **West Asia conflict**, which disrupted shipping routes, increased insurance costs, and weakened buyer confidence. **Gold jewellery exports** declined by **21.77%**, while **plain gold jewellery exports** plunged **47.06%**, reflecting weak global demand. **Cut and polished diamond exports** also dropped **19.65%**. However, **silver jewellery exports** surged by an impressive **444%** to **\$268.38 million**, emerging as the sector's strongest performer amid the broader slowdown.
- **Google and Blackstone** have launched a **\$5 billion AI cloud venture** focused on **Tensor Processing Units (TPUs)** and large-scale artificial intelligence infrastructure, aiming to challenge **Nvidia's dominance** in AI computing. The project will provide **Compute-as-a-Service (CaaS)**, enabling businesses to rent powerful AI computing resources without building expensive infrastructure. The first phase includes nearly **500 megawatts of data centre capacity**, reflecting booming demand for AI chips and cloud systems. Google strengthens its AI hardware ecosystem, while Blackstone expands aggressively into future-focused digital infrastructure investments.
- **Jio Platforms** has appointed **Akash Ambani** as its **Managing Director** for a five-year term beginning **9 April 2026**, marking a major leadership transition ahead of the company's anticipated **IPO**. Associated with Jio since **2014**, Akash has played a central role in its telecom expansion and digital ecosystem growth, previously serving as **Chairman of Reliance Jio Infocomm**. The appointment signals strategic continuity and may strengthen investor confidence ahead of public listing. Jio remains one of India's largest digital businesses spanning **telecom, enterprise services, cloud computing, and technology platforms**.
- Domestic rating agency **ICRA** has reduced India's **FY27 GDP growth forecast** from **6.5% to 6.2%**, citing rising **crude oil prices** and global uncertainty. Oil prices nearing **\$95 per barrel** could increase **inflation, transport costs, and India's import bill**, affecting economic momentum. Despite the downgrade, India is still expected to grow around **7.5% in FY26**, though quarterly expansion may slow. Key downside risks include **West Asia tensions, rupee depreciation, weakening exports, and higher commodity prices**, which could pressure fiscal management and broader macroeconomic stability.

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a **\$5 billion USD-INR buy/sell swap auction** to inject long-term liquidity into the banking system amid **global market volatility and rupee pressure**. Under the **three-year forex swap arrangement**, banks will temporarily sell US dollars to the RBI in exchange for rupee liquidity, improving banking system funding conditions. The move addresses risks from **capital flow volatility, inflation pressures, stronger US dollar trends, and financial uncertainty**. Scheduled for **26 May**, the measure reflects RBI's broader strategy of maintaining **stable credit flow, liquidity management, and financial market stability**.
- The **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)** has slightly lowered India's **2026 GDP growth forecast from 6.6% to 6.4%**, citing **global economic uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, crude oil price risks, inflation, and tighter financial conditions**. Despite the revision, India remains among the **world's fastest-growing major economies**, supported by strong **domestic demand, infrastructure spending, and services exports**. The UN projects growth to recover to **6.6% in 2027**, suggesting the slowdown may be temporary rather than structural. External shocks, especially from **West Asia**, remain important downside risks.
- **Bharti Airtel** briefly became India's **second most valuable listed company**, surpassing **HDFC Bank** during intra-day trading with a market capitalisation of nearly **₹11.91 trillion**. Investor optimism was driven by **strong earnings visibility, telecom sector recovery, healthy cash flows, and solid performance from Airtel's Africa business**. Meanwhile, **HDFC Bank** faced pressure from **foreign investor selling, weaker sentiment, and sector rotation**, despite stable fundamentals. The development reflects changing investor preferences toward **growth-driven digital infrastructure businesses** over traditionally dominant financial sector stocks in the evolving Indian equity market.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a record **₹2.87 lakh crore surplus transfer** to the Government of India for **FY26**, marking the highest-ever dividend payout by the central bank. The transfer strengthens **government non-tax revenue**, reduces borrowing pressure, and supports fiscal management amid global uncertainty. Higher **foreign exchange gains, rising gold prices, investment income, and expansion of RBI's balance sheet** contributed to the record surplus. RBI also allocated **₹1.09 lakh crore to its Contingent Risk Buffer** for financial stability, balancing fiscal support with prudent risk management and broader macroeconomic resilience.
- The Reserve Bank of India approved the reappointment of **Sandeep Bakhshi** as **Managing Director and CEO of ICICI Bank** for another **two-year term, from 4 October 2026 to 3 October 2028**. The extension ensures leadership continuity at one of India's largest private banks. Since taking charge in **2018**, Bakhshi has been credited with improving **profitability, digital transformation, operational**

efficiency, investor confidence, and overall business performance. **ICICI Bank** remains a leading institution in **retail banking, corporate finance, loans, deposits, wealth management, and digital financial services**, reinforcing its strong market position.

- A Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report shows a major consumer shift toward **credit cards, UPI, and digital wallets**, reflecting India's accelerating cashless economy transformation. Credit card transactions surged from **216 crore in 2021 to 570 crore in 2025**, while transaction value rose from **₹8.9 lakh crore to ₹23.2 lakh crore**. In contrast, debit card usage sharply declined from **408.7 crore to 133.6 crore transactions**. Growth is driven by **e-commerce expansion, cashback offers, EMI schemes, rewards, and UPI integration**, while private banks increasingly dominate India's rapidly expanding digital payments ecosystem.

Appointments/Resignations

- IAS officer **Saurabh Vijay**, a **1998-batch Maharashtra cadre officer**, assumed charge as the new **CEO of UIDAI** on **18 May 2026**. The **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** manages **Aadhaar**, the world's largest biometric identity system, under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**, functioning under the **Aadhaar Act, 2016**. An **IIT Delhi alumnus**, he has served in senior roles across finance, planning, tourism, education, and medical administration in Maharashtra. He also held positions at the **President's Secretariat** and the **World Bank**, bringing broad governance experience.

Defence News

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** achieved a historic milestone as **Squadron Leader Saanya** became the first woman officer to earn the prestigious **Cat-A Qualified Flying Instructor (QFI)** certification, one of the highest instructional qualifications in military aviation. The certification recognises exceptional flying skill, operational excellence, and advanced instructor capability, enabling officers to train future **fighter and transport pilots**. The achievement was officially acknowledged on **18 May 2026**, and she was felicitated by **Air Chief Marshal A. P. Singh**. The milestone reflects growing gender inclusion and merit-based advancement in India's armed forces.
- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully tested the indigenous **ULPGM-V3 (UAV-Launched Precision Guided Missile)**, strengthening India's drone warfare capabilities. Tested near **Kurnool**, the missile can operate in both **air-to-ground and air-to-air combat roles**, targeting **tanks, drones, helicopters, and aerial threats**. The project involved DRDO labs including **RCI, DRDL, TBRL, and HEMRL**, with UAV integration support from **NewSpace Research and Technologies**. Production backing from **Bharat Dynamics Limited** and **Adani Defence & Aerospace** reflects India's push for **self-reliant advanced defence manufacturing**.

- **Bharat Forge** has signed an agreement with the **Andhra Pradesh government** to establish India's first **private-sector marine gas turbine facility** in **Visakhapatnam**. The facility will offer **repair, overhaul, rotor balancing, blade restoration, and advanced testing services** for naval propulsion systems. Located near the **Eastern Naval Command and Naval Dockyard**, the project will enhance the **Indian Navy's operational readiness** while reducing dependence on foreign servicing ecosystems. The initiative strongly supports the **Atmanirbhar Bharat mission**, boosting indigenous defence manufacturing, strategic propulsion capability, and marine technology research.
- India launched the multinational military exercise **PRAGATI 2026** at **Umroi Military Station, Meghalaya**, with participation from armed forces of **12 friendly nations**. The two-week exercise focuses on **counter-terrorism operations, jungle warfare, interoperability, tactical coordination, and joint operational readiness** in difficult terrain conditions. Participating countries include **Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam**. **PRAGATI** stands for **Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region**, highlighting India's expanding role in **regional defence cooperation, Indo-Pacific security engagement, and multinational military collaboration**.
- India successfully test-fired the **Agni-I ballistic missile** from the **Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, Odisha**, on **22 May 2026** under the supervision of the **Strategic Forces Command**. The successful test confirmed achievement of all mission objectives, reinforcing India's strategic deterrence and defence preparedness. **Agni-I** is a **short-range ballistic missile** designed for quick deployment via **road and rail mobile launch platforms**, making it an important component of India's nuclear-capable deterrence architecture. The test highlights continued progress in India's **indigenous missile programme, defence modernisation, and strategic security capabilities**.

Awards and Recognitions

- India's **Chandrayaan-3 mission** received the prestigious **2026 AIAA Goddard Astronautics Award** in **Washington, D.C.**, recognising India's historic achievement in lunar exploration. The mission made global history when India became the **first country to successfully soft-land near the Moon's south pole**, a region of major scientific interest due to possible **water ice and resource potential**. The award was accepted on behalf of **ISRO** by India's Ambassador to the United States, **Vinay Kwatra**. The honour strengthens India's global standing in **space technology, lunar exploration, and advanced scientific capability**.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** received Sweden's prestigious **Royal Order of the Polar Star – Commander Grand Cross**, one of the country's highest civilian honours. Established in **1748 by King Frederick I**, the award recognises distinguished contributions to **international**

cooperation, diplomacy, and leadership. The honour reflects strengthening **India–Sweden relations** across **green transition, AI, innovation, defence, climate action, trade, and space cooperation**. This adds to PM Modi's growing list of international recognitions and symbolises India's expanding diplomatic footprint and strategic global partnerships in emerging sectors.

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** received Norway's highest civilian honour, the **Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit**, during his official visit to **Oslo**, marking his **32nd international honour** from a foreign country. Established in **1985 by King Olav V**, the award recognises exceptional contributions to **international relations and services connected to Norway**, and is conferred under **King Harald V**. The visit is historically significant as the **first by an Indian Prime Minister to Norway in 43 years**, highlighting stronger **India–Nordic cooperation** in diplomacy, trade, technology, and strategic engagement.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** received the prestigious **FAO Agricola Medal** during his visit to **Rome**, recognising contributions to **sustainable agriculture, food security, and rural development**. The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** acknowledged India's efforts in **climate-resilient farming, farmer welfare, agricultural innovation, and sustainable food systems** under his leadership. PM Modi dedicated the honour to India's **farmers, livestock rearers, fishers, scientists, and agricultural workers**, describing them as the backbone of national food security. He emphasised that agriculture in India is deeply linked to **culture, nature, and human welfare**, not merely economic production.
- Renowned **Kantha embroidery artist Tripti Mukherjee** will receive the **Padma Shri** on **25 May 2026** from President **Droupadi Murmu** for preserving West Bengal's traditional textile heritage and empowering rural women through handicrafts. With over **37 years of experience**, she trained numerous women through her centre in **Suri**, helping them achieve financial independence through embroidery work. She also promoted Indian handicrafts internationally at exhibitions in **Birmingham and Tokyo**. Her earlier honours include the **Shilp Guru Award, Bangashree Award, and National Award Certificate**, recognising her exceptional contribution to traditional Indian craftsmanship.
- Indian public health scientist **Dr. Soumya Swaminathan** has been elected a **Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS)**, one of the world's most prestigious scientific honours. The recognition celebrates her decades of contributions to **infectious disease research, public health leadership, and global health policy**, including roles as **former WHO Chief Scientist and former Director General of ICMR**. She becomes only the **second Indian woman after Gagandeep Kang** to receive the honour. The achievement also marks a notable father-daughter milestone, as her father, agricultural scientist **M. S. Swaminathan**, was also an **FRS Fellow**.

- **Taiwan Travelogue** by **Yang Shuang-zi**, translated by **Lin King**, won the **International Booker Prize 2026**, becoming the first **Mandarin Chinese-translated novel** to receive the prestigious literary honour. Set in **1930s colonial Taiwan**, the novel explores themes of **identity, friendship, colonial tensions, food culture, and metafictional storytelling** through the journey of a Japanese writer and her interpreter. The win highlights the rising global recognition of **Taiwanese literature** and the importance of literary translation in cultural exchange. The shortlist broadly reflected themes of **resilience, exile, struggle, and human connection**.

Sports News

- Fifteen-year-old **Vaibhav Sooryavanshi** created IPL history by becoming the Indian batter with the **most sixes in a single IPL season**, smashing his **43rd six** for **Rajasthan Royals** against **Delhi Capitals** on **17 May 2026**. He broke **Abhishek Sharma's** previous record of **42 sixes** set in 2024, achieving the feat in only **12 matches**. Vaibhav now joins elite hitters like **Chris Gayle, Andre Russell, and Jos Buttler**. He recently also became the **fastest batter in T20 history to hit 100 sixes**, reaching the milestone in just **515 deliveries**.
- Ukraine's **Elina Svitolina** won the **Italian Open 2026** after defeating **Coco Gauff** in a thrilling **6-4, 6-7, 6-2** final in Rome lasting nearly **2 hours 49 minutes**. The victory marked her **third Rome title**, after wins in **2017 and 2018**, showcasing a remarkable comeback at age **31**. After recovering from an early setback, she dominated the final set with superior consistency and endurance. Her title run was especially impressive as she defeated top players including **Elena Rybakina, Iga Swiatek, and Coco Gauff**, extending her winning streak over Gauff this season.
- Italy's **Jannik Sinner** won the **Italian Open 2026** by defeating **Casper Ruud 6-4, 6-4**, becoming only the **second male player after Novak Djokovic** to complete the prestigious **Career Golden Masters**—winning all **nine ATP Masters 1000 tournaments** at least once. At just **24 years old**, Sinner achieved the milestone far younger than Djokovic, underlining his rapid rise. The win marked his **sixth consecutive ATP Masters 1000 title**. Already holding **4 Grand Slam titles, 10 Masters titles, and the World No. 1 ranking**, he enters the French Open as a dominant favourite.
- Former India all-rounder **Vijay Shankar** announced retirement from **domestic cricket and the Indian Premier League**, ending a notable multi-format career. He represented India in **21 white-ball matches between 2018 and 2019**, including the **2019 ICC Cricket World Cup**, where he became widely known as the **"3D cricketer."** Shankar

enjoyed a successful domestic career with **Tamil Nadu**, leading the team to titles in the **Vijay Hazare Trophy, Deodhar Trophy, and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy**. In the IPL, he played **78 matches** for franchises including **CSK, SRH, Delhi Capitals, and Gujarat Titans**.

- **East Bengal FC** won their first **Indian Super League title in 2026**, defeating **Inter Kashi FC** at **Kishore Bharati Krirangan, Kolkata**, ending a **22-year wait** for a major top-tier domestic title. After trailing through **Alfred's 15th-minute goal**, East Bengal fought back with **Youssef Ezzejari's equaliser** and **Mohammed Rashid's winning goal** in the 73rd minute. Entering the final tied with **Mohun Bagan** on points, East Bengal clinched the title on superior **goal difference**. Ezzejari, who scored **11 goals in 13 matches**, also won the **Golden Boot**.
- **Cristiano Ronaldo** won his first **Saudi Pro League title** as **Al Nassr** defeated **Damac FC 4-1** in the season finale, securing the club's **11th league championship**. Ronaldo scored **two decisive second-half goals**, helping Al Nassr finish **two points ahead of Al Hilal**. The Portuguese superstar ended the campaign with **28 league goals**, proving his continued elite performance even at **41 years old**. The emotional triumph marks a major milestone in his Saudi football journey and builds strong momentum ahead of the **2026 FIFA World Cup**, where he is expected to represent **Portugal**.

Important Days News

- **International Museum Day 2026** was observed on **18 May** to highlight the importance of museums in preserving cultural heritage, promoting education, and strengthening social understanding. Organised annually by the **International Council of Museums (ICOM)** since **1977**, the day encourages awareness about museums as institutions of learning, historical preservation, and cultural dialogue. Museums play a critical role in safeguarding civilisational memory, artefacts, and artistic achievements for future generations. For competitive exams, remember the key facts: **Date – 18 May**, organiser – **ICOM**, and focus on cultural heritage preservation.
- **World AIDS Vaccine Day**, also known as **HIV Vaccine Awareness Day**, was observed on **18 May 2026** to raise awareness about the urgent need for an effective **HIV vaccine**. The observance began after **Bill Clinton's 1997 speech**, emphasising vaccine development as essential to controlling HIV/AIDS. Creating a vaccine remains difficult because **HIV mutates rapidly, attacks immune cells, and hides within the body**, making immunity challenging. Researchers are exploring **mRNA vaccines, broadly neutralising antibodies (bNAbs), T-cell immunity, and mosaic vaccine strategies**, while nearly **40 million people worldwide** continue living with HIV.

- **World Bee Day** is observed annually on **20 May** to raise awareness about the critical role of **bees and pollinators** in ensuring **food security, biodiversity, and ecological balance**. The **2026 theme**, “**Bee together for people and the planet – A partnership that sustains us all,**” emphasises blending traditional beekeeping wisdom with sustainable modern practices. The day honours **Anton Janša**, a pioneer of scientific apiculture, on his birth anniversary. Established by the **United Nations General Assembly in 2017**, the observance highlights threats including **climate change, pesticides, habitat loss, and declining pollinator populations**.
- **World Metrology Day 2026** was observed on **20 May**, marking the **151st anniversary of the Metre Convention**, with the theme “**Metrology: Building Trust in Policy Making.**” The day highlights the importance of accurate measurements in **science, trade, healthcare, governance, and consumer protection**. India marked the occasion by launching the **e-Maap portal**, decriminalising minor legal metrology offences, expanding **Government Approved Test Centres (GATCs)**, and advancing **One Nation, One Time** with **ISRO and the National Physical Laboratory**, strengthening digital precision infrastructure and standardised national measurement systems.
- **International Tea Day** is observed on **21 May** to celebrate tea’s cultural, economic, and social significance globally. The observance highlights the contributions of **tea farmers, workers, and small growers**, while promoting **fair labour practices, climate resilience, and sustainable tea cultivation**. In India, tea represents **hospitality, culture, and everyday social connection**, with varieties like **Masala Chai, Adrak Chai, Kahwa, and Cutting Chai** deeply embedded in tradition. India remains among the world’s largest tea producers, with **Assam, Darjeeling, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu** contributing significantly to the rural economy.
- **Anti-Terrorism Day** is observed across India on **21 May** to raise awareness about the dangers of **terrorism, extremism, and violence**, while promoting **peace, unity, and democratic values**. The day commemorates former Prime Minister **Rajiv Gandhi**, who was assassinated in a terror attack at **Sriperumbudur on 21 May 1991**. Schools, colleges, government offices, and institutions organise **pledge ceremonies, debates, seminars, and awareness campaigns**. The observance highlights terrorism’s devastating impact, including **loss of life, psychological trauma, economic disruption, national security threats, and social instability**.
- **World Turtle Day** is observed annually on **23 May** to raise awareness about protecting **turtles and tortoises**, among Earth’s oldest surviving species. Founded in **2000** by **American Tortoise Rescue**, the day highlights threats such as **habitat destruction, climate change, plastic pollution, illegal wildlife trade, and fishing bycatch**. Turtles play a

vital ecological role in maintaining healthy **marine, freshwater, and terrestrial ecosystems**, making their conservation crucial for biodiversity. The observance encourages actions such as **reducing plastic use, protecting habitats, participating in clean-up drives, and promoting wildlife-friendly conservation practices worldwide**.

- The **International Day for Biological Diversity** is observed on **22 May 2026** with the theme “**Acting locally for global impact,**” highlighting how community-level conservation supports global biodiversity protection. Established by the **United Nations**, the day raises awareness about safeguarding **ecosystems, wildlife, plants, and genetic diversity** essential for food, water, medicines, climate regulation, and livelihoods. The 2026 campaign emphasises **sustainable farming, wetland restoration, forest conservation, and pollution reduction**. The observance aligns with the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**, which aims to restore ecosystems and strengthen biodiversity protection by **2030**.

Obituaries News

- Former England cricket captain **M. J. K. Smith** passed away at the age of **92**, marking the end of a distinguished era in English cricket. Known for elegant strokeplay and positive captaincy, he scored over **39,000 first-class runs**, including **69 centuries**, and more than **30,000 runs for Warwickshire**. Smith represented England in **50 Test matches** and captained the side in **25 Tests between 1963 and 1966**, admired for his attacking leadership. After retirement, he served as **Warwickshire chairman** and later worked as an **ICC match referee**, continuing his contribution to cricket.
- Former Indian basketball captain and Olympian **Jennifer Paes** passed away after a battle with cancer, marking a major loss for Indian sports. She represented India at the **1972 Munich Olympics** and later captained the **Indian women’s basketball team**, becoming one of the pioneering women athletes in the country. Jennifer belonged to one of India’s most celebrated sporting families and was the mother of tennis legend **Leander Paes**. Her leadership, discipline, and pioneering role helped strengthen women’s basketball during its formative years, leaving behind a lasting and inspirational sporting legacy.
- Indian-origin technology leader **S. Soma Somasegar** passed away at the age of **59**, leaving a major legacy in global technology innovation. Born in **Puducherry** and educated at **Anna University**, he joined **Microsoft in 1989** and played a major role in developing **Windows, Visual Studio, and the .NET ecosystem** over a **27-year career**. He also established **Microsoft’s India Development Center in Hyderabad in 1998**, significantly strengthening India’s software innovation ecosystem. After retirement, he became Managing Director at **Madrona Venture Group**, investing in **AI, cloud, and enterprise technology startups**.

- Legendary **NASCAR driver Kyle Busch** reportedly passed away at the age of **41**, shocking the motorsports world. Known as **“Rowdy”** for his aggressive racing style, Busch won **two NASCAR Cup Series championships** and **63 Cup Series races** during an iconic **22-season career**. Tributes poured in from racing stars including **Denny Hamlin, Brad**

Keselowski, and Dale Earnhardt Jr., praising his talent and impact on the sport. Beyond competition, Busch mentored young drivers and remained a major figure in motorsport, leaving behind a lasting legacy, family, and devoted global fanbase.

Static Takeaways

Aspect	Details
Netherlands	President: Rob Jetten Capital: Amsterdam
Ethiopia	President: Taye Atske Salassie ,Capital: Addis Ababa
Russia	President: Vladimir Putin, Capital: Moscow
China	President: Xi Jinping, Capital: Beijing
Bangladesh	Prime Miniter: Tarique Rehman, Capital: Dhaka
Norway	PM: Jonar Gahr Store Capital: Oslo
Sweden	PM: Ulf David Kristersson Capital: Stockhom
United States	President: Donald Trump, Capital: Washington D.C.
Italy	Prime Minister: Georgia Meloni Capital: Rome
Cyprus	President: Nikos Cristodoulldes Capital: Nicosia
Saudi Arabia	President: Mohammed Bin Salman Capital: Jeddah
Kerala	CM:VD Satheesan Governor: R Arlekar , Capital: Thiruvananthpuram
Tamil Nadu	CM: Vijay Joseph, Governor: R Arlekar , Capital: Chennai
Andhra Pradesh	CM: Chandrababu Naidu, Governor: Abdul Nazeer, Capital: Amravati
Sikkim	CM: Prem Singh Tamang, Governor: Om Prakash Mathur , Capital:
Odisha	CM: Mohan Charan Majhi , Governor: Hari Babu Khambhupati, Capital: Bhubneshwar
Chhattisgarh	CM: Vishnu Deo Sai , Governor: Ramen Deka, Capital: Raipur
Uttarakhand	CM: Pushkar Singh Dhami , Governor: Gurmit Singh , Capital: Dehradun (winter Capital)
Karnataka	CM: Siddharamaiya, Governor: Thawarchand Gehlot , Capital: Bengaluru
West Bengal	CM: Suwendu Adhikari , Governor: RN Ravi, Capital: Kolkata
Haryana	CM: Nayab Singh Saini , Governor: Ashim Kumar Ghosh , Capital: Chandigarh
Madhya Pradesh	CM: Mohan Yadav , Governor: Mangubhai Patel, Capital: Bhopal
WHO	President: Dr. Teros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
RBI	Governor: Sanjay Malhotra
Bharti Airtel	Chairman: Sunil Mittal
ICICI Bank	CEO & MD: Sandeep Bakhshi