

COLONEL'S MILITARY & DEFENCE ARMOURY

STRATEGY • SECURITY • LEADERSHIP • GEOPOLITICS

COLONEL'S MILITARY
& DEFENCE ARMOURY

BEYOND LIMITS, BEYOND FEAR

KAAMYA KARTHIKEYAN

Defying the impossible.
Inspiring a nation.
A journey of courage,
resilience & glory.



INDIA'S STRATEGIC WESTWARD PIVOT



Strengthening partnerships.
Expanding influence.
Securing tomorrow.

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FOREIGN COUNTRY FOCUS



**INDIA-SURINAME
RELATIONS**
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Building a shared future.

GLOBAL MARKET IMPACT



**NVIDIA HITS
\$5 TRILLION VALUATION**

Eclipsing all of Dalal Street.
A new titan of
global markets.



EXPERT ANALYSIS



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS



STRATEGIC INSIGHTS



GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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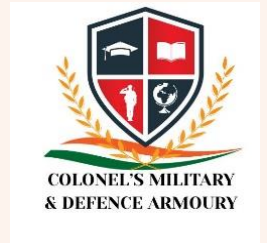


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LABOUR DAY

3 MAY
INTERNATIONAL PRESS DAY

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK



Hello all of you, the wonderful readers of CMDA-the Current Affairs Newsmag for India's youth. The heat wave is spreading across Peninsular India-to escape which people rush to the hills, thus causing needless jams there too! The best remedy to combat this heat is to stay hydrated, so keep having sips of water regularly, interspersed with coconut water, lemon or fruits, which are a big relief and will provide you all the required nutrients to remain fit and hydrated. And for those who have to study and prepare for the upcoming exams or interviews, the simple solution is to study early mornings, rest or sleep in the day, then repeat the study cycle late into the evenings. Besides, if you feel tired or sleepy in the day, do sleep as it's the best rejuvenator; ideally must sleep for 7-8 hrs per day



As regards **world affairs**, the **West Asia war**, though at a pause since 7th April, doesn't seem to be finishing soon, as both sides are adamant on their respective conditions. In my view, the simplest way out is for **President Trump to withdraw his forces, in return for a temporary opening of the Straits of Hormuz**, presently blocked by Iran. Also, if he can secure a guarantee on no more Uranium enrichment, by offering some other concessions (like paying War

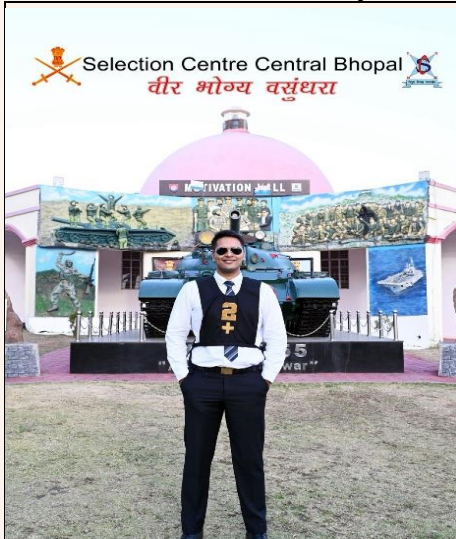
repatriation charges in parts), nothing like it. Thereafter, both sides can sit across the table (minus any mediators like the Pakis) and negotiate whatever's best for both, and the world at large, because its high time for this crisis to end, otherwise an economic holocaust stares us in the face!



Friends, coming to our monthly theme, we have adventure as our theme, and what better an exponent than **Kaamya Karthikeyan**, a young 18-year-old climber, **who hails from Mumbai, and is presently undergoing under-graduation at Shiv Nadar University, Noida**. She is the youngest female in the world to complete the Seven Summits challenge in 2024, a National Record holder and India's best example of beauty with brains (plus the mountaineer's brawn!)-at such a young age! At 16, she also became the youngest Indian mountaineer and **second youngest girl in the world to summit Mount Everest from the Nepal side**. Read all about her exploits, in Interview Section

As regards International News, our News-writer Anjney Singh **reports** about the **61st Venice Biennale**, traditionally celebrated as the world's premier art exhibition, which became a contested arena recently, where creativity collided with geopolitics. **Next, he discusses the Geopolitical Shift Reshaping Global Commerce, due to the West Asia War**. Next, he analyses the **Iran-Russia Strategic Axis-a new Geo-political equation developing after** Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi met President Putin in St Petersburg on April 27, and reports on India's strategic westward pivot: with PM Modi's Europe-

Gulf outreach -after his recent **5 country tour**. He also covers the **Foreign Country Focus-with India-Suriname relations** being dissected in detail, on the occasion of Suriname's National day.



One of my students from the Hybrid SSB Course at Delhi Cantt, **Mr Ashmit Pandey**, who got recommended, sent this touching message.

Jai Hind everyone,

I have attended the SSB batch conducted in Jan-Feb26' by Col Bhasker and his team at Delhi Cantt. I am very much confident to say that I improved a lot during the course of being a mentee here. I got to improve on my various qualities such as guiding people, being more articulate, showing way and constantly improving on every aspect.

I want to give special thanks to Col Bhasker Gupta sir for guiding me well in psych as well as confidence and Capt SK Yadav for helping me in GTO tasks and Brig Mathur, for the personal Interviews. I got a better understanding of not only structures as well as the formation of personality and became confident to handle any & every situation.

I also learnt a lot from different leadership webinars conducted by team ESELEI, and got the perspective of different interviewing officers as well. Overall it contributed in my improvement with the help of their constant efforts and way of teaching. Thank you, all. I'm really proud to now be recommended from 20 SSB, Bhopal, in my fourth attempt.

Towards National news, **Mahima** talks of **the results of the recently conducted elections in 4 States and 1 UT**, with the formidable **BJP sweeping W Bengal, Assam & Pondicherry, Congress winning with its allies in Keralam**, and a new star emerging on the Tamil Nadu political horizon- **the actor Vijay's TVK uprooting all other political entities**. Next, she analyses the Great Nicobar Project, that aims to transform Great Nicobar Island into an important economic and strategic hub in the IOR.



Ed-in-Chief presenting a copy of the May CMDA issue to Brig DS Basera, VSM** Secy Kendriya Sainik Board, who have just renewed their subscription for this year.

In defence coverage by Yogesh Dixit, he brings us news of

top leadership changes in May end at the Navy and MoD. Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani has been appointed as India's next **Chief of Defence Staff**, succeeding General Anil Chauhan; Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan appointed as the new **Chief of Naval Staff**, succeeding Admiral Dinesh Kumar wef 1st Jun. Next, he reports that IAF is procuring **high-altitude compact Micro UAV systems** for its Garud Special Forces & Indian Army having received indigenous **T-12 semi-automatic counter-drone shotgun** developed by SSS Defence, to strengthen close-range anti-drone capability. He also tell about India-Germany strengthening defence

cooperation, with discussions progressing on the **Project-75I submarine program**; of **DRDO** having unveiled **Vikram VT-21**, a next-gen-indigenous armoured platform designed to enhance the mobility, protection, and combat capabilities of mechanised forces. Yogesh also talks of **Navy** having taken delivery of **INS Mahendragiri**, the 4th stealth frigate under the Project 17A program; and about India successfully conducted a flight test of its indigenous **Long-Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Missile**, marking a major advancement in long-range maritime strike capability. He also reports about India testing an advanced

variant of the **Agni-5 ballistic missile** equipped with **MIRV** technology from Kalam Island, off the Odisha coast. Plus, about an **Indo-Cambodian Jt Ex- CINBAX-II**, and the **Indo-Vietnam Def Dialogue-2026**, having taken place recently in Hanoi, Vitenam.

As regards **Science, Tech & Environment News**, **Yuvanshi Hooda** reports about **A Sustainable Solution from Kutch-where** India is establishing its first green methanol plant using ***Prosopis Juliflora***, an invasive shrub; **DRISHTI**: India's first Opto-SAR satl mission from the Pvt Sector; discusses a conservation milestone-India's first **satl tagged ganges soft shell turtle**. She also talks of use of **Tech** & the future of population data wrt **India's digital census 2027 & reports of** India hosting the **first Intl Big Cat Summit (June 1-3)**, with delegates from 95 countries, less China, who chooses to skip it. Last, she discusses why **WHO** declared an international emergency over the **Ebola Virus**.

Towards Economic News-**Anand Srivastava** talks of the AI giant **NVIDIA crossing 5\$ trillion in market cap**, discusses why the **world's most important waterway- the Hormuz Strait is in trouble**, and supports **PM Modi's recent appeal** to avoid foreign tours, reduce gold purchases and shift to WFH-simply because the maths behind it checks itself out-as seen in the **4 subsequent hikes in Petrol/Diesel rates across the country**, which is his next news, duly analysed. Anand also gives us those **20 Quiz Questions** to rack your brain with, plus **5 CSE Mains Questions**, with one solved for your comfort!

Wrt Sports News, this desk, under **Yogesh Dixit**, reports that at the **2026 Asian Beach Games held in Sanya, China**, India won **6 medals**; **3 medals** at the **World Jr Weightlifting held at Ismailia, Egypt**, and **tops the medal standings** at the **ISSF Junior World Cup 2026 held in Cairo, Egypt**, with **16 medals**.

He talks of Indian women's recurve team of **Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat & Kumkum Mohod** clinching **Gold**, at the **Archery World Cup, Stage 2**, held in Shanghai, China; India **men's track cycling team** winning **gold medal in the event** at **UCI Grand Prix Tashkent 2026**, held in Uzbekistan. Further, Yogesh informs that **India's WUSHU team finished 3rd** at the **Sanda world cup**, while the men's badminton pair of **Satvik & Chirag** emerged **runners up** at the **Thailand Open**. Last, he reports from the **Federation Games held in Ranchi**, which witnessed a series of record-breaking performances in athletics

This month's reader's page features part 2 of the Poems by talented girls from Pacific World Schools, G Noida West. Readers-we invite schools & colleges, to showcase their talented writers. Do get in touch with the Ed-in-Chief or our marketing men-**Master Anjaney Singh**, on anjneysingh0@gmail.com or **Anand** at srivastavaanand900@gmail.com.

Readers-this unique magazine prides itself in originality of content-and there's no parallel to match this effort, because there we carry no commercials-to distract you from the news! Also, it's **not available in the open market, and comes to you exclusively through subscriptions only!**

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JAI HIND Col (Dr) Bhasker Gupta (retd),

cmda.newsmag@gmail.com

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH



KAAMYA KARTHIKEYAN: WORLD'S YOUNGEST FEMALE MOUNTAINEER TO HAVE SUMMITTED WORLD'S TOP 7 PEAKS

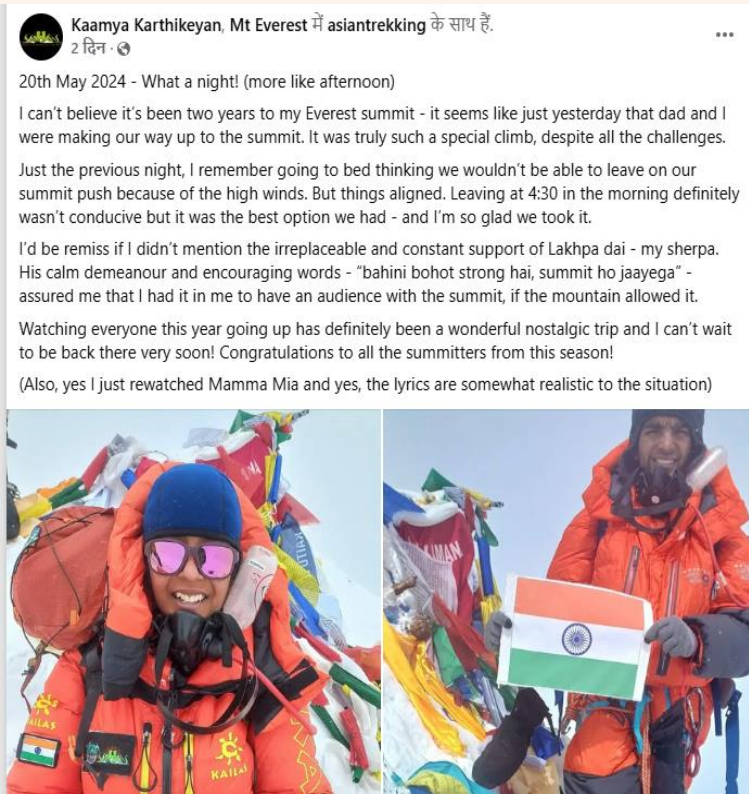
Kaamya Karthikeyan Sundaram, a young 18 year-old climber hails from Mumbai, and is presently undergoing an undergrad course at Shiv Nadar University, Noida. She is the youngest female in the world to complete the Seven Summits challenge in 2024. Kaamya is also the youngest Indian and the second-youngest female in the world to ski-traverse to the South Pole.

At 16 years of age, Kaamaya also became the youngest Indian mountaineer and second youngest girl in the world to summit Mount Everest from the Nepal side. In 2021, she was awarded the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar the highest civilian award for Indian citizens under the age of 18. Plus, she is a Khelo India Winter Games Gold Medal Winner in the vertical Ski-Mountaineering Race, in 2024 and 2026. What is commendable is that she continues to excel in the field, while also carrying on with her professional studies too.

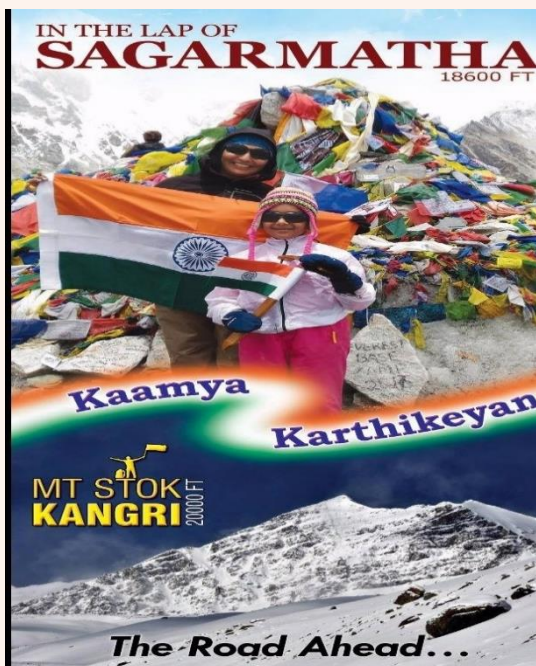
Early life

Kaamya's father Commander S Karthikeyan is a serving Indian Navy Officer and her mother Lavanya Karthikeyan is an early childhood educator, who has also shifted to Noida recently, to support Kaamya in her efforts.

Mountaineering



Kaamya has summited the highest peak on all continents and became the youngest female to complete the seven summits challenge when she summited Mt. Vinson in Antarctica at 1720 hrs on 24 Dec 2024. Besides summiting Mount Everest on 20 May 2024, she has summited Mount Denali in 2022 (becoming the youngest non-American to do so), Mt. Aconcagua in 2020 (becoming the youngest girl in the world to climb the peak) and Mount Elbrus in 2018 (becoming the youngest to complete a ski-descent from the peak). She scaled Kilimanjaro in 2017 and Mount Kosciuszko in 2018.



KAAMYA: IN CONVERSATION WITH TEAM CMDA

Brief Profile

Kaamya joyfully recalled her proud moments, of 2024, when at just 16 years old, she had made history by becoming the youngest Indian and the second youngest person globally to summit Mount Everest from the Nepal side. This remarkable achievement added to her impressive list of conquests, solidifying her position as a trail-blazer in the world of mountaineering.

A Passion for Adventure

Kaamya adds that her love for adventure began at a young age, inspired by her father, Commander S Karthikeyan, an Officer of the Indian Navy. She started trekking at the age of three and has since completed numerous high-altitude treks, including a journey to the Everest Base Camp at the nubile age of 9 years!

Conquering the Seven Summits

Kaamya has already summited the highest peaks in five continents, including: - Mt. Kilimanjaro, Africa (October 2017) - Mt. Elbrus, Europe (June 2018) -Mt. Kosciuszko, Australia (October 2018) - Mt. Aconcagua, South America (February 2020) - Mt. Denali, North America (June 2022)

The Pinnacle of Success: Mt. Everest

Kaamya's recent achievement was her successful summit of Mt. Everest, the highest peak in Asia and the world. She reached the summit **on May 20, 2024, accompanied by her father and a team of experienced climbers.**

A Future Full of Promise

Kaamya's next goal was to summit Mt. Vinson Massif in Antarctica, which would make her the youngest person to complete the **“Seven Summits challenge”**. This she finally achieved in late 2024. The ever-determined girl that she is, Kaamya is now



aiming to **ski to the North Pole in March 2027** and thus become the youngest person in the world to complete **the Explorers Grand Slam**, a feat accomplished by just 75 people the world over, of whom, only 15 are women. Her determination, perseverance, and passion for adventure are an inspiration to millions, and her story is a testament to the power of courage and hard-work.

Accolades and Recognition

Kaamya has received numerous awards and recognition for her achievements, including the **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Shakti Puraskar**, India's highest national award for young achievers.

Kaamya's remarkable journey is a reminder that age is just a number, and that with the right mindset and support, anyone can achieve greatness. We wish her all the best on her future adventures and look forward to seeing what this talented young mountaineer achieves next!

SAHAS – This is an initiative started by Kaamya- **in her quest to reach the Highest Peak on every continent and both the North & South poles.**



Besides mountaineering herself, she has also started teaching others keen to climb, and regularly takes treks across the Himalayas, both in Uttarakhand & Himachal, as well as in the Kashmir Valley. She also regularly participates in various National and International Skiing & Winter Games competitions. Recently, she had a Golden haul at the Khelo India Winter Games '26! Which she proudly announced, as in her own words, ***“Felt amazing to reclaim the top spot in the Vertical***

race of Ski-mountaineering after my first win in 2024.

A message for youngsters from Kamaya, in conversation with team CMDA

Asked what would be her message to the lakhs of young and inspired readers of this Magazine, Kaamya, in her unique style, quipped,

“Hello friends, I would just say keep putting one foot in front of the other and you will eventually reach your own Everest, whatever field that may be in! You will always face unexpected challenges. Don't let them break you, instead channelize them to make you”.

Because all the struggles you go through will only make you stronger, wiser and humbler”.

Well spoken, Young Girl. We at Team CMDA, wish Kaamya all the best in all her future endeavours, and thank her mother, Mrs Lavanya, for the valuable inputs.

17-YO Kaamya Karthikeyan Becomes World's Youngest Girl To Climb Highest Peaks In All 7 Continents



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

VENICE BIENNALE'26: PROTEST, POLITICS, POWER ART

Setting the Stage

The **61st Venice Biennale (May 2026)**, traditionally celebrated as the world's premier art exhibition, became a contested arena recently, where creativity collided with geopolitics. The participation of Israel amid the ongoing Gaza war triggered widespread protests, transforming the Biennale into a symbol of cultural resistance.



Protest Dynamics

- **Scale of Disruption:** Between **12 and 27 national pavilions** were closed or partially shuttered, marking the largest strike in Biennale history.
- **Symbolic Resistance:** Palestinian flags, slogans such as *"Palestine is the future of the world"*, and coordinated pavilion closures amplified the message.
- **Mass Mobilization:** Over **2,000 demonstrators** marched toward the Israeli pavilion, leading to police intervention and heightened security.
- **Institutional Fallout:** The Golden Lion jury resigned, refusing to judge entries from states under ICC arrest warrants (Israel, Russia).
- **Security Measures:** The Israeli pavilion was temporarily closed, guarded by armed police, underscoring the intensity of the backlash.

Data Insights

- **Humanitarian Context:** Activists cited **73,000 deaths in Gaza**, 10,000 missing, and widespread destruction of hospitals and schools.
- **Cultural Impact:** The Biennale's reputation as a neutral cultural forum was challenged, with accusations of *art-washing* war crimes.
- **Historical Significance:** Never before had such a large number of pavilions joined a coordinated strike, signalling a shift in how art institutions engage with global crises.

Analytical Perspective

- **Art as Political Agency:** The protests demonstrated that art spaces are no longer insulated from geopolitics. Cultural institutions now serve as platforms for dissent, amplifying voices marginalized in traditional diplomacy.
- **Risk of Fragmentation:** While the strike raised awareness, it risked overshadowing artistic merit and polarizing the Biennale's mission. The tension between cultural expression and political activism remains unresolved.

- **Institutional Dilemma:** Organizers faced a double bind—criticism for allowing Israel’s participation, but potential accusations of censorship, if exclusion occurred. This reflects the challenge of maintaining legitimacy in polarized global contexts.
- **Global Resonance:** The protests echoed wider debates on accountability, cultural diplomacy, and the role of art in conflict zones.

Strategic Takeaways

- **For Artists:** The Biennale underscored art’s capacity to function as geopolitical commentary, not merely aesthetic creation.
- **For Institutions:** Neutrality is increasingly untenable; cultural platforms must navigate legitimacy in politically charged environments.
- **For Observers:** The protests reveal how **global conflicts permeate cultural spaces**, shaping narratives beyond traditional diplomacy.

To Conclude: Venice Biennale 2026 was not just an exhibition—it became a contested stage where creativity, politics, and human rights converged. The protests underscored that in today’s fractured world, art cannot remain detached from geopolitics.

SHIFT IN CORRIDORS OF POWER: WEST ASIA **REDEFINING GLOBAL TRADE**

The Geopolitical Shift Reshaping Global Commerce

For decades, the global trade architecture of West Asia revolved around a familiar axis: the Suez Canal, the Persian Gulf, and maritime oil routes controlled by strategic chokepoints. However, the geopolitical turbulence of the 21st century — from the Russia-Ukraine war to Red Sea insecurity and intensifying US-China rivalry — has accelerated a dramatic restructuring of trade routes across West Asia. The region is no longer merely an energy corridor; it is evolving into the central nerve system of Eurasian connectivity.



From Energy Hub to Connectivity Hub

Traditionally, West Asia’s geopolitical importance stemmed from hydrocarbons. Today, the focus is shifting toward logistics, ports, railways, digital corridors, and strategic infrastructure. Gulf powers such as Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates are investing heavily in multimodal trade connectivity to reduce dependence on oil revenues and position themselves as global transit economies.

Emergence of the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), announced during the G20 New Delhi Summit, reflects this transition. The proposed corridor aims to

connect India with Europe through ports, rail links, and energy infrastructure across West Asia. Strategically, it's as an alternative to response to China's growing influence in Eurasia.

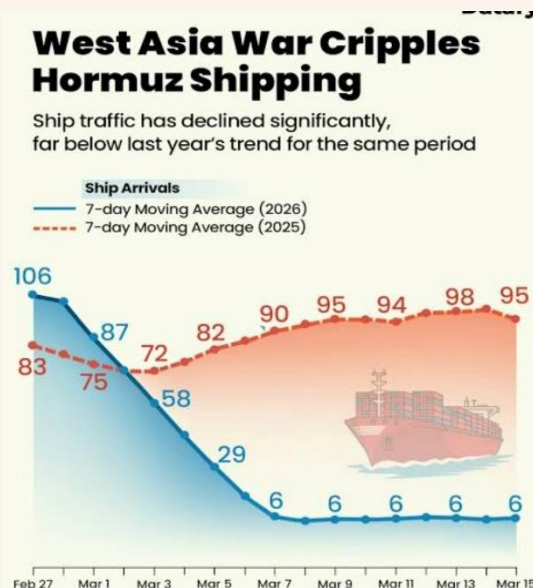
Red Sea Crisis and Maritime Vulnerabilities

The recent instability in the Red Sea has further exposed the fragility of existing maritime routes. Attacks on commercial shipping and rising insurance costs forced several global shipping companies to reroute vessels around the Cape of Good Hope, increasing transit time and freight expenses. This disruption highlighted how a single regional conflict can affect global supply chains, inflation, and energy markets.

Consequently, nations are increasingly prioritizing land-based alternatives and diversified corridors. Rail connectivity projects linking Gulf ports with Mediterranean terminals are gaining renewed urgency. The Gulf monarchies now perceive infrastructure not merely as economic assets but as instruments of strategic autonomy and geopolitical leverage.

The New Great Game in West Asia

The transformation of trade routes has also intensified geopolitical competition. The United States supports corridors that integrate India, Europe, and pro-West Gulf states, while China continues expanding its economic footprint through port investments and industrial zones. Simultaneously, regional actors like Iran-Turkey seek to leverage their geography to become indispensable transit hubs.



In essence, West Asia is witnessing the rise of *“corridor geopolitics,”* where infrastructure determines influence. Trade routes are no longer passive channels of commerce; they are strategic instruments shaping alliances, power balances, and global economic order.

Conclusion

The changing trade routes of West Asia signify more than logistical realignment-but a geopolitical reordering of Eurasia itself. As connectivity replaces oil as the principal currency of influence, the region's future will increasingly be defined by who controls the corridors of trade, technology, and transit.

IRAN-RUSSIA STRATEGIC AXIS: A NEW GEOPOLITICAL EQUATION

Diplomatic Convergence

- **Event:** Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met Russian President Vladimir Putin in **Saint Petersburg on April 27, 2026.**



- **Outcome:** Russia pledged **full diplomatic and strategic support** to Iran amid rising tensions with Israel and the US.

- **Significance:** The meeting symbolized a **shift from transactional diplomacy to strategic alignment**, embedding Iran deeper into Russia's Eurasian framework.

Geostrategic Context

- **Region in Flux:** The **Strait of Hormuz**, Levant, and Caspian corridors remain flashpoints for global energy and security.

- **Power Realignment:** The alliance challenges **US-Israel dominance** and strengthens the **multipolar order** led by Eurasian powers.

- **Strategic Depth:** Iran gains **deterrence leverage**, while Russia expands its **influence**

arc from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf.

Military-Security Dimension

- **Defence Cooperation:** Joint projects in **drone warfare, missile systems, and cyber defence** enhance Iran's asymmetric capabilities.
- **UN Leverage:** Russia's veto power at the **UN Security Council** provides Tehran diplomatic shielding against Western sanctions.
- **Regional Projection:** The partnership reinforces an **anti-Western coalition**, countering NATO's eastward and Middle-Eastern reach

Economic & Energy Calculus

- **Sanction Evasion:** Russia facilitates **parallel oil markets** for Iran, undermining Western embargoes.
- **Energy Corridors:** Joint ventures in **pipeline logistics and maritime routes** could redraw the **global hydrocarbon map**.
- **Connectivity Agenda:** Integration with **Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)** and **North-South Transport Corridor** strengthens Iran's role as a **bridge to South Asia**.

Global Implications

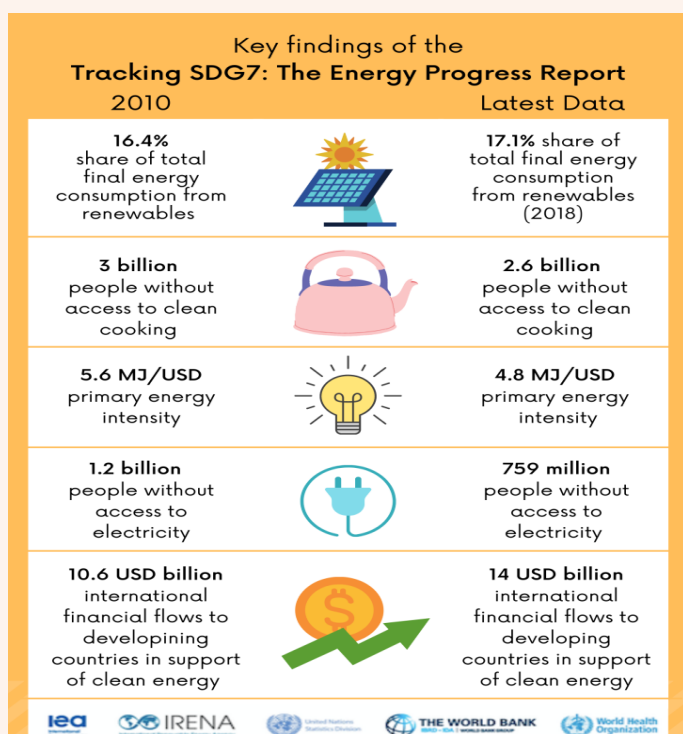
- **Strategic Repercussions:** The Moscow-Tehran axis complicates **US deterrence strategies** and reshapes **Middle East power balances**.

- **Regional Ripples:** India, Turkey, and Gulf monarchies face new **energy-security variables** and maritime uncertainties.
- **Systemic Shift:** Analysts foresee a **dual-polar contest**—Western alliances versus Eurasian coalitions—defining the **geopolitical architecture of the late 2020s**.

Conclusion

The April 27 summit was not a ceremonial exchange but a **strategic declaration**. Russia's embrace of Iran amid Gulf volatility signals a **new axis of power** in Eurasia. As multipolarity deepens, the **Moscow–Tehran partnership** stands as a blueprint for how regional crises evolve into enduring geopolitical realignments.

THE PARADOX OF SUSTAINABILITY: UN REPORT ON CLEAN ENERGY & DIGITAL TECH COSTS



Global Context

- The UN's April 30 report (2026) warns that the race toward clean energy and digital transformation is **extracting a heavy human and ecological toll**.
- Nations accelerating the **green transition**—solar, wind, EVs, and AI infrastructure—are inadvertently deepening **resource inequality**.
- The report highlights how **critical mineral mining** (lithium, cobalt, nickel, rare earths) is reshaping global power equations, linking sustainability to geopolitics.

Resource Geopolitics

- **Top producers:** Congo (cobalt), Chile (lithium), Indonesia (nickel), and China (rare earths).
 - **Strategic concern:** Over-dependence on a few suppliers creates **new chokepoints**, akin to oil geopolitics of the 20th century.
 - **Emerging trend:** Resource nationalism—countries tightening export controls to gain leverage in the **energy-tech supply chain**.
 - **Geopolitical implication:** The scramble for minerals mirrors Cold War-style competition, now framed as the **“Green Race.”**
- | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| • Environmental | & | Human | Cost |
| Mining for clean-tech minerals consumes massive water reserves , contaminates soil, and displaces communities. | | | |

- The UN estimates **up to 40 % of global water stress** in mining zones linked to renewable-energy supply chains.
- **Health impact:** Respiratory and toxic exposure among miners in Africa and South America remains under-reported.
- **Irony:** The pursuit of “clean” energy is producing **dirty realities** in developing regions.

Digital Technology Nexus

- The report connects **AI data centres, semiconductor fabs, and battery plants** to rising carbon footprints.
- **Digital inequality:** High-tech growth benefits advanced economies while burdening resource-rich but poor nations.
- **Strategic insight:** Control over **data and minerals** defines the next frontier of technological sovereignty.

Policy & Global Order

- The UN urges **ethical supply-chain governance, water-use accountability, and fair-trade frameworks**.
- **Key players:** EU’s Critical Raw Materials Act, China’s Belt & Road mining investments, and India’s push for self-reliant green tech.
- **Future outlook:** The clean-energy race could evolve into a **geo-economic divide**—between those who profit from technology and those who pay its environmental cost.

Conclusion

The UN’s findings expose the paradox of modern sustainability: **green progress built on gray exploitation**. As nations pursue carbon neutrality, the geopolitics of minerals and data will define the next decade. The challenge lies not in halting innovation but in ensuring that the **energy transition remains equitable, ethical, and truly sustainable**.

INDIA’S STRATEGIC WESTWARD PIVOT: MODI’S EUROPE–GULF OUTREACH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s May 2026 visit to the **UAE, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy** reflected more than diplomatic symbolism — it marked India’s calibrated transition from a balancing power to a network-building geopolitical actor. Stretching across Europe and the Gulf, the tour reinforced New Delhi’s strategy of linking economic security, connectivity and technology diplomacy into a coherent grand strategy.

IMEC and the Rise of Connectivity Geopolitics



At the core of the visit was **renewed momentum for the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**. By engaging both Gulf partners and European stakeholders in a single diplomatic arc, India signalled its intent to position itself as the principal bridge between the Indo-Pacific and Europe. The corridor is no longer merely an infrastructure proposal; it is emerging as a strategic alternative within the evolving contest over global supply chains and trade routes. India's outreach

demonstrated that connectivity diplomacy now sits at the centre of its foreign policy architecture.

Beyond Trade: Building Strategic Interdependence

The tour also highlighted India's expanding economic statecraft. Discussions on green hydrogen, semiconductor cooperation, clean technology and resilient maritime logistics reflected a shift from transactional trade relations to long-term strategic interdependence. In the Gulf, energy ties are increasingly being redefined through investment partnerships and future-oriented sectors. In **Northern Europe, India's engagement with innovation-driven economies such as Sweden and Norway underscored its ambition to integrate with advanced technological eco-systems.** This convergence of capital, technology and markets enhances India's profile as a trusted economic partner amid global uncertainty.



This convergence of capital, technology and markets enhances India's profile as a trusted economic partner amid global uncertainty.

Maritime and Tech Diplomacy

A notable feature of the tour was the emphasis on maritime cooperation across the Arabian Sea, Mediterranean and North Atlantic strategic spaces. As geopolitical competition intensifies across sea lanes, India is steadily expanding its role as a stabilising maritime power. Simultaneously, AI and digital governance emerged as key pillars of engagement. By partnering with technologically advanced European states and investment-rich Gulf economies, **India is shaping a hybrid diplomacy model where strategic technology becomes an instrument of influence.**

A Multi-Alignment Success

The visit ultimately reaffirmed India's doctrine of multi-alignment. Without entering rigid blocs, New Delhi continues to deepen partnerships across regions while preserving strategic autonomy. **Modi's Europe–Gulf outreach showcased an India that is no longer merely responding to global shifts,** but actively designing the emerging geopolitical order through connectivity, commerce and strategic partnerships.

VIETNAM PRESIDENT TO LAM'S INDIA VISIT: STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC TIES

Introduction

India & Vietnam have agreed to strengthen their bilateral relationship by moving towards an “**Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.**” The decision was announced after talks between PM Modi & President **To Lam**, who came on an official visit from 5th to 7th May '26. This reflects growing cooperation in trade, defence, technology & cultural exchange.

Further Insights

- A major outcome of the meet was **announcement of a new trade target of 25 billion USD by 2030.** Both countries aim to expand investment in sectors- renewable energy, high-technology manufacturing, logistics, EVs & digital services. As Asia's rapidly growing economies, both hope to strengthen supply chains and create new business opportunities.
- **Defence Cooperation** was also an important topic during the discussions. Both nations agreed to deepen strategic collaboration to ensure peace, stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region. Increased military exchanges and maritime cooperation are expected to play a major role in the future partnership.
- PM Modi also highlighted the importance of cultural ties. Both countries plan to enhance people-to-people connections through tourism, education and cultural programmes.

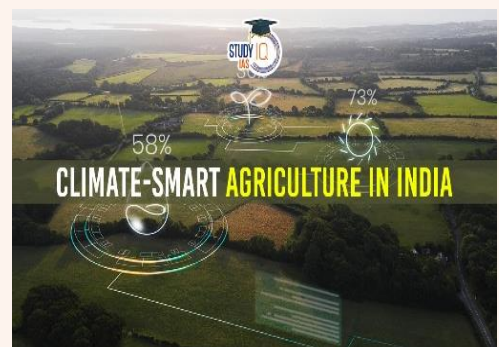


Conclusion: The decision to elevate India-Vietnam relations marks an important step towards stronger regional cooperation. With shared goals in economic growth, defence and technology, the partnership is expected to contribute to long-term prosperity and stability for both nations.

NATIONAL NEWS

INDIA STRENGTHENS GLOBAL AGRICULTURE POSITION

Introduction-Union Minister Piyush Goyal recently chaired key meetings focused on strengthening India's agricultural sector, improving farmers' livelihoods and expanding the country's global agricultural presence. The discussions highlighted India's efforts to deepen agricultural cooperation with African nations and increase exports of Indian farm and fisheries products.



Further Insights

- Discussions focused on improving quality of life for farmers through better market access, stronger agricultural infrastructure and increased global trade opportunities.
- India is working to expand its influence in the global agricultural market by promoting exports, sharing farming expertise & encouraging innovation in food production. Improving agricultural competitiveness will help India become a stronger player in intl food supply chains.
- The meetings also explored deeper agricultural collaboration with African countries. India plans to share knowledge in areas such as farming technology, irrigation, food processing and crop management.
- A major focus of the discussions was preparing a roadmap for obtaining Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) approvals for Indian agricultural and fisheries products in global markets. SPS standards ensure that exported food products meet international safety and quality requirements related to contamination, pests and diseases.
- Faster SPS approvals are expected to increase exports of Indian farm and seafood products, benefiting farmers, fisherfolk and the food processing industry.

Conclusion- India is actively working to strengthen its agriculture sector through global partnerships, export expansion and farmer-focused reforms. By improving international market access and promoting agricultural cooperation, the government aims to enhance food security, increase rural incomes and position India as a major force in global agriculture.

INDIA'S PENSION TRANSFORMATION

Introduction- India is rapidly expanding its pension system to provide better retirement security for government employees, private sector workers and citizens in the informal economy. Through reforms such as the National Pension System and the Atal Pension Yojana, the government is focusing on wider coverage, financial sustainability and improved old-age income security.

Unified Pension Scheme

1 ASSURED PENSION Retiring govt staff to get 50% of their average basic pay from the last 12 months before retirement if they have completed a minimum of 25 years of service. The pension amount will be proportionate for those with shorter service periods, if they have served for at least 10 yrs

2 FAMILY PENSION Next of kin to get 60% of pension amount after the retired govt staff's death

3 MINIMUM PENSION A guaranteed minimum monthly pension of ₹10,000 for those who retire after at least 10 years of service

4 RETIREMENT CORPUS Lump sum payment at retirement in addition to gratuity

5 INFLATION INDEXATION Scheme includes provisions for inflation indexation for assured pensions, family pensions, minimum pension

2.3mn govt employees are set to benefit from the scheme

"We are proud of the hard work of all govt employees who contribute significantly to national progress. The Unified Pension Scheme ensures dignity and financial security for govt employees, aligning with our commitment to their well-being and a secure future."

— NARENDRA MODI, PM

"Pension upon superannuation is a big part of social security. Govt employees have been demanding that the NPS should be reformed. The PM constituted a committee for this..."

Further Insights

- India replaced the Old Pension Scheme for new Central Government employees in 2004 with the contributory National Pension System. Unlike OPS, which provided fixed pensions funded by the government, NPS requires contributions from both employees and employers. Pension benefits depend on the accumulated investment corpus, helping reduce long-term financial pressure on the government.
- The **newly introduced Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)** combines features of both assured pensions and contributory savings. Eligible employees receive inflation-linked pension benefits, family pension support and minimum guaranteed payouts.
- Retirement protection in the organised private sector continues mainly through the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation and Employees' Pension Scheme. Growing formal employment, stronger compliance and rising awareness have significantly increased pension participation among salaried workers.

- The Atal Pension Yojana has become an important social security scheme for low-income and unorganised workers. Subscribers contribute small monthly amounts and receive fixed pensions after turning 60.
- Online registration, Aadhaar integration, mobile banking and simplified account management have made pension services easier and more transparent. Digital reforms have also helped increase enrolment across rural and urban areas.

Conclusion- India's pension system is evolving into a broader and more sustainable framework. By combining contributory pensions, social welfare support and digital reforms, the country is strengthening retirement security for millions while preparing for future workforce and demographic changes.

WEST BENGAL EXPERIENCES A SAFFRON WAVE: **MAMATA DETHRONED**

Introduction - West Bengal has always been one of India's most politically influential states. During British rule, Bengal was the center of nationalism, social reform, literature, and intellectual movements. After Independence and Partition in 1947, the state faced refugee migration, economic pressure, and political instability. Politics in West Bengal gradually became connected with issues such as identity, land rights, employment, and social justice.



From 1977 to 2011(34 years), Leftists ruled- and introduced important land reforms and stronger local governance through the panchayat system. These policies initially helped farmers and rural communities. However, industrial decline, unemployment, and anti-incumbency weakened the Left Front over time. In 2011, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) led by Mamata Banerjee, ended Left rule and came to power in the state.

Further Insights

- TMC gained popularity through movements like Singur and Nandigram, where farmers protested against land acquisition. Mamata Banerjee projected herself as a leader of ordinary people and promised change and development. After assuming power, the Mamata govt focused on welfare, rural development, infra & women's empowerment.
- Programs such as *Kanyashree*, *Lakshmir Bhandar*, and *Sabooj Sathi* increased the party's support, especially among women and rural voters. The party also promoted Bengali identity and regional pride.
- However, over time, TMC govt faced criticism regarding corruption, recruitment scams, political violence & weak industrial growth. Allegations of favouritism & inefficiency reduced public trust



- After 2014, BJP gradually expanded its influence here, gaining support by raising issues such as corruption, unemployment, border security, migration & law and order. BJP emerged as the main opposition force and attracted urban voters, youth, and people dissatisfied with TMC.
- The 2026 Assembly election became a historic turning point as BJP defeated TMC and formed the govt in West Bengal for the first time. Suwendu Adhikari became the first BJP CM, promising transparent governance, anti-corruption measures, industrial investment, job creation, and better State- Centre ties. It assured focus on improving infra, education, digital governance & improving the law and order.

Despite political change, West Bengal still faces major challenges such as unemployment, industrial stagnation, political polarization, corruption, and declining trust in institutions. Many educated young people continue to migrate to other states for better opportunities. Political violence and social tensions remain major concerns.

Conclusion- Future of West Bengal depends on balancing development, democracy, employment, and social harmony. Political parties must focus more on governance, industrial growth, fair recruitment, and public welfare rather than conflict and polarization. If the BJP govt succeeds in creating jobs, attracting investment, improving education, and maintaining peace and stability, West Bengal can once again become one of India's leading economic and cultural centres and restore its pristine glory.

TAMIL NADU: ACTOR VIJAY'S TVK UPROOTS ALL OTHER POLITICAL ENTITIES

Introduction - Since 1967, politics in TN has been dominated by two major Dravidian parties-the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) & All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). Leaders such as CN Annadurai, M Karunanidhi, MG Ramachandran (MGR) & Jayalalithaa became highly influential figures in the state's political history. Tamil Nadu also became known for welfare politics, industrial development, and relatively strong social indicators in education and healthcare. After the deaths of Karunanidhi and Jayalalithaa, politics here entered a new phase with leadership changes, increasing competition & rise of new political forces.



Further Insights

- DMK, currently led by MK Stalin, returned to power in 2021 and focused on welfare schemes, social justice, education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. The party continued the Dravidian model of governance by emphasizing secularism, state rights, and regional identity. Welfare programs for women, students, and economically weaker sections helped strengthen DMK's support base.



- At the same time, AIADMK remained an important opposition force despite internal leadership struggles after Jayalalitha's death. The party still holds influence among rural voters and supporters of MGR and Jayalalitha's welfare legacy.
- BJP has also tried to expand its presence in TN-focusing on nationalism, development, Hindu cultural identity, and stronger central-state coordination. However, it continues to face challenges because politics here has traditionally favoured regional parties and Dravidian ideology.
- A major recent development has been the rise of Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), founded by actor Vijay. Vijay is one of Tamil cinema's biggest stars, especially among youth, and his entry into politics created major public attention. TVK aims to present itself as a fresh alternative to traditional Dravidian politics. The party focuses on youth empowerment, anti-corruption measures, education, employment, transparency, and social welfare.
- TVK has attracted strong support from young voters and first-time voters who are looking for political change. Vijay's popularity, public image, and large fan base have helped the party gain visibility quickly. However, TVK still faces major challenges such as building a strong grassroots organization, developing experienced leadership, and competing against established parties like DMK and AIADMK.
- TN today faces several important issues including unemployment, urban-rural inequality, water disputes, rising living costs, environmental concerns, and political polarization. Youth employment and industrial growth remain major priorities for the future.



Conclusion -Political parties in TN must focus on employment generation, education, industrial investment, clean governance, and social harmony rather than personality-based politics alone. If the state successfully combines economic progress with inclusive governance, the State can continue to remain among India's most developed and politically influential states.

THE GREAT NICOBAR PROJECT

Introduction- The Great Nicobar Project is one of India's largest infrastructure & development projects planned in Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The project aims to transform Great Nicobar Island into an important economic and strategic hub in the Indian Ocean region.

It includes the development of an international trans-shipment port at Galathea Bay, a greenfield airport, a power plant & a modern township. The project is important for improving India's trade, connectivity, tourism & security.



Further Insights

- One of the biggest advantages of the project is its strategic location near the Malacca Strait, one of the world's busiest shipping routes. The trans-shipment port can help India reduce dependence on foreign ports such as Singapore and Colombo for cargo handling. The project is expected to increase trade, attract foreign investment, create employment opportunities, and improve tourism in the region. Better infrastructure and connectivity could support economic growth and strengthen India's maritime presence in the Indo-Pacific region. From a security perspective, the project may also improve India's naval and defence capabilities in the Indian Ocean.
- However, the Project is being criticised by environmentalists, scientists, and tribal rights groups. Great Nicobar Island is ecologically sensitive and rich in biodiversity, including tropical forests, coral reefs, mangroves, and endangered species such as the leatherback sea turtle. Large-scale construction may lead to deforestation, habitat destruction, and ecological imbalance. Environmental experts fear that the project could damage fragile ecosystems and increase disaster risks in a region already vulnerable to earthquakes and tsunamis.
- Another concern is the impact on indigenous tribal communities-the Shompen & Nicobarese people. Critics argue that rapid urbanization and outside population growth could threaten their traditional lifestyle and cultural identity.

Conclusion- The Great Nicobar Project offers major economic and strategic opportunities for India, but it also raises serious environmental and social concerns. The success of the project will depend on balancing development with ecological protection, tribal rights, and sustainable planning.



HIGH-ALTITUDE COMPACT UAVs FOR GARUD SFs

Introduction: The Indian Air Force is in the process of procuring **high-altitude compact Micro UAV systems** for its Garud Special Forces to enhance surveillance and operational capability in extreme terrains.



About

- These UAVs are designed for **high-altitude operations up to 16,400 feet**, making them suitable for deployment in mountainous regions like the Himalayas.
- These systems are **man-portable**, weighing under 25 kg, and can be carried in backpacks, enabling easy deployment by special forces teams.
- The platforms will support **day and night surveillance, reconnaissance, and target acquisition**, improving situational awareness during operations.
- Can operate in **extreme weather conditions**, ranging from -20°C to 50°C, ensuring reliability in harsh environments.
- They will feature **vertical take-off and landing (VTOL)** capability along with **secure, encrypted comms links**, allowing ops even in GPS-denied environments.
- The procurement is planned under the **'Buy (Indian-IDDMM)' category**, promoting indigenous development with a high percentage of domestic content.

Conclusion: Compact high-altitude UAVs will boost Garud Special Forces' reconnaissance, surveillance, and mission effectiveness in tough terrains while advancing indigenous defence manufacturing.

INDIA–GERMANY TIES DEEPEN WITH PROJ-75I

Introduction: India and Germany are strengthening defence cooperation, with discussions progressing on the **Project-75I submarine program**, alongside a broader push for defence industrial collaboration.



About

- Germany's **Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems (TKMS)** is expected to partner with **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders (MDL)** to build 6 advanced conventional submarines in India.
- The subs, under Project-75I will be equipped with **Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) systems**, enabling longer underwater endurance and improved stealth.
- Project focuses on **technology transfer and indigenous manufacturing**, strengthening India's domestic submarine-building capability.
- The deal, estimated at around ₹90,000–₹1,00,000 crore, is among the **largest defence projects under consideration**, aimed at modernising India's sub fleet.
- The initiative comes amid increasing focus on **underwater capability in the Indian Ocean region**, where submarine presence is growing.

Conclusion: The India–Germany submarine collaboration under Project-75I reflects a major step towards strengthening underwater capability and defence industrial partnership. It supports India’s long-term goal of enhancing maritime security while promoting indigenous manufacturing.

COAS GEN DWIVEDI INDUCTED INTO US ARMY WAR COLLEGE HALL OF FAME

Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of Indian Army, has been inducted into the **International Hall of Fame at the US Army War College (USAWC)**. The honour recognises his distinguished military career and leadership, marking a significant milestone in his professional journey.

The Hall of Fame celebrates international military officers who have risen to the highest ranks in their respective armed forces. Gen Dwivedi is the 3rd **Indian Army Chief** to receive this distinction, following **Gens VK Singh** and **Bikram Singh**. As an **alumnus of the USAWC**, his induction represents a return to his alma mater and highlights his contributions to military education and leadership.

During his US visit, General Dwivedi also engaged with faculty and officers, sharing perspectives on leadership, professional military education, and evolving security challenges. He also met senior US military leadership, including **Gen Ronald P Clark**, to discuss strengthening bilateral defence cooperation. The recognition underscores the growing India–US military partnership, particularly in the context of Indo-Pacific security.



VIKRAM VT-21 NEXT-GEN ARMoured PLATFORM

Introduction: The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has unveiled **Vikram VT-21**, a next-generation indigenous armoured platform designed to enhance the mobility, protection, and combat capabilities of mechanised forces.



About

- Vikram VT-21 is developed as a **modular armoured platform**, available in both **tracked and wheeled variants**, allowing flexibility across different op roles.
- The platform is intended to serve as a base for multiple configurations, including **infantry combat vehicles, armoured personnel carriers, and support vehicles**.
- It features **improved protection systems**, including enhanced armour design for survivability against modern battlefield threats.
- The vehicle integrates **advanced mobility features**, enabling operations across varied terrains such as deserts, plains, and semi-urban environments.
- It is designed to incorporate **modern battlefield technologies**, including network-centric systems for better communication and coordination.

Conclusion: Vikram VT-21 marks a significant step in modernising India's mechanised forces by providing a flexible, indigenous armoured platform. It strengthens future combat capability, while also supporting self-reliance.

NAVY'S PROJECT 17A ADD ON 'MAHENDRAGIRI'

Introduction: Indian Navy has taken delivery of **INS Mahendragiri**, the 4th stealth frigate under the Project 17A program, marking progress in indigenous warship construction.

About

- INS Mahendragiri is part of the **Project 17A class of stealth frigates**, designed as an advanced follow-on to the Shivalik-class.
- The warship has been built by **MDL, Mumbai**, reflecting India's indigenous shipbuilding capability.
- It incorporates a **stealth design with reduced radar cross-section**, improving survivability in combat operations.
- The frigate is equipped with a **multi-role combat suite**, including surface-to-surface missiles, air defence systems, and anti-submarine warfare capabilities.
- Advanced sensors and integrated systems enable **network-centric operations and coordinated threat response**.



Conclusion: The delivery of INS Mahendragiri strengthens the Indian Navy's surface fleet with a modern stealth platform. It highlights progress in indigenous warship development and enhances operational capability in maritime security operations.

INDIA SUCCESSFUL TESTS INDIGENOUS LONG-RANGE ANTI-SHIP HYPERSONIC MISSILE

Introduction: India successfully conducted a flight test of its indigenous **Long-Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Missile (LR-AShM)** from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast, marking a major advancement in long-range maritime strike capability.

About

- The missile, developed by **DRDO**, reportedly struck a target over **1,500 km away** with high precision.
- The **LR-AShM** achieved speeds nearing **Mach 10**, while sustaining hypersonic flight above Mach 5 during its glide phase.
- It uses a **two-stage solid rocket propulsion system**, where the booster accelerates the missile before it transitions into a hypersonic glide vehicle phase.
- The missile is specifically designed for **anti-ship operations**, intended to engage high-value naval targets such as aircraft carriers and major warships.
- Its hypersonic glide capability, unpredictable flight path, low-altitude manoeuvring make interception by conventional AD systems extremely difficult.



- The system is capable of carrying different payloads and performing **terminal manoeuvres** for improved survivability and strike accuracy.
- The test also reflects progress in India's broader hypersonic program, including recent advances in scramjet combustor technology for future hypersonic missiles.

Conclusion: The successful LR-AShM test significantly strengthens India's long-range maritime deterrence and strategic strike capability. It **places India among a select group of nations possessing advanced hypersonic weapon technology.**

AGNI-5 MISSILE WITH MIRV TECHNOLOGY

Introduction: India successfully flight-tested an advanced variant of the **Agni-5 ballistic missile** equipped with **Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV)** technology from Kalam Island, off the Odisha coast.

About

- The test was conducted by **DRDO**, in coordination with the **Strategic Forces Command**.
- MIRV technology enables a single missile to carry and deploy **multiple warheads against different targets independently**, significantly increasing strike flexibility and deterrence capability.
- The Agni-5 is a **long-range ballistic missile** with a strike range of over **5,000 km**, capable of reaching strategic targets across a wide region.
- During the test, multiple payloads reportedly achieved accurate target impact, validating guidance, separation, and re-entry performance.
- The system strengthens India's **credible minimum deterrence posture** by improving survivability and penetration capability against missile defence systems.
- The successful test places India among a limited group of countries possessing operational **MIRV-capable ballistic missile technology.**

Conclusion: The successful Agni-5 MIRV test marks a major advancement in India's strategic missile program. By enabling one missile to engage multiple targets independently, the system significantly **strengthens India's deterrence and long-range strike capability.**



GEN RAJA SUBRAMANI APPOINTED 3rd CDS



Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani has been appointed as India's next **Chief of Defence Staff**, succeeding General Anil Chauhan. Commissioned into the **8 Garhwal Rifles in 1985**, he brings extensive operational and strategic experience across both the Pakistan and China fronts. His command profile includes leadership of an Infantry Battalion, a Brigade, and a Division in J&K, as well as the strategically important II Corps and, later, Central Command, giving him exposure across some of India's most sensitive operational theatres. Before this appointment, he served as **Army's Vice Chief & Military Adviser** at the National

Security Council Secretariat, contributing directly to higher defence planning, national security coordination, and military modernisation.

Widely regarded as a “**soldier-scholar**,” his elevation is being seen as crucial for continuity in defence reforms, especially integrated theatre commands, jointness among the three services, and long-term force restructuring.

Beyond operational command, Lt Gen Subramani has built a strong **reputation in strategic and institutional domains**. He has held key appointments in military operations, planning, and higher defence management, while also pursuing advanced academic and strategic studies in India and abroad. Notably, reports indicate that he continued his PhD journey even while holding senior national security responsibilities, reflecting a rare blend of operational leadership and academic depth.

A recipient of the **PVSM, AVSM, SM, and VSM**, he becomes the 3rd Officer to hold the office of CDS. He will also serve as Secy, Department of Military Affairs, where he is expected to play a central role in shaping India’s future joint military architecture and technology-driven warfighting approach.

VICE ADM SWAMINATHAN IS 26TH NAVAL CHIEF



Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan has been appointed as the new **Chief of Naval Staff**, succeeding Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi. Commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 July 1987, he is a specialist in **Communication and Electronic Warfare** and he served as **Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command** before being Chief of the Naval Staff. Over a distinguished naval career, he has commanded key frontline platforms including missile vessels **INS Vidyut** and **INS Vinash**, missile corvette **INS Kulish**, guided missile destroyer **INS Mysore**, and notably the aircraft carrier **INS**

Vikramaditya, reflecting extensive operational leadership across multiple combat domains.

A highlight of his career was the role in strengthening operational training and safety mechanisms within the Navy, including raising the Indian Naval Safety Team and later heading the Navy’s Work Up Organisation as Flag Officer Sea Training.

At higher leadership levels, VA Swaminathan served as Flag Officer C Western Fleet, Advisor for Offshore Security and Defence to Govt of India, Chief of Staff of Western Naval Command, Chief of Personnel, and Vice Chief of Naval Staff before his present appointment. His elevation reflects strong continuity in operational, personnel, and strategic leadership within the Navy.

An **alumnus of NDA Khadakvasla, Joint Services Command and Staff College (UK), US Naval War College**, and **College of Naval Warfare**, he holds advanced degrees in telecommunications, defence studies, strategic studies, and international relations, including a PhD in International Studies. A recipient of the **PVSM, AVSM, and VSM**, he will serve as 26th CNS, till December 2028.

ARMY RECIEVES INDIGENOUS COUNTER-DRONE SHOTGUN DEVELOPED BY PVT SECTOR

Introduction: Indian Army has started receiving the indigenous **T-12 semi-automatic counter-drone shotgun** developed by **SSS Defence** to strengthen close-range anti-drone capability.

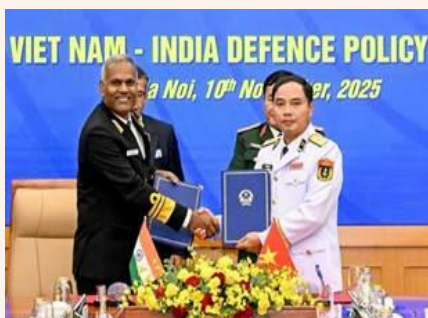


About

- T-12 has been inducted by the Army's **Northern Command** to counter low-flying drones and FPV (First Person View) unmanned systems near border areas.
- Its specifically designed for **hard-kill counter-drone operations**, physically destroying small drones at short range.
- A **12-gauge gas-operated semi-automatic shotgun** with an effective anti-drone engagement range of around 90 metres.
- Weighs **3.8 kg** and features a **20-inch nitride barrel**, detachable magazines, and ambidextrous controls for easier battlefield handling.
- It includes a **full-length Picatinny rail** for mounting optics and accessories, improving targeting and operational flexibility.
- Provides a **low-cost and rapid-response solution** against small drones in environments where larger air defence systems may be ineffective or unavailable.
- Induction reflects increasing focus on **counter-drone warfare**, especially after recent experiences involving reconnaissance & explosive-dropping drones.
- T-12 is part of the broader **Atmanirbhar Bharat** push to strengthen indigenous defence manufacturing and reduce dependence on imported anti-drone systems.

Conclusion: This induction strengthens IA's close-range counter-drone capability by providing a mobile, low-cost, and effective solution against emerging drone threats on the modern battlefield.

INDIA-VIETNAM DEFENCE DIALOGUE 2026



Introduction: 15th edition of India-Vietnam Defence Dialogue held in Hanoi, has further strengthened their defence partnership under the **Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**. The partnership is guided by the **India-Vietnam Joint Vision Statement 2030**.

About

- Both countries signed important MoUs to expand cooperation in **AI & quantum technology** in defence.
- A new **Language and IT Lab** at the Air Force Officers College in Vietnam was also inaugurated to improve military training and technical skill development.
- Defence ties between the two nations are strongly centred on **maritime security cooperation**, especially in the Indo-Pacific and South China Sea region.
- India continues to support Vietnam's military modernisation through **capacity building, training programmes, defence exports**
- We gave **12 high-speed guard boats** to Vietnam under a \$100 million defence credit line, with the vessels built by our Larsen & Toubro, as also the Indigenously-built missile corvette **INS Kirpan** to the Vietnam People's Navy.
- Discussions on exporting the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** to Vietnam have gained momentum, with reports suggesting a deal worth around \$700 million.

- Vietnam has asked for the **shore-based anti-ship version** of BrahMos for strengthening its maritime defence network in the South China Sea.
- Both are exploring cooperation in **quantum cryptography, secure communications, EW, military AI applications, and autonomous systems**.
- India has extended multiple Ls of C to Vietnam, including packages of upto **\$300 million**, aimed at defence procurement and local military manufacturing.
- Both have signed a **Mutual Logistics Support agreement**, allowing both militaries to use each other's bases for repair, replenishment & Op support.

Conclusion: India–Vietnam defence ties have evolved into a strong strategic partnership driven by maritime security, defence technology cooperation, and military modernisation and Indo-Pacific cooperation.

JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE CINBAX-II 2026

Introduction: India and Cambodia successfully concluded 2nd edition of joint military Ex **CINBAX-II 2026** in Cambodia, focusing on enhancing military-to-military cooperation.

About

- Main objective was to improve **interoperability, tactical coordination, and joint operational capability** during counter-terrorism and peacekeeping missions.
- Troops from both sides participated in field training exercises, tactical drills, combat discussions, and joint mission planning activities.
- Focused on operations in **semi-urban environments**, including room intervention drills, cordon-and-search operations, and handling hostile situations.
- Joint training helped improve understanding of each other's military procedures, command structures, and tactical approaches.



- CINBAX-II also strengthened cultural and professional ties between the two-promoting mutual trust and defence diplomacy.

Conclusion: The Ex reflects India's growing defence engagement with Southeast Asian countries under its broader Indo-Pacific and Act East policy framework. It **highlights India's increasing military cooperation with SE Asian partners**, as well as its **commitment towards regional**

security and stability.

ECONOMIC NEWS

NVIDIA'S 5\$ TRILLION ECLIPSES ALL OF DALAL STREET

The American chip giant's market capitalisation has surpassed the combined value of every listed Indian company, and the gap keeps widening. At \$4.9 trillion, Nvidia's market capitalisation now exceeds the total value of all companies listed on Indian exchanges. Nvidia, meanwhile, briefly crossed the \$5 trillion mark last week, a threshold no single company had ever touched, before settling at \$4.91 trillion as per Bloomberg data.

Two years ago, that number stood at roughly \$2 trillion. The near-tripling in valuation has been driven almost entirely by one force: insatiable global demand for AI chips, with Nvidia cementing itself as the defining infrastructure play of the artificial intelligence era.

The Contrast With India Is Stark.

One Chip Giant, All of Dalal Street

Nvidia's market cap vs. total listed market caps of select economies | May 2026



Note: Market cap figures converted to USD and rounded.



Nvidia alone is now worth more than all companies listed in India combined, having multiplied its valuation nearly 5x in three years on the back of AI chip demand.

India's benchmark indices-both Sensex and Nifty, have endured prolonged volatility and a marked downward drift over the same period. Price-to-earnings multiples, which once commanded a premium, have compressed. Foreign funds turned net sellers as rupee weakness compounded the pain, leaving market capitalisation almost unchanged on a point-to-point basis.

For India's market strategists, the number is less a headline and more a mirror: one that reflects how decisively AI infrastructure has reshuffled global capital allocation, leaving even the world's fastest-growing major economy watching from the sidelines. Nvidia-the chip giant's market cap has surpassed the combined value of every listed Indian company, and the gap keeps widening.

WORLD'S MOST IMPORTANT WATERWAY IN TROUBLE

And Your Fuel Bill is just the Beginning

Imagine a single narrow lane on a highway. Now imagine 20% of the world's oil passes through that one lane every single day. That lane is the Strait of Hormuz. And right now, it's having a very bad month.

Here's what happened

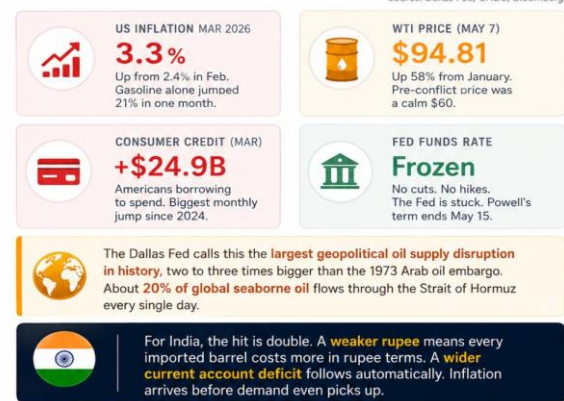
The Iran conflict escalated in early 2026. Military action began. Iran started restricting traffic through the Strait. And oil markets, which had been relatively calm at around \$60 a barrel in Jan'26, completely lost their composure. By May 7, Brent crude was sitting at \$100 a barrel. WTI was at \$94.81. In roughly 4 months, oil had become 60% more expensive.

Here's Why It Matters Beyond Just Petrol Prices

When oil gets expensive, everything else also follows suit. Trucks, ships, factories, airlines. It all costs more to run. And that cost gets quietly passed on to you at the checkout counter. The US saw this play out in real time. Inflation jumped to 3.3% in March, up sharply from 2.4% the month before. Gasoline alone surged 21% in a single month.

The World's Most Important Waterway is in Trouble

The Strait of Hormuz carries 20% of the world's oil. Here's why its disruption hits your wallet too.



The Federal Reserve is in a Corner

Normally, when inflation rises, the Fed raises rates. When growth slows, it cuts them. But right now both are happening at the same time. Rate cuts are off the table. Rate hikes would hammer an already fragile consumer. So the Fed is doing the one thing it hates most: waiting.

And the American consumer? They're borrowing to survive. Consumer credit shot up by nearly \$25 billion in March alone. The largest monthly jump in over two years. People are funding their grocery runs and fuel stops with credit cards. The Dallas Fed has called this the largest geopolitical oil disruption in history. Bigger than 1973. Two to three times bigger.

For India, the math is even harsher. A weaker rupee means every barrel of imported oil costs more in rupee terms. A wider current account deficit follows. Inflation gets imported even before domestic demand picks up. The question now is not whether this hurts. It clearly does. The question is how long the Strait stays choked, and whether a diplomatic deal can arrive before the damage becomes permanent.

As of 25th May, Iran had not agreed to reopen it! For now, the word just waits-and watches!

PM MODI JUST ASKED US TO SKIP BUYING GOLD, STAY AT HOME

And for once, it is not just politics. The maths actually checks out.

On May 10, Prime Minister Modi stood at an event in Secunderabad and said something that got everyone talking. He urged Indians to place "nation first above personal comfort", avoid foreign trips, use less fuel, work from home more, buy Indian-made products and cut back on gold purchases. Understandably, the whole nation had reactions! But before you roll your eyes, let us look at why the government is actually worried. Because the numbers behind this appeal are genuinely alarming.

Let's start with oil.

India imports around 85% of its crude oil needs. As global crude prices surged from around \$70 per barrel to nearly \$126 per barrel in recent weeks, India's import bill has ballooned. The rupee is taking the hit. It has weakened to near-record lows, trading around 94.9 rupees to the US dollar as of May 11.

Now add Gold

India buys more gold than almost any other country in the world. The metal accounts for 9% of the import bill, second only to crude oil. Every year, India purchases more than 700 tonnes of gold. With domestic production at only one to two tonnes annually, it imports more than 90% of its requirements.



And then there is foreign travel

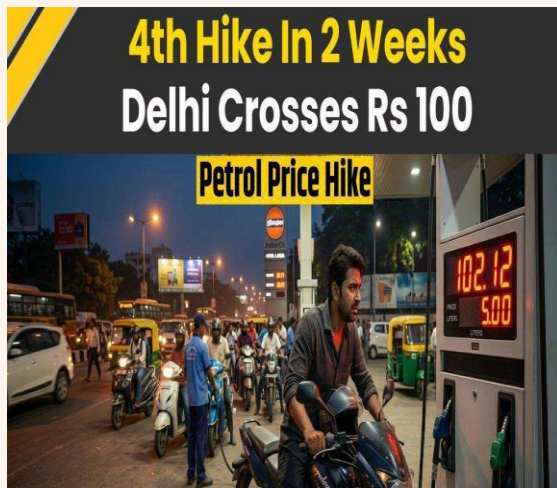
In 2025, a record 32.7 million Indians travelled abroad, up from 30.8 million the year before. Every holiday booked abroad is foreign exchange leaving the country. Put it all together and you get a current account deficit problem. When a country spends more on imports than it earns from exports, the currency weakens, inflation rises and everyone pays more for everything. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh noted that India currently holds 60 days of crude oil and natural gas reserves and 45 days of petroleum gas. That is not a lot of cushion if the Hormuz situation worsens.

Economists believe the government wants citizens to voluntarily adopt spending discipline before global conditions worsen further. Think of it less as a government order and more as a heads-up from someone who can see the storm coming.

To Sum Up: Whether it works is a different question entirely. But the reason it was said? That part makes complete sense.

PETROL JUST CROSSED ₹102 in DELHI, ₹112 IN KOLKATTA- HERE'S THE FULL STORY

4 hikes in 11 days. And the pump is not done yet.



Let us start with what just happened. India's petrol prices have been revised upward three times in last 10 days, starting 15 May'26. The latest hike, on May 25th pushed Delhi's petrol at ₹102.50 per litre, while Mumbai crossed ₹110, Kolkata ₹112. That stings. But the more interesting question is: why now?

Between April'22-May'26, India's state-run oil retailers, Indian Oil, BPCL, and HPCL, held retail fuel prices virtually unchanged for nearly four years. The only adjustment in that entire window was a minor ₹2 per litre cut in March 2024. 4 years of frozen prices sounds like a gift. It was actually a ticking clock.

Here is what was happening behind the scenes. Every time global crude prices moved up, the oil marketing companies absorbed the loss themselves rather than passing it to consumers. That worked when crude was at \$60 a barrel. When the Hormuz crisis sent crude to \$100, the losses became impossible to absorb. The 2026 West Asia conflict broke the dam, and OMCs could no longer hold the line.

The Central Government did try to soften the blow. It slashed the Central Excise Duty on petrol significantly to ₹3 per litre and eliminated it entirely on diesel in April 2026. But because petroleum products remain outside the GST framework, State govts still levy their own VAT on top, which is why Mumbai pays nearly ₹10 more than Delhi, for the exact same fuel. That last point is worth sitting with for a moment. India has a unified goods and services tax that covers almost everything from biscuits to bulldozers. But petrol and diesel, the two commodities that most directly affect every Indian's daily cost of living, remain outside it.

Every State sets its own rate-the consumer pays the price of that political convenience every time they fill up.

The hikes are adding pressure on household budgets, transportation costs, and inflation at a time when the govt is already struggling to control India's rising import bill. Truckers pay more, which means vegetables cost more, which means your grocery bill climbs even if you do not own a vehicle.

Moreover, ₹ sitting at 94.9 to the \$ makes everything worse. Since crude is priced in dollars globally, every ₹ that weakens against the \$ makes each barrel India buys more expensive in domestic currency terms, even if the dollar price of crude stays flat.

So, what comes next? If the Hormuz situation eases and crude pulls back toward \$80, some relief is possible. But the 4-year freeze has taught us one thing clearly. Deferring the pain does not make it smaller. It just makes it arrive all at once, at the worst possible moment. *Which is exactly what is happening right now at every petrol pump in the country!*



SCIENCE – TECHNOLOGY, HEALTH

& ENVIRONMENT NEWS

TURNING AN INVASIVE WEED INTO GREEN MARINE FUEL



A Sustainable Solution from Kutch: India is set to establish its first green methanol plant using *Prosopis Juliflora*, an invasive shrub that has long damaged biodiversity in Gujarat's Banni grasslands. Introduced during the colonial era, this hardy plant spread aggressively, displacing native vegetation. Now, it is being repurposed as a valuable biomass resource.

How It Works

- The plant will be converted into **syngas (hydrogen + carbon monoxide)** through gasification.
- **Syngas is then processed into green methanol**, a cleaner marine fuel.
- The facility at Kandla will initially produce **5 tonnes per day**.

Why It Matters

- Can reduce ship emissions: CO₂ (up to 95%), NO_x (80%).
- Supports global shipping transition under environmental norms.

- Helps manage invasive species while promoting renewable energy.

SUPREME COURT REVIEWS APNOEA TEST IN BRAIN DEATH

Medical Debate Reaches Court: Supreme Court of India is examining concerns regarding the reliability of the apnoea test, commonly used to determine brain death. A petition claims the test may itself contribute to reduced cerebral blood flow, potentially influencing outcomes.



Key Concerns Raised

- May not be sufficient as a standalone diagnostic tool.
- Could risk worsening the patient's condition.
- Alternative tests suggested: EEG, CT angiography, radionuclide imaging.

Court's Response: It directed AIIMS to form an expert panel, whose recommendations are to be submitted within two months.

Why It Matters: The case highlights the need for accurate, ethical, and standardized protocols in organ transplantation and brain death certification.

DRISHTI: INDIA'S FIRST Opto-SAR SATL MISSION

A Breakthrough in Space Technology

India's private space sector has achieved a milestone with the launch of its first OptoSAR satellite, developed by Galaxy Eye and deployed via Falcon 9. This mission marks the country's **largest privately built Earth observation satellite**.



What Makes It Unique

- Combines optical imaging + synthetic aperture radar (SAR)
- Works day and night, in all weather conditions
- Operates in low Earth orbit (160–2000 km)

Advantages

- Overcomes cloud and darkness limitations of optical sensors
- Provides clearer, more usable data than traditional SAR alone
- Enhances surveillance and environmental monitoring

The Bigger Picture: The mission reflects the rapid rise of Indian space startups, pushing innovation in satellite technology & global competitiveness.

INDIA'S NEW SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT RULES 2026:

A MAJOR SHIFT TOWARDS ACCOUNTABILITY

India has introduced the new Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 to improve waste handling and environmental protection. Effective from April 1, 2026, the rules replace the older 2016 framework and focus on strict waste segregation and accountability.



Key Features

- Mandatory four-stream waste segregation:
 - ✓ Wet waste
 - ✓ Dry waste
 - ✓ Sanitary waste
 - ✓ Special care waste
- Bulk waste generators must process wet waste on-site.
- Digital monitoring through a centralized online portal.
- Landfills restricted only to inert and non-recyclable waste.

Why It Matters: India generates nearly 1.85 lakh tonnes of waste daily. Improper disposal leads to pollution, diseases & overflowing landfills. The new rules aim to encourage recycling, composting, and waste-to-energy systems.

Environmental Impact: The “Polluter Pays Principle” ensures penalties for non-compliance. The rules also promote Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) use in industries, supporting India’s circular economy goals and cleaner urban management.

INDIA'S INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE GAINS MOMENTUM WITHOUT CHINA

International Big Cat Alliance is emerging as a major global wildlife initiative, although China is unlikely to join at present. The alliance focuses on conserving species such as tigers, lions, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, pumas, and snow leopards.



India's Leadership Role: India will host the first IBCA summit from June 1–3 with delegates from 95 countries. The country currently has over 3,000 wild tigers, making it one of the world's most important tiger habitats.

China's Position: China has only about 50–70 wild Amur tigers near Russian border. The South China Tiger is considered functionally extinct in the wild.

Goals of the Alliance

- Habitat conservation
- Research collaboration

- Anti-poaching measures
- Knowledge sharing
- Capacity building

Saudi Arabia has already confirmed membership, while other countries continue discussions. The alliance reflects India's growing influence in global wildlife conservation diplomacy.

INDIA'S FIRST SATL TAGGED GANGES SOFT SHELL TURTLE: A CONSERVATION MILESTONE

Ganges Soft-shell Turtle has been satellite-tagged for the first time in India, marking a breakthrough in wildlife conservation. The turtle was released in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve on Endangered Species Day.

Why the Project Matters: The satellite tag will help scientists track:

- Seasonal movement, Breeding zones, Nesting habitats & Home range patterns

The project is led by the Wildlife Institute of India in collaboration with the Assam Forest Department.

Ecological Importance: The turtle acts as a natural scavenger by feeding on dead and decaying matter, helping maintain river ecosystem health.



Conservation Status

IUCN: Endangered; Wildlife Protection Act: Schedule I; CITES: Appendix I

Assam remains one of Asia's richest freshwater turtle habitats, making this initiative highly significant for biodiversity conservation.

WHY WHO DECLARED AN INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY OVER EBOLA

World Health Organization recently declared the Ebola outbreak in parts of Africa a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). The outbreak has affected regions in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda.

What is Ebola? Ebola Virus Disease is a dangerous viral infection transmitted through direct contact with infected bodily fluids. Symptoms include: High fever, Vomiting, Diarrhoea, Bleeding, Severe weakness.

Why the Alert Was Issued-WHO raised concerns because The disease spreads rapidly without strict containment. Also, cases had crossed international borders & conflict zones complicate healthcare access



Current Response Measures



- Contact tracing
- Isolation of infected patients
- Ring vaccination
- Public awareness campaigns
- Safe burial practices

Rapid international coordination is essential to prevent a wider global health crisis.

INDIA'S DIGITAL CENSUS 2027:

TECHNOLOGY & FUTURE OF POPULATION DATA

India's 2027 Census will become the country's first fully digital population survey, representing a major transformation in governance and data collection systems.

Key Digital Features

- Use of smartphones and tablets for enumeration
- Faster data processing
- Digital self-enumeration options
- Reduced paperwork and manual tabulation



Challenges in Digital Enumeration: Despite technological advantages, concerns remain regarding: Enumerator training; Digital literacy gaps; Data-entry errors; Privacy and confidentiality risks

Why Accuracy Matters: The Census directly affects:

- Delimitation of parliamentary constituencies
- Welfare planning
- Resource allocation
- Representation of states

Need for Strong Safeguards: Experts stress the importance of Field-testing questionnaires; Enumerator training; Verification systems; Preventing exclusion of migrants and vulnerable groups.

So, to sum up, we can say that the success of India's digital Census 2027 will depend not only on technology, but also on accuracy, inclusiveness, and public trust.

SPORTS NEWS

INDIA WIN SIX MEDALS AT ASIAN BEACH GAMES

Introduction: At the **2026 Asian Beach Games** held in **Sanya, China**, India finished with **6 medals, including 3 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze**, thus standing 6th in the medal standings. India's strongest performances came in **beach kabaddi and beach wrestling**. The Indian women's beach kabaddi team won its **sixth consecutive gold medal**, defeating Sri Lanka **47-31** in the final, while the men's team secured silver after losing to Iran. In beach wrestling, **Priya Malik (70+kg) & Pushpa Yadav (60kg)** won golds, **Siddharth** claimed silver & **Jaspreet Kaur** secured bronze.

Overview: India competed across disciplines, including beach kabaddi, beach wrestling, sailing and 3×3 basketball during the Games. The performance reflects India's continued strength in beach kabaddi & **growing presence in beach wrestling at continental level.**

WORLD JR WEIGHTLIFTING: INDIA'S 3 MEDALS

Introduction: India's **Yash Khandagale** delivered an impressive performance at the **2026 IWF World Junior Weightlifting Championships** held in **Ismailia, Egypt**, winning 3 medals in the men's 71kg category.

Khandagale secured a **silver medal in snatch with a lift of 140kg**, won **bronze in clean and jerk with 169kg**, and added another **silver medal in total with an overall lift of 309kg**. The championships, held at the **Suez Canal Authority Club**, saw strong performances from leading nations including China, Iran and Venezuela, with China finishing on top of the medal standings.

Solo Effort: Khandagale's performance highlights the emergence of promising talent on the international stage, ahead of future global competitions.



INDIA TOPS AT ISSF JUNIOR WORLD CUP



Introduction: India delivered a dominant performance at the **ISSF Junior World Cup 2026** held in **Cairo, Egypt**, finishing on top of medal standings, with **16 medals, including 5 gold, 6 silver and 5 bronze.**

Among the standout performances, **Shambhavi Shravan Kshirsagar** and **Divyanshu Shailendra Dewangan** won gold in the **10m Air Rifle Mixed Team** event with a junior world record, while **Shiva Narwal** secured gold in **10m Air Pistol Men Juniors**. **Hemant Burman** added a silver medal in the **50m Rifle 3 Positions Men Junior** category, while India also secured bronze in the **Trap Mixed Team** event during a competition that witnessed several junior world records across rifle, pistol and shotgun disciplines.

Competition: The tournament featured participation from **284 athletes representing 25 federations** at the Egypt International Olympic City shooting range. The result reflects **India's growing strength in junior shooting**, with consistent performances across disciplines highlighting the country's strong talent pipeline at the international level.

KENYAN SAWE BREAKS 2-HR MARATHON BARRIER

Introduction: Kenya's **Sabastian Sawe** created history at the **2026 London Marathon**, becoming the first athlete to run a legal sub-two-hour marathon after clocking a world-record time of **1:59:30**.

Competing in the World Athletics Platinum Label race, Sawe shattered the previous world record by more than a minute while maintaining an average speed of over 21 km/h throughout the race.

Ethiopia's **Yomif Kejelcha** also finished under two hours with a time of **1:59:41**, while **Tigst Assefa** improved her own women-only world record by clocking **2:15:41** in women's race.



Dominance: Sawe's performance marked a historic milestone in long-distance running, with the achievement further strengthening Kenya's dominance in long distance & marathon racing and setting a new benchmark.

INDIA'S HISTORIC GOLD AT UCI GRAND PRIX

Introduction: The Indian men's track cycling team created history by winning the **gold medal in the Elite Team Pursuit event** at the *Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Grand Prix Tashkent 2026*, held in Uzbekistan.

The quartet of **Harshveer Sekhon, Sahil Kumar, Dinesh Kumar and Vishavjeet Singh** secured the title in the **4000m team pursuit event**, earning crucial world ranking points for India in the Class 2 competition. In another strong performance, Indian contingent, under **Harshveer Sekhon** won a **bronze in men's Elite Omnium event**.

A Small Step: The result marks a significant achievement for Indian track cycling on the international stage, with the team's performance reflecting growing progress and competitiveness in endurance cycling events.



INDIA'S GOLD AT ARCHERY WORLD CUP STAGE 2

Introduction: India delivered a strong performance at the **Shanghai 2026 Hyundai Archery World Cup Stage 2** held in China, winning one gold and one bronze medal during the competition.

The Indian women's recurve team of **Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Kumkum Mohod** clinched the gold medal, defeating world No. 1 South Korea **5–1 in the semi-finals** before overcoming hosts China **5–4 in a shoot-off final**. The victory marked India's first women's recurve team gold medal at the World Cup since 2021. In the compound category, **Sahil Jadhav** secured his maiden World Cup medal by defeating Denmark's **Martin Damsbo 147–144** in the bronze medal match.

Back on Track: The result reflects India's continued strength in international archery, with the women's recurve team producing one of the standout performances of the tournament against top-ranked opposition.



INDIA STRONG AT ASIAN WEIGHTLIFTING

Introduction: India delivered a strong performance at the **Asian Weightlifting Championships held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat**, winning a total of **10 medals** during the competition.

Indian weightlifters secured medals across multiple categories, with the women's team finishing **3rd in the overall team rankings**, while the men's team secured **5th position**. The championship witnessed consistent performances from Indian lifters in both senior and junior divisions, contributing to the overall medal tally and strengthening India's standing in Asian weightlifting. **More to come:** The result reflects India's growing depth in weightlifting, with strong performances across categories highlighting the country's steady progress at the continental level.



MUKHERJEE SISTERS WIN TABLE TENNIS TITLE

Introduction: Indian table tennis players **Ayhika Mukherjee** and **Sutirtha Mukherjee** won the women's doubles title at the **WTT Feeder Istanbul in Turkey**, defeating the top-seeded Chinese Taipei pair of **Chien Tung-chuan** and **Li Yu-jhun** in the final.

Seeded 4th, the Indian duo secured a **3–1 victory (11–8, 12–10, 3–11, 12–10)** in the title clash. The highlight was the 4th game when Ayhika and Sutirtha staged a remarkable comeback after trailing **0–8**, recovering to level at 8–8 before closing out the game 12–10 to seal the championship.

The victory continued their strong run on the WTT circuit after earlier winning the **WTT Feeder Cappadocia II** title and finishing runners-up at the **WTT Feeder Vadodara** in 2026.

Working hard: The result reflects the growing consistency of the Mukherjee sisters on the international circuit, with the pair continuing to strengthen India's presence in women's doubles table tennis through strong performances against top-ranked opposition.



INDIA'S WUSHU TEAM 3rd AT SANDA WORLD CUP

Introduction: The Indian Wushu team delivered a strong performance at the **11th IWUF Sanda World Cup in Macau**, finishing third overall behind China and Vietnam with a total of **five medals, including two gold, one silver and two bronze**.

India's gold medals came through **Aparna Dahiya** in the women's **52kg category** and **Shivani** in the women's **75kg category**. Aparna defeated reigning world champion **Thi Phuong Nga Ngo of Vietnam** in straight sets to claim gold, while Shivani overcame Russia's **Ekaterina Valchuk** in the final. **Kushal Kumar** secured silver in the men's 48kg category, while **Kareena Kaushik** and **Sagar Dahiya** added bronze medals to India's tally.

Women's Role: The result reflects India's growing strength in international wushu, with the women's contingent playing a major role in the team's success and highlighting the country's steady progress in Sanda competition at the global level.



SATWIK-CHIRAG RUNNERS-UP: THAILAND OPEN

Introduction: India's top men's doubles pair of **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy** and **Chirag Shetty** finished runners-up at the **Toyota Thailand Open** held in Bangkok, after losing in the final to Indonesia's **Leo Rolly Carnando** and **Daniel Marthin**.

Entering the tournament as the top seeds, the Indian duo reached their first final of the 2026 season before going down in straight games **12–21, 23–25** against the unseeded Indonesian pair in the Super 500 event.

India also recorded notable performances with **K Srikanth** registering an upset win over former world champion **L K Yew** during the tournament.

Consistency: The result reflects the continued consistency of Satwik and Chirag on the international circuit, with their run to the final strengthening India's presence in men's doubles badminton at the elite level.



NATIONAL RECORDS FALL AT FEDERATION CUP

Introduction: The 29th National Senior Athletics Federation Cup 2026, held at the Birsa Munda Stadium in Ranchi, witnessed a series of record-breaking performances as athletes competed for qualification for the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.

The men's 100m event produced historic results, with the national record being broken three times within 24 hours. **Gurindervir Singh** first clocked **10.17s** in the semi-finals before **Animesh Kujur** responded with **10.15s** in the next heat. In the final, Gurindervir won gold in **10.09s**, becoming the first Indian to run under 10.10s and securing Commonwealth Games qualification.



In another major performance, **Vishal TK** became the first Indian to break the 45-second barrier in the men's 400m with a national record time of **44.98s**, while **Tejaswin Shankar** set a new national record in decathlon with **8057 points**, becoming the first Indian to cross the 8,000-point mark.

Growing Depth: The championships also saw strong performances from athletes, including **Ancy Sojan**, who set a meet record in women's long jump with **6.75m**, and **Seema**, who crossed the Commonwealth Games qualification mark in women's discus throw. The results reflect the growing depth and competitiveness of Indian athletics ahead of major international events.

FOREIGN COUNTRY FOCUS

INDIA–SURINAME RELATIONS: A CIVILIZATIONAL CONNECT IN THE CARIBBEAN

Reimagining India's Caribbean Diplomacy Through Diaspora, Development and Strategic Engagement



Introduction: India's relationship with Suriname represents a unique example of diplomacy rooted not merely in strategic calculations, but in historical memory, cultural continuity and people-to-people solidarity. Located on the northeastern coast of South America, Suriname is a small yet geopolitically significant Caribbean nation with deep Indian civilizational linkages. Nearly 27% of its population traces its ancestry to Indian

indentured labourers who arrived from British India during the colonial period.

This shared historical experience has evolved into a modern partnership encompassing diplomacy, culture, development cooperation, healthcare, education, trade and multilateral engagement. While the bilateral relationship may not receive the same strategic attention as India's ties with major powers, India–Suriname relations hold immense significance in India's broader Caribbean outreach and Global South diplomacy. The relationship demonstrates

how diaspora-driven diplomacy can be transformed into meaningful political, economic and strategic cooperation.

“India and Suriname share warm and friendly relations rooted in common history, shared heritage, and strong people-to-people connections.” -Arunkoemar Hardien, Surinam’s Ambassador to India.

Historical Foundations of the Relationship



The Indentured Labour Legacy: The foundations of India–Suriname relations lie in the migration of Indian indentured labourers during 19th century. Following abolition of slavery in Dutch colonies, plantation owners in Suriname sought labour from British India. On 5 June 1873, the first ship carrying Indian labourers, the Lalla Rookh, arrived in Suriname. Between 1873 and 1916, 34,000 Indians migrated to Suriname, primarily from UP-Bihar. These migrants preserved their languages, traditions, religious practices and cultural identity despite difficult socio-economic conditions.

Today, the Indo-Surinamese community forms a politically influential and economically vibrant segment of Surinamese society. Hindi, Bhojpuri cultural traditions, Indian festivals and religious practices continue to shape Suriname’s multicultural identity.

Diplomatic Relations and Political Goodwill

Diplomatic relations began in 1976, soon after Suriname gained independence from Netherlands in 1975. India opened its embassy in Paramaribo in 1977; since then, bilateral ties have remained warm, cordial and free from major political disputes.

The relationship gained renewed momentum in 21st Century through high-level visits, development partnerships and India’s growing outreach to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).



High-Level Political Engagements

Political relations are marked by mutual trust and frequent diplomatic exchanges. Notably, Chandrikapersad Santokhi, President of Suriname, has emphasized the historical and cultural closeness. India has also engaged Suriname actively through multilateral forums. India’s increasing engagement with the Caribbean reflects a broader geopolitical strategy aimed at strengthening South-South cooperation.

Cooperation in Multilateral Forums

Both cooperate in international orgs such as: the UN, NAM, WTO, International Solar Alliance & the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.



Suriname supports India's aspiration for permanent membership in a reformed UNSC & both advocate for greater representation of developing countries in global governance institutions. Both also share common concerns regarding: Climate vulnerability; Sustainable development; Global inequality; Debt pressures on developing nations & Food and energy security. This convergence strengthens their partnership within the Global South framework.

Economic and Trade Relations

Trade Dynamics: Bilateral trade has fluctuated over the years and remains underdeveloped compared to its potential. India exports pharmaceuticals, machinery, automobiles, textiles, chemicals and consumer goods to Suriname. In return, Suriname exports timber, minerals, aluminium-related products and agricultural

commodities. The limited size of Suriname's economy and logistical barriers have constrained large-scale trade expansion. However, several emerging sectors offer opportunities for deeper engagement.

Emerging Areas of Economic Cooperation

1. Energy Cooperation: Suriname has recently attracted global attention due to significant offshore oil discoveries. International energy companies have identified substantial hydrocarbon reserves in the Suriname-Guyana basin. This opens new possibilities for India's energy diplomacy. Indian public and private sector companies may explore investments in: Offshore oil exploration; Refining infrastructure; Renewable energy projects & Energy technology transfer. For India, engagement in Suriname's emerging energy sector aligns with its broader objective of diversifying energy sources.

2. Agriculture and Food Processing: Agriculture remains an important sector in Suriname. India's expertise in: Irrigation, Agro-technology, Seed development, Food processing & Dairy production can contribute significantly to Suriname's agricultural modernization, help Suriname improve food security, while creating opportunities for Indian agri-businesses.

3. Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare: Indian pharmaceutical products are widely respected across developing countries due to affordability and quality. Suriname has increasingly relied on Indian medicines and healthcare cooperation. The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted India's role as a provider of affordable healthcare. India supplied vaccines and medical assistance to several Caribbean nations, reinforcing goodwill in the region.

4. Digital and Capacity-Building Partnerships: India's digital public infrastructure model offers valuable lessons for developing countries. Cooperation in: E-governance; Digital

payments; Telemedicine; IT training & Skill development-these could become important pillars of future bilateral engagement.

Cultural and Diaspora Dimensions

The Indo-Surinamese Community: A Living Bridge

The Indian diaspora is the most powerful pillar -having preserved Indian traditions for over 150 years, while simultaneously contributing to Suriname's national identity. Hindi music, Bollywood cinema, yoga and Indian cuisine enjoy immense popularity. The continued relevance of Indian cultural traditions demonstrates the resilience of diaspora identity. Diaspora also acts as a soft power asset for India. It facilitates cultural diplomacy, economic interaction and political goodwill.

Language and Cultural Preservation

Although Dutch is the official language, many Indo-Surinamese families continue to use Sarnami Hindustani, a language influenced by Bhojpuri and Awadhi dialects. India has actively supported cultural preservation through: ICCR scholarships; Cultural exchange programmes; Hindi language promotion; Yoga diplomacy & Educational cooperation. Indian cultural organizations and visiting artists continue to strengthen people-to-people engagement.

Strategic Importance of Suriname for India

India's Caribbean Outreach: Suriname occupies an important position in India's Caribbean diplomacy. India's engagement with CARICOM nations has expanded significantly in recent years. **The Caribbean region is strategically relevant for several reasons:** Maritime connectivity; Energy resources; Climate diplomacy; Support in multilateral forums; Diaspora engagement & Emerging markets for Indian products. Suriname serves as a gateway for India's deeper engagement with the wider Caribbean and northern South America.



Countering Strategic Vacuum

The Caribbean has historically witnessed influence from major powers such as USA, China and European nations. China's expanding economic presence in Latin America & Caribbean has altered regional geopolitics. Unlike some major powers, India's approach is perceived as partnership-oriented, development-focused and non-coercive, thus enhancing credibility.

Climate and Sustainable Development Cooperation

Suriname is one of the world's most forested countries and plays an important role in climate sustainability. The country has positioned itself as carbon-negative due to its extensive rainforest cover. India and Suriname can collaborate in: Climate adaptation; Renewable energy; Forest conservation; Sustainable agriculture; Biodiversity protection. As climate diplomacy becomes central to international politics, cooperation in environmental governance can emerge as a major area of partnership.

Challenges in Bilateral Relations

Limited Economic Scale: The small size of Suriname's economy limits large-scale commercial engagement. Bilateral trade volumes remain relatively low.

Connectivity Constraints: Geographical distance and inadequate direct connectivity hinder tourism, trade and investment flows.

Low Strategic Visibility: India's policy focus on major powers & immediate neighbourhood concerns often reduces sustained attention toward smaller Caribbean nations.

Institutional Gaps: Business-to-business engagement, academic exchanges and tourism cooperation remain underdeveloped. Addressing these challenges requires sustained diplomatic investment and innovative partnership mechanisms.

The Way Forward

Strengthening Economic Diplomacy



India should expand trade missions, investment forums and business partnerships with Suriname. Special attention should be given to: Energy cooperation; Agriculture; Healthcare; Pharmaceuticals & Digital economy.

Expanding Educational and Skill Partnerships: India can enhance scholarships, vocational training programmes and technological cooperation for Surinamese youth. Capacity-building initiatives under

the ITEC programme can deepen developmental engagement.

Enhancing Cultural Diplomacy: Cultural exchanges, diaspora engagement and tourism promotion should be intensified to preserve civilizational ties. Promotion of yoga, Ayurveda and Hindi can further strengthen India's soft power presence.

Deepening Climate Cooperation: India and Suriname should collaborate more actively on: Green technology; Disaster resilience; Sustainable forestry; Renewable energy initiatives. This aligns with global sustainability goals and South-South cooperation frameworks.

Leveraging Multilateral Platforms: India can use forums such as CARICOM, ISA and CDRI to institutionalize deeper engagement with Suriname and the wider Caribbean region.

Conclusion

India–Suriname relations, rooted in the shared experiences of migration and cultural preservation, have matured into a multidimensional engagement encompassing politics, culture, development and strategic cooperation. In the contemporary geopolitical environment, Suriname may appear small in terms of territory or economic size, but its significance for India extends far beyond conventional metrics. It offers India an opportunity to strengthen its presence in the Caribbean, reinforce Global South solidarity and project its soft power through a people-centric approach. Ultimately, the India–Suriname partnership is not merely a bilateral relationship; it is a living testament to the enduring power of civilizational bonds in shaping modern diplomacy.

READERS PAGE

This month's contributions continue from **Pacific World School, Noida Extn, UP**. We thank **Mrs Ruchika Gupta**, the activity co-ordinator for the effort, and the students & the **Principal, Mrs Pooja Bose**, for making this effort possible! Balance contributions have already been published in last month's edition.

EARTH'S SILENT CRY: FROM GREEN PAST TO GREY PRESENT



I am Annika Sharma from class XI-C. I enjoy all forms of creative writing and speaking skills. I love to write poems and stories and books. I love to speak, whether it's an elocution or acting or even a debate. Here, I present a piece which depicts the cry of mother earth, which remains unheard, as it turns from green to grey!

What is earth?

It's all I ask.

A warm hearth,

Is acceptance too much of a task?

Earth is a mother to all,

She nurtures, she cares, she protects.

Why must we let it fall?

She's beautiful and kind,

But is she still?

Is earth's past still enshrined?

Nature used to have its fill.

Oh. Where is it now?

Why must we let it decline?

She lets out a silent cry.

She's wounded deeply by our actions.

She shows it simply,

Silent forests due to lack of wildlife action.

Pollution to which the skies comply,

Her tears of rain, full of affliction.

Her pain is silent,

Her voice unheard.

Do you really want her to show it as violence?

Despite keeping silently perturbed?

The lush green keeps fading away,

Replaced by buildings, factories and roads in sway.

We must also give,

In order to let her live.

There is loss, there is hatred,

Aren't our actions just putrid?

Wars, extinction and the cost of our progress,

Is causing her to regress.

Why don't people just understand?

The need to protect this land?

The Earth's voice is silenced,
Yet she feels a flame yet to be extinguished.
Do we not play a role ourselves?
For earth to feel like her hope had no gone
to wane itself?
She knows,

If humanity listens to her implores,
Healing is possible,
Even if it may sound impossible.
She hopes, that time will come and she will
be restored.



I am Aavaran Dhar, a student of class X. I aspire to be a writer. Out of all literary art forms I love poems the most. In today's world people prioritize their mind over their heart. I have tried to capture this essence in my poem 'Grow a heart'-which talks about the intricate relationship between nature & humans.

GROW A HEART

Do we truly love our mother or only the comfort she gives us?
True love is quiet it gives without asking and protects without being seen.
We call 'Earth' our mother with reverence yet betray her with our actions.
She is a culmination of beauty and ethereal wonders.
Her integrity lies defiled by her own kin, her own children.
The mother who embraces us all is left abandoned in the nigrescent night
How twisted is this will of time to turn a child against their mother?
To ignore the flame that set her ablaze.
How deep is human hypocrisy to steal a child's dream of seeing a shooting star?
Instead, show them the blazing sky forged by the wars we wage.
The dust and smoke that poison our lungs and covers the earth in a blanket of ash.
Our sins deny us salvation for we have turned the mother into a monster.
In this grand game of betrayal, war and defilement,
The only path to penance is to grow a heart.

A QUIZ TO RATTLE YOUR BRAINS

SECTION A: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Q1. India and Italy upgraded ties to a Special Strategic Partnership in May 2026. Which tour included this announcement?

- (A) PM Modi's Europe and Gulf tour (B) PM Modi's five-nation tour concluding in May 2026
(C) EAM Jaishankar's Nordic visit (D) NSA Doval's diplomatic outreach tour

Q2. The World Cities Report 2026 by UN-Habitat estimates 3.4 billion people face a housing affordability crisis. UN-Habitat reports through which UN body?

- (A) UN Security Council (B) ECOSOC under the General Assembly
(C) UNDP (D) UNEP

Q3. The India-EU EV battery recycling initiative of EUR 15.2 million was launched under which bilateral framework?

- (A) India-EU Strategic Partnership (B) India-EU Trade and Technology Council
(C) G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group (D) WTO Agreement on TRIMS

Q4. IIT Madras launched its first US Centre in Menlo Park-May26. Where was this announced?

- (A) US-India Business Council Summit (B) Select USA Investment Summit
(C) World Economic Forum Special Meeting (D) Quad Tech Summit

Q5. Which five nations form the Nordic grouping in the India-Nordic Summit?

- (A) Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden
(B) Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Norway and Sweden
(C) Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia and Sweden
(D) Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Netherlands

SECTION B: NATIONAL

Q6. India assumed IAEA-RCA chairmanship for 2026. The RCA primarily promotes nuclear applications in which domain?

- (A) Nuclear deterrence and non-proliferation (B) Peaceful uses — healthcare, agriculture and environment
(C) Nuclear power plant safety (D) Uranium enrichment transfer

Q7. Solid Waste Management in urban India is governed by which rules?

- (A) Municipal Solid Wastes Rules 2000 (B) Solid Waste Management Rules 2016
(C) SBM Guidelines 2014 (D) 74th Amendment read with Municipal Corporations Act

Q8. The *Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya's* third AI HoloBox features which personality?

- (A) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (B) APJ Abdul Kalam
(C) Mahatma Gandhi (D) Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Q9. India's nodal agency for cybersecurity incident response is which body?

- (A) National Cyber Security Coordinator (B) CERT-In under MeitY
(C) CIS Division under MHA (D) NCIIPC under NTRO

Q10. The **e-Maap** portal launched in May 2026 decriminalises offences under which legislation?

- (A) Standards of Weights and Measures Act 1976 (B) Legal Metrology Act 2009
(C) Bureau of Indian Standards Act 2016 (D) Essential Commodities Act 1955

SECTION C: DEFENCE

Q11. NASM-SR, recently test-fired by DRDO and Indian Navy, is an air-launched:

- (a) Surface-to-air missile (b) Anti-ship missile (c) Cruise missile (d) Ballistic missile

Q12. Exercise Flintlock 2026, involving Indian Special Forces, is conducted in which region?

- (a) Europe (b) Africa (c) Asia (d) Australia

Q13. Tata Advanced Systems recently rolled out India's first locally manufactured:

(a) Rafale fighter jet (b) Airbus C-295 aircraft (c) Apache helicopter (d) Tejas Mk-2

Q14. TARA, recently tested by DRDO and IAF, is an indigenous:

(a) Glide bomb (b) Cruise missile (c) Anti-tank missile (d) Surface-to-air missile

Q15. Q11. The International Fleet Review 2026 was hosted by India at which port city?

(A) Mumbai (B) Kochi (C) Visakhapatnam (D) Chennai

SECTION D: SCIENCE, ENVIRONMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Q16. India recorded 97 of the world's 100 hottest cities in May 2026. The Urban Heat Island effect is primarily caused by which factor?

(A) Methane from urban landfills (B) Heat-absorbing surfaces with reduced vegetation and waste heat (C) Industrial particulate emissions

(D) Tropospheric ozone from vehicles

Q17. ICAR's **Khet Bachao Abhiyan** launched in May 2026 promotes which practice?

(A) Zero budget natural farming (B) Balanced fertiliser use and sustainable farming

(C) Drip irrigation in arid zones (D) GM crop adoption in tribal districts

Q18. The IUCN Red List classifies species under how many threat categories?

(A) Five (B) Seven (C) Nine (D) Eight

Q19. Cobalt is classified as a critical mineral primarily because of which reason?

(A) It is radioactive (B) Supply is concentrated in the DRC creating vulnerability

(C) It is a byproduct of uranium mining (D) It has no substitute in EV batteries

Q20. The Vayu Astra-1 loitering munition trial in May 2026 was conducted by which company?

(A) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (B) Nibe Defence and Aerospace

(C) Bharat Forge (D) Tata Advanced Systems

SECTION E: ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

Q21. Retail fuel prices in India are revised under which mechanism?

(A) PPAC quarterly administered pricing (B) Daily dynamic pricing by oil marketing companies on a 15-day rolling average

(C) Statutory PNGRB formula (D) CCEA approval above 5% revision

Q22. NEP 2020 restructures school education into which format?

(A) 4+4+4 (B) 5+3+3+4 (C) 3+5+2+2 (D) 6+3+3

Q23. Affordable housing under PMAY Urban is defined by which primary criteria?

(A) Units below Rs 45 lakh in metros (B) Carpet area up to 60 sqm in metros and 90 sqm elsewhere with EWS, LIG and MIG eligibility

(C) Any DUDA-allotted government unit (D) PPP units with state land regardless of size

Q24. CNG retail pricing in India is set by which mechanism?

(A) PNGRB statutory notification (B) Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission

(C) City Gas Distribution companies under PNGRB oversight

(D) Ministry of Petroleum through PPAC

Q25. Menlo Park California where IIT Madras opened its US centre is located in

(A) Route 128 corridor near Boston (B) Silicon Valley

(C) Research Triangle North Carolina (D) Austin Technology Corridor

SECTION F: SPORTS

Q26. Who became only the third Indian to enter the top-20 of BWF women's singles rankings?

(a) Unnati Hooda (b) PV Sindhu (c) Saina Nehwal (d) Malvika Bansod

Q27. Which Indian football legend was part of India's gold medal-winning team at the 1962 Asian Games?

(a) Sunil Chhetri (b) Peter Thangaraj (c) IM Vijayan (d) Baichung Bhutia

Q28. Who recently set a new national record in pole vault with a jump of 5.41 m?

(a) Kuldeep Kumar (b) Dev Meena (c) Neeraj Chopra (d) Avinash Sable

Q29. Jimmy George, regarded as one of India's greatest players, was associated with which sport?

(a) Basketball (b) Volleyball (c) Handball (d) Football

Q30. Which Indian athlete matched PT Usha's 400 m hurdles national record of 1984 but did not break it?

(a) Hima Das (b) Vithya Ramraj (c) Dutee Chand (d) Jyothi Yarraji

ANSWERS

Section A	1.B	2.B	3.B	4.B	5.A
Section B	6.B	7.B	8.C	9.B	10.B
Section C	11.B	12.B	13.B	14.A	15.C
Section D	16.B	17.B	18.C	19.B	20.B
Section E	21.B	22.B	23.B	24.C	25.B
Section F	26.A	27.B	28.A	29.B	30.B

PRACTICE QUESTIONS: CIVIL SERVICES MAINS

Q.1 India's current account deficit is structural, not cyclical. Examine in light of the 2026 Hormuz oil shock and PM Modi's austerity appeal. Suggest a long-term policy framework. (15 marks)

Q.2 The Economic Survey 2026 calls India's economy a 'Goldilocks moment.' Do rising inequalities and sectoral stress contradict this framing? Analyse. (15 marks)

Q.3 With forex reserves at \$701.4 billion, examine how a depreciating rupee, rising crude prices, and gold imports are testing India's reserve adequacy. (15 marks)

Q.4 Critically examine whether voluntary demand-side restraint, as seen in PM Modi's May 2026 appeal, is a sustainable macroeconomic management tool. (15 marks)

Answer to Q.1

Introduction: A current account deficit (CAD) arises when a nation's import expenditure on goods, services, and transfers exceeds its export earnings. For India, CAD is not an episodic imbalance corrected by market cycles. It is a structural condition embedded in chronic energy dependence & commodity import intensity, a vulnerability the 2026 Hormuz oil shock has exposed again.

Structural Roots of India's CAD

The structural character of India's CAD rests on two pillars. First, crude oil. India imports over 85% of its petroleum requirements, with dependency having deepened to 89.4% in



FY2024-25. Critically, 45% of this imported crude transits through the Strait of Hormuz. When the Iran conflict disrupted this chokepoint in early 2026, Brent crude surged from \$60 per barrel in January to \$100 by 7th May. India had no structural buffer. The import bill expanded automatically, the ₹ fell to record lows of ₹94.9 to \$; inflation accelerated. This is the anatomy of structural vulnerability: the shock changes, the exposure does not.

Second, gold. India annually consumes over 700 tonnes of gold, while producing two tonnes domestically. Gold constitutes 9% of our import bill, second only to crude oil. This demand is culturally embedded and largely price-inelastic, making it resistant to conventional monetary or fiscal interventions. The cyclical view argues that when global oil prices normalise, CAD pressure eases automatically. While partially valid, it ignores the trajectory of Indian demand. With oil consumption projected at 5.99 million barrels per day by 2026 and rising, lower prices provide temporary relief before the next exogenous shock recreates identical pressures.

PM Modi's Austerity Appeal: A Diagnostic Signal

The Prime Minister's 10th May appeal, urging citizens to reduce gold purchases, cut foreign travel, use less fuel, and prefer domestically manufactured goods, is economically coherent as crisis communication. It acknowledges that aggregate consumption behaviour has macro-economic consequences, and that at scale, voluntary restraint in import-heavy spending can meaningfully ease pressure on reserves and the exchange rate.

However, voluntary demand-side restraint has well-documented limitations as a policy instrument. It is un-enforceable, socially uneven in its incidence, and historically short-lived in impact. It addresses symptoms rather than causes. The appeal is best understood as a stabilising signal during acute crisis, rather than a substitute for structural reform.

Long-Term Policy Framework: To be credible, it must operate on 3 fronts:

On energy, India must front-load its 500 GW renewables target and invest aggressively in green hydrogen as a petroleum substitute in transport and industry. Strategic petroleum reserves must be expanded from the current 60-day cover to the IEA-recommended minimum of 90 days, providing meaningful crisis buffering without immediate demand adjustment.

On gold, the Gold Monetisation Scheme must be structurally redesigned. Raising deposit interest rates, simplifying collection logistics, and integrating the scheme with the Jan Dhan infrastructure can mobilise idle household gold into the banking system, reducing fresh import demand organically over time.

On manufacturing and exports, PLI schemes must be deepened in import-intensive sectors including electronics, specialty chemicals, and capital goods. India's services export advantage, \$387.6 billion in FY25 growing at 13.6%, must be expanded through digital trade agreements to organically offset the current account drag from goods imports.

Conclusion: Keynes observed that in the long run, structural imbalances do not correct themselves; they compound. India's CAD recurs with every external shock not because the world is unpredictable, but because our import architecture remains unreformed. The present Hormuz crisis is not an anomaly-but a preview. Durable macro-economic resilience requires that energy sovereignty, a redesigned gold economy, and deep domestic manufacturing replace import dependence as the structural foundation of India's growth story. The PM's appeal is a necessary first word. Policy reform must be the last.



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A Note of Gratitude to the Mentors

"Our sincere thanks to Ruchika Mam, Jyoti Mam, and Bhasker Sir for their invaluable guidance and support throughout this journey!"



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Three aspirants from 21 SIKH, 3/3 GR, and 3/5 GR (F/F) have successfully cleared their SSB Interviews, marking a significant milestone in their military careers. Trained at Bhatinda & Delhi Cantts (Dec25' & Feb 26'), these candidates—securing recommendations for their respective ACC and SCO entries—excelled under the expert mentorship of Team ESELEI. Guided by Brig Milan Mathur, Col Bhasker Gupta, and Capt SK Yadav, they gained the strategic clarity essential for success.

A Note of Gratitude to the Mentors

"Our sincere thanks to Team ESELEI for their exceptional mentorship. The insights and disciplined approach provided by our mentors were crucial to our preparation and final recommendation. Jai Hind, Sir—we did it!"

NEXT BATCH STARTING SOON



ABOUT US

This monthly magazine provides you all with a worldwide view of Military, Sports, National & International, Science & technology and Environmental happenings. So, let's take a dip into the realm of current affairs and events, guided by the brilliance of insights by Team CMDA. In midst of the prevailing culture of fake news and false publicity, we have attempted to convey factual and 'to the point' information for you all, under the directions and guidance of Col (Dr) Bhasker Gupta (retired). It is also being published under his sponsorship.



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