

Weekly One Liners 27th April to 3rd May, 2026

India and New Zealand Sign Landmark Trade Deal to Boost Investment and Exports

The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement was signed at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The Agreement was signed by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal and New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Investment Hon. Todd McClay. This agreement can be seen as the transformative step to strengthening the economic ties between the two countries. It aims to remove the trade barriers, improve market access and it will create the long-term economic opportunities.

100% Duty-Free Access Boosts Indian Exports

The important highlight of this agreement is the zero-duty access for 100% of Indian exports to the New Zealand. This means that Indian goods will become the more competitive in the New Zealand market. The sectors like textiles, leather, footwear, engineering goods and the processed foods will get the benefit the most. Before this agreement signed the tariffs of up to the 10% on Indian products made the expensive. Now the MSMEs, artisans and the exporters will gain the better opportunities and will help to boost production, job creation and the global trade participation.

Balanced Trade with The Protection for Key Sectors

In the FTA agreement India has carefully balanced the terms by opening the 70% of its tariff lines along with protecting the sensitive sectors like dairy, agriculture and metals. Around the 30% of products will see the immediate duty removal while others will have phased out the reductions over the several years. Also the special safeguards like the tariff rate quotas are applied to the items such as apples, kiwi and Manuka honey. This will ensure the consumer benefits along with protecting the Indian farmers and domestic industries from the sudden competition.

Big Opportunities in The Services and Skilled Jobs

The FTA will offer the major gains in to the services as with the New Zealand opening the 118 sectors which includes the IT, education, finance and the tourism. Also the Indian professionals will benefit from the new visa pathway in which it will allow 5,000 skilled workers to stay up to three years. It also supports the yoga instructors, chefs, teachers and the healthcare workers. Also the students get better opportunities too and with no cap on admissions, part-time work rights and extended the post-study work visas for career growth.

Investment Boost and Faster Market Access

New Zealand have committed to facilitating the USD 20 billion investment into India and it will support the sectors like infrastructure, renewable energy and digital services. The agreement will also simplify the access for the Indian pharmaceuticals and medical devices by accepting global regulatory standards. This will reduce the costs and speed up the approvals. This trade facilitation will measure like the faster

customs clearance, paperless systems and transparent procedures will make the exporting easier and more efficient for businesses.

Agriculture, MSMEs and Cultural Cooperation

The agreement will also promote the agricultural productivity via the joint research, better farming practices and it improved the supply chains. MSMEs and startups will benefit from the reduced barriers, innovation support, and global value chain access. A unique feature is the focus on cultural exchange and traditional knowledge, including the AYUSH systems and creative industries. Also the organic trade will also grow the under mutual recognition standards and it will open the new markets for the Indian products like tea, rice and spices.

Strong Future for India-New Zealand Trade

As the bilateral trade between the both nations already growing rapidly and this FTA is expected to significantly increase the trade volumes, exports and employment. It will strengthen the India's ties with developed economies and it will expand its global trade network. Also the states across India from Gujarat and Maharashtra to Tamil Nadu and Punjab are likely to benefit via improved exports. Overall this agreement creates the strong foundation for the long-term economic growth, innovation and global partnership.

RBI Launches Mission SAKSHAM to Enhance Governance in Urban Co-operative Bank

The Reserve Bank of India has launched the Mission SAKSHAM on the April 28, 2026 and it aims to strengthen the Urban Co-operative Banking (UCB) sector. This initiative focuses on improving the skills, governance and its operational efficiency through large-scale training programs. This mission will cover around the 1.4 lakh participants and the mission sets to target the various key stakeholders such as the board members, senior management and technical staff.

What is Mission SAKSHAM by RBI?

The Mission SAKSHAM which stands for the 'Sahkari Bank Kshamta Nirman' and it is designed as the mission-mode capacity-building initiative.

It also aims to upgrade the skills and capabilities of those personnel who are working in Urban Co-operative Banks across India.

The program includes both the in-person training and e-learning modules by ensuring the accessibility and flexibility.

RBI has also emphasized that the initiative is not just about the training but it is also about creating the long-term transformation in how these banks function.

The initiative was developed after the several rounds of consultations with key stakeholders which including the Umbrella Organization of UCBs and various cooperative federations and also by ensuring that it addresses real challenges faced by the sector.



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Who Will Benefit from the Initiative?

The Mission SAKSHAM has the wide reach and it will targeting the multiple levels within the banking system.

It includes the,

- Board Members and Directors
- Senior Management Officials
- Heads of Risk, Compliance, and Audit
- IT and technical staff
- Employees in critical operational roles

By covering this type of the such diverse group the RBI aims to ensure that both leadership and execution levels will improve simultaneously and leading to the overall institutional strengthening.

Focus Areas: Skills, Compliance, and Governance

The training programs under the Mission SAKSHAM are designed to address the some of the most pressing issues in the UCB sector.

The key focus is to improving the managerial and operational capabilities which are essential for the efficient banking services. This initiative are also aims to strengthen the compliance culture and also ensuring that banks are adhere to regulatory norms more effectively.

Another important aspect is the enhancing risk management and the audit practices which will help to prevent financial irregularities and improve transparency.

RBI have also highlighted the importance of the regional language training and making the program inclusive and accessible to several institutions across different parts of India.

Why Urban Co-operative Banks Need Strengthening

The Urban Co-operative Banks play the important role in the India's financial ecosystem and specially to providing banking services to small businesses, local communities and the middle-income groups.

However, the sector has faced challenges such as the,

- Weak governance structures.
- The limited professional expertise.
- Some of the compliance gaps.
- The rechnological limitations.

Mission SAKSHAM is also aims to address these issues by building the strong foundation of the knowledge, skills and the accountability within the system.

Building The Sustainable Learning Ecosystem

Unlike the short-term training initiatives the Mission SAKSHAM is designed to create the self-sustaining ecosystem of the continuous learning.

The RBI also envisions the system where the training and skill development to become an ongoing process rather than a one-time effort.

This will help UCBs adapt to the evolving financial regulations, technological advancements and the market demands.

Ultimately the mission will be expected to contribute to the systemic stability and the long-term growth of the co-operative banking sector.

National Affairs

- The **Supreme Court of India** ruled that **safe travel on highways** is a **fundamental right under Article 21 (Right to Life)**, expanding its scope beyond survival to **safe mobility**. The judgment mandates the State to improve **road safety**, remove **illegal structures** like roadside dhabas, and regulate **vehicle parking**. It highlights that **National Highways**, though only 2% of roads, account for nearly **30% of fatalities**. The Court also directed formation of **District Highway Safety Task Forces**. This landmark ruling strengthens **citizen protection**, ensuring accountability, better infrastructure, and prevention of avoidable road accidents.
- **NITI Aayog** launched the **DPI@2047 roadmap** to transform India into a **\$30 trillion economy** with **\$18,000 per capita income**. The plan includes **DPI 2.0 (2025–2035)** focusing on **digital empowerment** and **inclusive access**, and **DPI 3.0 (2035–2047)** driving **innovation-led growth**. Building on platforms like **Aadhaar** and **Unified Payments Interface**, it targets **MSMEs, agriculture, education, and healthcare**. The initiative supports **financial inclusion, job creation**, and aligns with **Viksit Bharat 2047**, aiming for sustainable and technology-driven economic development.
- **Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation** launched a **14-day Bharat–Bhutan Mystic Mountain Tour** from **New Delhi**, offering a **premium rail-cum-road journey** via the **Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train**. Covering **Northeast India** and **Bhutan**, key destinations include Guwahati, Shillong, Thimphu, and Paro. The package features **luxury cabins, meals, 3-star stays, and guided sightseeing**. Priced from **₹1.16 lakh**, it ensures a **hassle-free travel experience**. This initiative boosts **tourism**, strengthens **India–Bhutan connectivity**, and promotes **cultural exchange** through curated travel.
- **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority** will establish a **₹15 crore Basmati and Organic Training Centre** in **Pilibhit** to boost **agricultural exports**. The centre will train farmers in **basmati cultivation, organic farming, and export practices**, supported by **AI-based crop mapping** and a **NABL-accredited lab** for quality testing. Targeting over **50,000 farmers**, it will enhance **productivity, traceability, and global competitiveness**. This initiative strengthens India's **agri-export ecosystem**, promotes **high-value crops**, and empowers farmers with modern technology and skills for sustainable growth.
- **Ayushman Bharat Diwas**, observed on **April 30**, celebrates India's flagship scheme **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana**, launched in 2018. It provides **cashless healthcare coverage up to ₹5 lakh per family**, benefiting over **10.74 crore families**. The initiative ensures **universal health coverage**, offering access to **1,900+ treatments**, nationwide portability, and coverage of **pre-existing diseases**. It primarily supports **economically vulnerable groups**, reducing financial burden and improving healthcare access. Aligned with global health goals, the scheme strengthens India's **public health system**, promotes **health equity**, and moves toward **"Healthcare for All."**

- **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **594 km Ganga Expressway** in **Uttar Pradesh**, built at **₹36,230 crore**, to boost **connectivity** and **economic growth**. Linking Meerut to Prayagraj across 12 districts, the six-lane (expandable to eight) corridor reduces travel time from **10–12 hours to about 6 hours**. A key feature is a **3.5 km emergency airstrip** for defence use. The project will enhance **logistics efficiency**, support **industrial corridors**, and attract investments, transforming Uttar Pradesh into a major hub for **trade, transport, and regional development**.
- The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** released the **Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0 Report** on **National Panchayati Raj Day**, showcasing progress in rural development. A total of **3,635 Gram Panchayats** emerged as **Front Runners (A Grade)**, with **97.3% participation** from over **2.59 lakh Panchayats**. The report evaluates governance across **150 indicators** covering **livelihoods, health, and infrastructure**. High performance was seen in **poverty reduction** and **health improvements**. With enhanced **data transparency, real-time monitoring, and Gram Sabha validation**, PAI 2.0 strengthens **grassroots governance** and supports targeted rural development initiatives.
- The **Government of India** has announced the **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2026**, to be held from **June to August** under the **Ministry of External Affairs**, marking the revival of cross-border pilgrimage. Devotees will travel via **Lipulekh Pass** (trek-based) and **Nathu La Pass** (vehicle-friendly). The yatra includes **20 batches of 50 pilgrims each (1,000 total)**, selected through a **digital random process**. Centered around **Mount Kailash** and **Lake Mansarovar**, the journey holds deep significance for **Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains**, symbolizing spiritual purification and devotion.
- India conducted a nationwide trial of the **Cell Broadcast Alert System** on May 2, 2026, led by the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)**, sending test alerts at **11:42 AM**. This system delivers **real-time, location-based emergency warnings** during disasters like **earthquakes, floods, and cyclones**, without relying on phone numbers. Powered by the **SACHET Integrated Alert System** developed by **C-DOT**, it supports **19+ languages** and works even during network congestion. Developed with the **Department of Telecommunications**, it enhances **disaster preparedness, rapid communication, and public safety**, ensuring timely alerts reach all mobile users across affected regions.
- **Om Birla**, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, has reconstituted four key **Parliamentary Committees for 2026–27** (May 1–April 30). These include the **Committee of Estimates (Sanjay Jaiswal)**, **Public Accounts Committee (K. C. Venugopal)**, **Committee on Public Undertakings (Baijayant Panda)**, and **Committee on Welfare of SC/ST (Faggan Singh Kulaste)**. They ensure **financial accountability, transparency, and social justice** by reviewing **government expenditure, PSU performance, and welfare policies**. Guided by **Articles 105 and 118 of the Constitution**, these committees strengthen **parliamentary oversight, checks and balances, and effective governance** in India's democratic system.
- The **Government of India** has notified the **Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026** through the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, updating the **Citizenship Rules, 2009**. Key changes include **full digitalisation of OCI and citizenship applications**, introduction of **e-OCI (digital registration)**, and removal of duplicate document submission. It clarifies that **minors cannot hold both Indian and foreign passports**. OCI renunciation now requires **online declaration and card surrender**. Applicants must also consent to **biometric data collection for fast-track immigration**. These reforms aim to enhance **efficiency, transparency, compliance, and ease of processing** in India's citizenship and immigration system.

States in the News

- **Justice Lisa Gill** was sworn in as the **first woman Chief Justice** of the **Andhra Pradesh High Court** in **Vijayawada**, marking a major milestone for **women's representation** in India's judiciary. The oath was administered by Governor **S Abdul Nazeer**. Her appointment reflects progress toward **gender equality, inclusivity, and diversity** in the legal system. Chief Minister **N Chandrababu Naidu** extended congratulations. This historic step encourages greater participation of women in **legal professions** and strengthens the credibility of India's **judicial institutions**.
- The **Andhra Pradesh** government, led by **N Chandrababu Naidu**, launched a **₹13,000 crore Mushroom Mission** to make the state India's **largest producer**. Targeting **67,500 tonnes output** and **1.62 lakh units**, it focuses on **small farmers, self-help groups (SHGs), and rural employment**. With **40% subsidy support**, the initiative promotes varieties like **milky, paddy straw, and button mushrooms**. It aims to build a strong **agri value chain**, boost **exports**, and generate sustainable income, positioning the state as a hub for **agri-based entrepreneurship** and rural development.
- The **Ladakh** will gain **five new districts**—Nubra, Sham, Changthang, Zaskar, and Drass—raising the total from **2 to 7**, boosting **decentralised governance** and **regional development**. Announced under the leadership of **V. K. Saxena**, the move aims to improve **administrative efficiency**, enhance **public service delivery**, and address long-standing local demands. It is expected to create **economic opportunities**, strengthen **infrastructure**, and support remote communities. Linked to post-**Article 370 abrogation** reforms, this step reinforces inclusive governance and balanced development in border regions.
- **West Bengal** recorded its **highest-ever voter turnout** since Independence, with an overall **92.47% participation** in recent Assembly elections, as per the **Election Commission of India**. Phase-I saw **93.19% turnout**, while Phase-II recorded **91.66%**, surpassing the previous **84.72% (2011)** record. Notably, **female voters (92.28%)** outpaced **male voters (91.07%)**, reflecting rising **gender inclusivity** and **democratic engagement**. This historic participation highlights strong **public trust in elections**, increased **voter awareness**, and the robustness of India's **democratic process**.

- The **Bengaluru Police** has introduced an **AI-powered multilingual feature** in the **Namma 112 helpline**, enabling communication in **10+ Indian and foreign languages** like Bengali, Malayalam, French, Spanish, and Arabic. Built on **Voice AI technology**, it ensures **real-time translation**, reducing delays during emergencies. With around **8,000 daily calls**, including **100–200 language-barrier cases**, this system improves **emergency response efficiency and accessibility**. It strengthens **public safety**, supports **international visitors**, and reflects India's push toward **digital governance, smart policing, and inclusive emergency services** in a globally diverse city like Bengaluru.
- The **Karnataka government** has launched India's first **digital grievance redressal system for gig workers**, developed by the **Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers Board** with the e-Governance Department. Through the **Integrated Public Grievance Redressal System (IPGRS)**, workers can report issues related to **wages, incentives, and working conditions**, with **real-time tracking and time-bound resolution**. This initiative creates a formal link between workers, platforms, and authorities, enhancing **transparency, accountability, and worker protection**. It marks a major step toward regulating the **gig economy** and ensuring rights for app-based workers like delivery partners and ride-hailing drivers.
- **Emmanuel Macron** announced he will exit **politics after 2027**, completing his second term as **France's President**. Speaking in **Nicosia**, he ruled out any **political comeback**, ending speculation. First elected in **2017** as the youngest president and re-elected in **2022**, his tenure saw key **reforms**, including raising the **retirement age** from 62 to 64, alongside **public protests** and political challenges. With France's **two-term limit**, his decision signals a **leadership transition**, marking the close of a significant political era and shaping the country's future political landscape.
- **Annalena Baerbock**, President of the **United Nations General Assembly**, will visit **India on April 28, 2026**, marking her first trip in the role. The visit focuses on **global cooperation, multilateralism**, and addressing challenges like **climate change, economic instability, and conflict resolution**. She will hold talks with **S. Jaishankar** and other officials on **digital governance and UN collaboration**. The visit highlights India's growing role in **global diplomacy**, followed by her next engagement in **China**, strengthening international partnerships.
- **Symbiosis Skills and Professional University** launched Asia's first **UNESCO Chair on Gender Inclusion and Skill Development** in collaboration with **UNESCO**. The initiative aims to empower women by promoting participation in **AI, robotics, and advanced manufacturing**. Inaugurated by **Jayant Chaudhary**, it focuses on **future skills, gender equality, and employment opportunities**. With over **10,000 girls trained**, it highlights strong **industry-academia collaboration** involving global firms. This milestone strengthens India's role in bridging the **gender gap** and advancing **inclusive skill development** for emerging industries.

International Affairs

- India, through **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** and **National Biodiversity Authority**, launched a **five-year biodiversity project (2025–2030)** with support from **United Nations Development Programme** and **Global Environment Facility**. Focused on **Tamil Nadu** and **Meghalaya**, it strengthens **grassroots governance** by integrating biodiversity into **Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GDPDs)**. The initiative promotes **community participation, sustainable livelihoods, and eco-friendly enterprises**. It supports institutions like **PRIs** and **BMCs**, ensures **Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)**, and empowers **women and tribal communities**, enhancing **biodiversity conservation and local development**.
- The **World Health Organization** approved the **first infant-specific malaria drug** on **World Malaria Day 2026**, targeting babies under **5 kg**. The **artemether-lumefantrine** formulation ensures **safe dosing**, reducing **toxicity risks** and improving **pediatric care**. This milestone enables faster **global distribution**, especially in **malaria-endemic regions** like **Sub-Saharan Africa**, which accounts for **90% of cases**. With **children under five** contributing nearly **70% of malaria deaths**, the drug offers critical protection. Supporting **maternal and child health**, this innovation strengthens global efforts to combat **malaria**, improve **survival rates**, and advance **equitable healthcare access**.
- **India** submitted revised **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** for **2031–2035**, targeting **47% emission intensity reduction, 60% non-fossil energy capacity, and a 3.5–4 billion tonne carbon sink**. Aligning with the **Paris Agreement**, the plan emphasizes **clean energy, forest expansion, and green growth**. Supported by initiatives like **Green Hydrogen Mission** and **International Solar Alliance**, India strengthens its role in **global climate action**, progressing toward its **2070 net-zero goal** while balancing development and sustainability.
- **India** became the **fifth-largest military spender** in 2025, with expenditure rising to **\$92.1 billion**, according to the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute**. Defence spending grew **8.9%**, driven by **modernisation, border security, and regional tensions**, including the **India–Pakistan conflict**. India now ranks behind the **US, China, Russia, and Germany**, contributing to rising **global military expenditure**. Increased investments in **aircraft, missiles, and advanced technologies** highlight its focus on **defence readiness**. This trend reflects India's strategic push toward strengthening **national security** and maintaining a robust **military capability** amid global uncertainties.

- The **United Arab Emirates** announced its exit from **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries** effective **May 1, 2026**, ending nearly **60 years of membership**. The move aims to gain **greater production flexibility** and expand output beyond **OPEC quotas**. Analysts note dissatisfaction with production limits and a push for **strategic autonomy**. The decision may **weaken OPEC's influence** and increase **global oil supply**, potentially lowering prices but raising **market volatility**. Amid geopolitical tensions, including disruptions in the **Strait of Hormuz**, this shift signals a major change in **global energy dynamics**.
- **Finland** launched Europe's first **fully integrated lithium project** near **Kokkola**, covering **mining to refining**. Known as the **Keliber project**, it aims to produce **15,000 tonnes of lithium hydroxide annually**, supporting **electric vehicle (EV) batteries** and **clean energy storage**. Backed by firms like **Sibanye-Stillwater**, the initiative strengthens Europe's **energy independence** and reduces reliance on imports. Lithium, a key resource for modern technology, positions Europe as a stronger player in the **global green transition** and sustainable industrial development.
- The **Federal Reserve** kept **interest rates unchanged at 3.50%–3.75%** on April 29, 2026, signaling **policy uncertainty** amid mixed economic conditions. The decision saw a rare **8–4 split vote**, reflecting divisions over **inflation control vs economic growth**. Rising **global oil prices** and **geopolitical tensions** continue to fuel **inflation pressures**, while the **labour market remains stable**. Some policymakers favored rate cuts, highlighting uncertainty in future direction. With **Jerome Powell** nearing the end of his term and **Kevin Warsh** likely to succeed, the **US monetary policy outlook** remains uncertain.
- India has deployed the **Aarogya Maitri portable healthcare system** in **Jamaica** under its **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)** framework, marking a major step in global humanitarian outreach. Coordinated by the **Ministry of External Affairs** and National Security Council Secretariat, the initiative delivers **rapid, technology-driven medical support** in disaster situations. It strengthens ties with **CARICOM nations** and showcases India's role as a **reliable global healthcare partner**, focusing on **disaster response, healthcare collaboration, and capacity building** in vulnerable regions.
- **global healthcare markets** and promotes **affordable medicines** through biosimilars.
- **One MobiKwik Systems** received **NBFC approval** from the **Reserve Bank of India**, enabling entry into the **regulated digital lending space**. The company will launch **MobiKwik Financial Services Pvt. Ltd.** to offer **loans** and expand its **credit portfolio**. With over **18.6 crore users** and strong **technology infrastructure**, this move marks a shift from payments to full-scale **financial services**. The approval boosts **credibility**, supports **financial inclusion**, and strengthens India's **fintech ecosystem**, especially in extending credit access to underserved segments.
- **Visa Inc.** appointed **Suresh Sethi** as **Group Country Manager for India & South Asia**, aiming to boost **digital payments** and **financial innovation**. Based in **Mumbai**, he will oversee operations across **India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, and Bhutan**. Sethi succeeds **Sandeep Ghosh** and brings experience from **Protean e-Gov Technologies Ltd.**, where he advanced **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**. His leadership aligns with Visa's vision of expanding **fintech innovation, financial inclusion**, and strengthening the **digital economy** in South Asia.
- The **Reserve Bank of India** launched **Mission SAKSHAM (Sahkari Bank Kshamta Nirman)** to strengthen **Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs)** through large-scale **capacity building**. The initiative will train around **1.4 lakh participants**, including **board members, senior management, and technical staff**, via **e-learning and offline programs**. It focuses on improving **governance, risk management, compliance, and operational efficiency**. Addressing issues like weak governance and skill gaps, the mission aims to enhance **financial stability** and transparency. This step reinforces RBI's commitment to modernising the UCB sector and improving banking services for **local communities and small businesses**.
- **Piyush Goyal** announced a **3-year waiver on Intellectual Property (IP) fees** during **World Intellectual Property Day** in **New Delhi**, aiming to promote **sports innovation**. The waiver covers **patents, trademarks, copyrights, and GI tags**, encouraging **startups, athletes, and students** to protect their ideas. The initiative supports "**Innovate, Patent, Produce, Prosper**" and highlights products like **Kashmir willow bats**. Plans include **sports manufacturing clusters** and a **wearables hackathon** with **IIT Delhi**, boosting **global competitiveness** and strengthening India's **sports economy**.
- India's **industrial output (IIP)** growth slowed to **4.1% in March 2026**, the lowest in five months, as per the **National Statistical Office**. The decline was driven by weak **manufacturing (4.3%)** and **power sector (0.8%)** performance, while **mining** showed resilience with **5.5% growth**. The **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** reflects overall **economic activity**, and the slowdown signals **weaker demand** and sectoral challenges. Despite this, annual growth remained stable at **4.1%**, indicating **moderate but uneven industrial recovery** and highlighting the need for stronger momentum in key sectors.

Banking/Economy/Business News

- **Sun Pharmaceutical Industries** has proposed a **\$11.75 billion acquisition** of **Organon & Co.**, marking one of India's **largest overseas deals**. The all-cash transaction, expected by **2027**, will expand Sun Pharma's presence across **150 countries**. Organon's portfolio of **70+ products** and focus on **women's health** and **biosimilars** will strengthen future growth. The combined entity may achieve **\$12.4 billion revenue**, placing it among the **top global pharma companies**. This strategic move boosts India's position in

- The **Reserve Bank of India** introduced new **loan restructuring guidelines** for **disaster-hit areas**, effective **July 1, 2026**. Banks and NBFCs can now **proactively restructure loans** without borrower requests, ensuring **faster financial relief**. A **5% provisioning norm** is mandated to balance **risk and stability**. Only **standard accounts** (≤ 30 days overdue) are eligible, with a **135-day opt-out option** for borrowers. The framework requires action within **45 days** and completion in **90 days**. This move strengthens **financial resilience**, supports affected borrowers, and enhances the banking system's **crisis response capability**.
- The **Employees Provident Fund Organisation** will launch the **E-PRAAPTI portal** to help users trace and reactivate **dormant PF accounts** without a **UAN**. Announced by **Mansukh Mandaviya**, the platform uses **Aadhaar-based authentication** for secure access and allows users to manage accounts independently. It enhances **transparency, digital governance, and user empowerment**, especially for individuals with multiple job changes. With rising **digital claim settlements** and faster processing, this initiative strengthens EPFO's modernization efforts, ensuring **efficient, accessible, and paperless services** for millions of subscribers.
- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India** has operationalised the **PaRRVA (Past Risk and Return Verification Agency)** system from **May 4, 2026**, enhancing **market transparency and investor protection**. Managed by **CARE Ratings Limited** with support from **National Stock Exchange of India**, it verifies performance claims of **investment advisers, research analysts, and others**. The platform ensures **accurate, standardized data**, reducing misleading claims and enabling **informed investment decisions**. This initiative strengthens **accountability**, boosts investor confidence, and improves the credibility of India's **financial ecosystem**.
- India's **Unified Payments Interface**, launched in 2016 by the **National Payments Corporation of India** under the **Reserve Bank of India**, has completed a decade, becoming the **world's largest real-time payment system**. Transactions surged from **2 crore to 24,000+ crore**, with value reaching **₹314 lakh crore**, contributing **85% of India's digital payments** and **49% globally**. Its success lies in **instant transfers, interoperability, low cost, and ease of use**. Widely used for **P2P and P2M payments**, UPI also expanded globally, strengthening India's leadership in **digital public infrastructure and financial inclusion**.
- The **India Post Payments Bank** has launched **zero-balance SHG Savings Accounts** to empower **women-led Self Help Groups (SHGs)** in rural areas. Announced under the **Ministry of Communications**, the initiative offers **no minimum balance, zero initial deposit, and ₹2 lakh limit**, making banking accessible. It aims to boost **financial inclusion, savings habits, and digital banking access**, while reducing dependence on informal credit. By integrating SHGs into the **formal banking system**, this move strengthens **women empowerment, grassroots economic development, and inclusive growth** across India.
- The **National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited** reported strong recovery performance in FY 2025–26, recovering **₹4,364 crore**, taking total recoveries to **₹6,345 crore**. It has acquired **33 stressed borrower accounts** with exposure nearing **₹1.65 lakh crore**, moving toward its **₹2 lakh crore target**. Working alongside **India Debt Resolution Company Ltd (IDRCL)** and under the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)**, NARCL plays a key role in resolving **NPAs**, improving **bank balance sheets**, and boosting **credit flow and economic growth** by enabling faster and more efficient asset recovery.
- India's **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** collections hit a **record ₹2.42 lakh crore in April 2026**, registering an **8.7% year-on-year growth**—the highest ever monthly collection. The surge was largely driven by **strong import growth**, contributing over **₹57,000 crore** (up 25.8%), and **year-end stock clearance** by businesses, which increased tax payments. Domestic GST remained steady at **₹1.85 lakh crore** (4.3% growth). After refunds, net collections stood at **₹2.11 lakh crore**. However, **rising refunds (up 19.3%)**, especially due to the **inverted duty structure**, remain a key concern for policymakers despite strong revenue performance.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** reported that **98.47% of ₹2,000 notes** withdrawn in **May 2023** have returned to the banking system, marking a major **currency management milestone**. The total circulation dropped from **₹3.56 lakh crore to ₹5,451 crore (April 2026)**. The withdrawal was not demonetisation—notes remain **legal tender** but are no longer actively circulated. Smooth exchange through **RBI offices and banks** ensured minimal disruption. The move aimed to promote **cleaner currency circulation, reduce high-value cash usage, and encourage digital payments**, reflecting India's shift towards a more **transparent and efficient financial system**.

Appointments/Resignations

- **Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)** appointed **Sanjay Jamuar** as the first CEO of **Delhi Metro International Limited (DMIL)**, marking a step toward **global expansion**. DMIL aims to take India's **metro expertise** to international markets through **consultancy** and project execution. Jamuar, a former **IRTS officer**, brings extensive global experience across **Europe and West Asia**. DMRC, already involved in projects like **Dhaka Metro**, strengthens its position in **urban transport solutions**. This move highlights India's growing role in **global metro infrastructure** and sustainable urban development.

- **Dilip Kumar** assumed charge as **Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO)** of **Steel Authority of India Limited** on **April 27, 2026**, aiming to enhance **transparency, accountability, and vigilance** in the PSU. A senior officer of the **Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers**, he brings over **two decades of experience** in operations, maintenance, and management. Known for innovations like **ISO-certified trains** and **wheel replacement techniques**, he holds a degree from **IIT BHU**. His appointment strengthens governance and operational integrity in India's **steel sector**.
- Indian cricketer **Shreyas Iyer** has been named brand ambassador for the F1 programme in India by **Mumbai Falcons Racing Limited**. Alongside, the **F1 Sim Racing India Open 2026** has been launched to identify and nurture **esports racing talent**. The initiative aims to bridge **gaming and professional motorsport**, offering a national platform for young players. Iyer's involvement is expected to boost youth engagement and promote a **multi-sport ecosystem**, highlighting the growing convergence of **traditional sports, esports, and digital innovation** in India.
- **Infosys** has appointed **Nitin Paranjpe** as **Non-Executive Vice Chairman**, strengthening its **governance and strategic leadership**. Approved by the Board, he will work alongside Chairman **Nandan Nilekani** to guide long-term strategy. Paranjpe, also Chairman of **Hindustan Unilever Limited**, brings vast global experience in **corporate governance and business strategy**. The role focuses on advisory and board-level decisions, ensuring stability as Infosys navigates **digital transformation and global competition** in the evolving IT sector.
- **Vishvajit Sahay** has been appointed **Secretary (Defence Finance)** in the Ministry of Defence, bringing over **30 years of experience** in **defence finance and public administration**. A **1990-batch IDAS officer**, he earlier served as **Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA)** and held key roles across multiple ministries. An alumnus of **St. Stephen's College** with a **law degree**, he also has international exposure from the **University of Cambridge** and the **George C. Marshall Centre**. His appointment is expected to strengthen **financial governance, transparency, and strategic decision-making** in India's defence sector.
- **Anugraha Narayana Das**, a **1991-batch IDAS officer**, has assumed charge as **Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA)**, bringing over **30 years of experience** in **defence finance and public administration**. An alumnus of **Utkal University**, with international exposure at the **University of Ljubljana** and training from **IIM Bangalore** and **Duke University**, he has held key roles including **Additional Financial Adviser (MoD)** and **Principal IFA, Army HQ**.
- **Ashutosh Gowariker** has been appointed **Festival Director** for the **57th International Film Festival of India 2026**, scheduled in **Goa (November 2026)**. A renowned filmmaker with a long association with IFFI since 1984 and former Jury President (2024), he brings strong **creative vision and global experience**. Established in 1952, IFFI is among **Asia's oldest**

film festivals, organized by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, NFDC, and Entertainment Society of Goa. The 2026 edition will feature **international competitions, masterclasses, and retrospectives**, aiming to boost **global cinematic collaboration and cultural exchange**.

- **Bharat Khera**, a **1995-batch IAS officer**, has been appointed **Secretary of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)**. With over **30 years of administrative experience**, he is expected to strengthen the **MSME sector**, contributing **30% to India's GDP**. He previously served as **Additional Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs**, and held key roles in the **Ministry of Defence** and **Cabinet Secretariat**. He also served in senior positions in **Himachal Pradesh**. An alumnus of **BITS Pilani, Syracuse University**, and **ISB**, he brings strong **policy, governance, and leadership expertise** to drive **MSME growth and economic development**.

Defence News

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** unveiled two **advanced armoured platforms** in **Ahilyanagar**, strengthening India's **defence modernisation and self-reliance**. Developed by **Vehicles Research and Development Establishment**, the platforms include **tracked and wheeled variants** with a **30 mm crewless turret, 7.62 mm gun, and anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs)**. Featuring **high mobility, STANAG Level 4/5 protection, and modular design**, they suit diverse combat roles. With **65% indigenous content** (target 90%), and collaboration with firms like **Tata Advanced Systems Limited** and **Bharat Forge Limited**, this marks a major step in **indigenous defence manufacturing**.
- The **Indian Army** will host the inaugural **Exercise PRAGATI** at **Umroi Foreign Training Node**, with participation from **11 countries**. Aimed at enhancing **military cooperation, interoperability, and mutual trust**, the exercise reflects India's commitment to **regional security** in the **Indian Ocean Region**. PRAGATI (Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation) promotes **joint training** and strategic collaboration among partner nations, including **ASEAN and neighbours**. The initiative strengthens defence ties, boosts India's **global military engagement**, and highlights the strategic importance of the **Northeast region** in international cooperation.
- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation** and **Indian Navy** successfully conducted the maiden salvo launch of the **Naval Anti-Ship Missile-Short Range (NASM-SR)**, boosting India's **indigenous defence capabilities**. Fired from a naval helicopter at **Integrated Test Range Chandipur**, the missile demonstrated **precision targeting**, including **waterline strike capability**. Equipped with **advanced navigation, two-way data link, and high-precision seeker**, it ensures effective maritime combat performance. Developed under **Make in India**, this achievement strengthens India's **naval strike power, technological self-reliance, and overall maritime security readiness**.

- **India and Sri Lanka** conducted the fourth **IN-SLN DIVEX 2026** in **Colombo**, enhancing **maritime cooperation**. The exercise featured the **Indian Navy** vessel **INS Nireekshak** and **Sri Lankan divers**, focusing on **deep-sea diving** and **mixed-gas operations**. It improved **interoperability**, **operational readiness**, and **maritime security** in the **Indian Ocean Region**. Alongside drills, activities like **joint exercises**, **yoga**, and **humanitarian support** under **Aarogya Maitri** strengthened bilateral ties, trust, and regional stability.

Awards and Recognitions

- Botanist **N. Alim Yusuf** was honoured by the **World Wide Fund for Nature** for developing an **AI-powered app** to detect **invasive plant species** in **Kerala**. The app identifies nearly **100 species**, aiding **biodiversity conservation** and enabling **early detection** of ecological threats. Developed at the **Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute for Plant Sciences**, it empowers **researchers**, **forest officials**, and the public. This innovation highlights the role of **artificial intelligence** in **environmental monitoring**, bridging **technology and ecology**. The recognition underscores efforts toward **sustainable development**, **climate action**, and strengthening **ecosystem protection** globally.
- The **Sur Jyotsna National Music Awards 2026**, held in **New Delhi**, honoured eminent artists **Sumitra Guha** and **Laxman Krishnarao Pandit** for their lifelong contribution to **Indian classical music**. The awards celebrate excellence and aim to preserve **cultural heritage** while encouraging young talent. Hosted at the **Dr Ambedkar International Centre**, the event featured dignitaries and performances by artists like **Kailash Kher**. Expanding to multiple cities, the initiative promotes wider appreciation of **traditional music** across India.
- The Indian scientist **Parveen Shaikh** has won the **Whitley Award 2026** for protecting the endangered **Indian Skimmer** in the **Ganga Basin**. Her **community-led conservation model**, involving local “**nest guardians**,” improved survival rates and increased bird population significantly. Supported by the **Bombay Natural History Society**, the project will now expand to **Prayagraj**, addressing challenges like pollution and human disturbance. This recognition highlights the importance of **community participation**, **biodiversity conservation**, and **grassroots environmental efforts** in protecting endangered species.

Sports News

- **Punjab Kings** created history by chasing **265 runs** against **Delhi Capitals** at **Arun Jaitley Stadium**, marking the **highest successful chase in IPL history**. **KL Rahul** scored a stunning **152 runs**, supported by **Nitish Rana** (91), taking DC to 264. In reply, **Prabhsimran Singh** (76) and **Priyansh Arya** (73) powered PBKS with a rapid start. Captain **Shreyas Iyer** guided the team to victory. PBKS also surpassed their previous **262-run record (2024)**, dominating IPL's top chase records.

- **Sabastian Sawe** created history at the **London Marathon 2026** by finishing in **1:59:30**, becoming the first to run an **official sub-2-hour marathon**. He broke the previous record of **2:00:35** set by **Kelvin Kiptum**, redefining **human endurance**. Competitors like **Yomif Kejelcha** and **Jacob Kiplimo** also delivered record-level performances. Sawe's achievement is compared to legends like **Roger Bannister** and **Usain Bolt**, marking a historic milestone in **athletics history**.
- India emerged as the top nation at the **ISSF Junior World Cup 2026** in **Cairo**, winning **16 medals** (5 gold, 6 silver, 5 bronze), highlighting its rising strength in **shooting sports**. **Hemant Burman** secured silver in the **50m Rifle 3 Positions** event, while **Zuhair Khan** and **Addya Katyal** won bronze in the **Trap Mixed Team**. Despite mixed results in women's events, India dominated overall. Focus now shifts to the **ISSF Junior World Championship** in Germany, boosting Olympic preparation.
- **Virat Kohli** became the first player to score **9000 runs** in the **Indian Premier League**, achieving the milestone during a match between **Royal Challengers Bengaluru** and **Delhi Capitals**. Reaching the mark in his **275th match**, Kohli reinforced his status as the most **consistent T20 batter**. He leads the IPL run charts ahead of players like **Rohit Sharma** and **David Warner**. This record sets a new **benchmark** in franchise cricket, highlighting his dominance, longevity, and unmatched contribution to the league.
- **P. V. Sindhu** became **Chair of the Athletes' Commission** and secured a **voting role** in the **Badminton World Federation Council**, marking a historic step in **global badminton governance**. As an **active athlete**, she will represent players' interests and influence **policy decisions** at the highest level. Her participation bridges the gap between **athletes and administrators**, strengthening **inclusive decision-making**. Supported by BWF leadership, this move highlights the importance of **athlete representation** and sets a precedent for greater involvement of sportspersons in shaping the future of international sports governance.
- **Rithika Sri** from **Tamil Nadu** became India's **first transgender cricket umpire**, marking a milestone in **sports inclusivity**. Enabled by the **Tamil Nadu Cricket Association** introducing an '**Other**' category in umpire exams, her achievement highlights growing **gender representation**. Starting her journey in 2021, she overcame **social stigma** and barriers to succeed. Her recognition aligns with India's **2014 Supreme Court ruling** on transgender rights, promoting **equality and opportunity**. This landmark moment inspires wider acceptance and encourages greater participation of transgender individuals in **professional sports and governance**.
- **Punjab FC** retained the **AIFF Elite Youth League 2025–26** title with a dominant **3-0 win** over **Zinc Football Academy**. After a goalless first half, goals by **Karish Soram**, **Vishal Yadav**, and **Thongram Rishikanta Singh** in quick succession sealed victory. The performance highlights Punjab FC's **youth dominance**, strong **grassroots development**, and consistent excellence in national competitions, establishing them as a leading talent pipeline in **Indian football**.

- India delivered an impressive performance at the **Commonwealth Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships** in Apia, winning **four gold medals**. Athletes like **Sunil Singh, Aisangfa Gogoi, Abhinob Gogoi, and Charu Pesi** excelled in **snatch and clean & jerk** events. The achievement highlights India's rising strength in **international weightlifting**, backed by strong **grassroots training**, improved **coaching**, and growing participation. Success across youth and senior categories signals a promising future and strengthens India's presence in global sporting competitions.
- India's men's badminton team created history by defeating **Chinese Taipei 3-0** at the **Thomas Cup 2026** in Horsens, Denmark, entering the **semifinals** and securing a medal—only their **second last-four finish after 2022**. **Lakshya Sen** led with a comeback win over Chou Tien-chen. The doubles pair **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty** dominated their match, while debutant **Ayush Shetty** sealed victory with an upset win. This performance highlights India's **growing dominance, strong bench strength, and rising global stature in badminton**.

Science and Technology News

- **Skyroot Aerospace** marked a major breakthrough with **Vikram-1**, India's **first privately built orbital rocket**, transported from **Hyderabad to Satish Dhawan Space Centre**. Flagged off by **A. Revanth Reddy**, the mission signals a shift toward a **private-driven space sector**. Designed for **low-cost satellite launches**, Vikram-1 can carry **350 kg to Low Earth Orbit (LEO)** and uses **3D-printed engines**. Supported by **IN-SPaCe** and **ISRO**, this initiative boosts India's **commercial space capabilities** and innovation ecosystem.
- The **Maharashtra** Cabinet, led by **Devendra Fadnavis**, approved the **AI Policy 2026** to attract **₹10,000 crore investment** and create **1.5 lakh jobs by 2031**. The policy focuses on **AI innovation, infrastructure, and skilling**, including **AI Innovation Cities, GPU-based computing, and training 2 lakh professionals**. It supports **startups and MSMEs** through funding, subsidies, and incubators. With initiatives like **Maha AI Tools Hub**, the state aims to become a leading **AI hub**, boosting **economic growth, employment, and India's global competitiveness in artificial intelligence**.
- The **Indian Space Research Organisation** plans to expand the **Gaganyaan programme** by including **civilian astronauts** in the next selection batch. Moving beyond only **Indian Air Force test pilots**, the initiative will involve **STEM experts**, enhancing India's **human spaceflight capabilities**. The new batch may include around **10 candidates**, combining **military and civilian expertise** for advanced **space research and missions**. This step aligns with India's long-term vision of **space station development** and a **manned Moon mission by 2040**, strengthening its position in **global space exploration**.

Important Days News

- **World Design Day 2026**, celebrated on **April 27**, highlights the importance of **design** in shaping **modern life**. Also known as **International Design Day**, it promotes **innovation, creativity, and problem-solving**. The day commemorates the founding of the **International Council of Design (1963)** and was first observed in **1995**. Design plays a vital role in **technology, architecture, urban planning, and product development**, improving **quality of life** and enabling **sustainable solutions**. Celebrated in over **50 countries**, activities include **workshops, exhibitions, and social media campaigns**, encouraging people to appreciate and actively engage with design in everyday life.
- The **World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2026**, observed on **April 28**, promotes **safe and healthy workplaces** globally. Led by the **International Labour Organization**, it focuses on **accident prevention, occupational health, and worker protection**. The 2026 theme highlights **psychosocial well-being**, emphasizing **mental health, stress management, and supportive work environments**. Established in **2003**, the day also honors workers affected by unsafe conditions. It encourages **governments, employers, and employees** to build a strong **safety culture**, ensuring **dignity, productivity, and inclusive workplaces** in the modern economy.
- **International Dance Day**, celebrated on **April 29**, honours **Jean-Georges Noverre** and promotes **dance as a universal language**. Organized by the **International Theatre Institute** with support from **UNESCO**, the day highlights **creativity, cultural exchange, and emotional well-being**. It encourages participation from all age groups, emphasizing dance as a tool for **self-expression, education, and cultural identity**. Celebrated worldwide, it fosters **unity**, supports **artistic freedom**, and raises awareness about integrating dance into education and everyday life.
- The **International Labour Day** is observed on **May 1, 2026** to honour workers and promote **labour rights, fair wages, and safe working conditions**. Originating from the **Haymarket Affair**, it symbolizes global labour movements. In India, first celebrated in 1923 by **Singaravelu Chettiar**, it includes rallies and awareness campaigns. The 2026 theme by the **International Labour Organization** focuses on **psychosocial workplace health**, addressing stress and work-life balance. The day highlights **social justice, worker dignity, and labour law reforms**, emphasizing the workforce's role in national development.
- The **Gujarat Foundation Day** is celebrated on **May 1, 2026**, marking the formation of Gujarat in 1960 after separation from **Bombay State** under the Bombay Reorganisation Act. The movement for statehood was led by **Indulal Yagnik**. In 2026, grand celebrations are held in **Surat**, featuring cultural programs and police bike stunts. The day highlights Gujarat's **cultural heritage, unity, and economic progress**, celebrating its role as a major contributor to India's **industry, trade, and development**.



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- The **Maharashtra Day** is celebrated on **May 1, 2026**, marking the formation of Maharashtra in 1960 after the division of **Bombay State** into Maharashtra and Gujarat. The statehood demand was led by the **Samyukta Maharashtra Movement**, reflecting the unity and identity of Marathi-speaking people. The day honours sacrifices made during the movement and celebrates **cultural pride, language, and heritage**. Observed with **flag hoisting, parades at Shivaji Park, and cultural programs like Lavani**, it highlights Maharashtra's journey as a leading economic and cultural state in India.

career in **1965**, he gained global recognition after being mentored by **Henri Cartier-Bresson** and joining **Magnum Photos**. His iconic work covered the **1971 India-Pakistan War**, refugees, and everyday life. A recipient of the **Padma Shri**, he also worked with **India Today**, shaping modern **photojournalism** in India.

- Veteran actor-director **Bharat Kapoor** passed away at **80** in **Mumbai**, leaving a rich legacy in **Indian cinema**. Beginning his career in **1972**, he acted in over **150 films**, known for versatile roles in movies like *Noorie* and *Khuda Gawah*. He also gained popularity through **television serials** such as *Tara* and *Amanat*. As a director, he helmed films like *Raeeszada*. Renowned for **strong supporting roles** and **character depth**, Kapoor significantly contributed to both films and TV, inspiring generations and enriching India's cinematic heritage.

Obituaries News

- Legendary Indian photojournalist **Raghu Rai** passed away at **83**, marking the end of an era in **Indian photography**. Known for documenting India's **social, political, and cultural journey**, he battled **cancer** before his demise. Starting his

Static Takeaways

Aspect	Details
Andhra Pradesh	Governor: Abdul Nazeer CM: Chandrababu Naidu Capital: Amravati
Gujarat	Governor: Acharya Devrat CM: Bhupendra Patel Capital: Gandhinagar
Maharashtra	Governor: Jishnu Dev Varma CM: Devendra Fadnavis Capital: Mumbai
West Bengal	Governor: R.N. Ravi CM: Mamta Banerjee Capital: Kolkata
Uttar Pradesh	Governor: Anandiben Patel CM: Yogi Adityanath Capital: Lucknow
NITI AAYOG	Chairperson: OM Narendra Modi
Minister of the Panchayati Raj	Lalan Singh
Minister of the Defense	Rajnath Singh
Minister of the Finance	Nirmala Sitharaman
Minister of the Home	Amit Shah
Minister of the MSME	Jitan Ram Manjhi
Minister of the Communication & Technology	Ashwini Vaishnaw
Karnataka	Governor: Thawar Chand Gehlot CM: Siddaramaiah Capital: Bengalore
UAE	Head of State: Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Capital: Abu Dabhi
Finland	President: Alexander Stubb Capital: Helsinki
RBI	Governor: Sanjay Malhotra
WHO	President: Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
UNGA	President: Annalena Baerbock
SEBI	Chairman: Tuhin Kanta Pandey
ISRO	Chairman: V. Narayanan
Denmark	PM: Mette Frederiksen Capital: Copenhagen