

17/05/2026 Daily Current News

1. *Government e Marketplace (GeM):*

Context: Government e Marketplace (GeM) is observing its Incorporation Day 2026, marking its continued role in supporting public procurement in India through transparency, efficiency and technology-driven governance.

About Government e Marketplace (GeM):

- ❖ The Government e Marketplace Special Purpose Vehicle (GeM SPV), a Section 8 non-profit company under the Ministry of Commerce, was incorporated on 17 May 2017 under the Companies Act, 2013 to develop, manage and maintain the GeM platform.
- ❖ Over the years, GeM has emerged as a major digital public procurement platform, promoting ease of doing business and wider market access for sellers across the country.
- ❖ It is an online platform for public procurement.
- ❖ It was launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I).
- ❖ It was created with the objective to create an open and transparent procurement platform for government buyers to facilitate the online procurement of goods and services.

2. *Operation RAGEPILL:*

Context: In a major breakthrough against transnational synthetic drug trafficking networks, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), under Operation RAGEPILL, has successfully unearthed an international drug syndicate involved in the trafficking of Captagon.

More details:

- ❖ The Captagon mainly contains Fenetylline and Amphetamine which are Psychotropic Substances under the NDPS Act.
- ❖ This operation marks India's first-ever seizure of Captagon in India and exposes attempts by international syndicates to use India as a transit hub.

3. *Jaggery Production and Processing in India:*

Context: PIB article on Jaggery was published.

About Jaggery Production and Processing in India:

- ❖ Jaggery, commonly known as gur, is a traditional, unrefined, natural sweetener.
- ❖ It is produced by concentrating sugarcane juice without the use of chemicals. Often called "medicinal sugar", it is nutritionally comparable to honey.
- ❖ India accounts for over 70 percent of global jaggery production. This makes it the world's largest jaggery producer.
- ❖ Nearly 20–30 percent of the country's sugarcane production is used for jaggery production.
- ❖ A good-quality jaggery typically contains more than 70% sucrose, small amounts of glucose and fructose, and about 5% minerals, with low moisture content.

- ❖ Jaggery also contains trace amounts of vitamins, including folic acid and B-complex vitamins, as well as vitamins A, C, D, and E. These micronutrients make jaggery an energy-rich food that can help address deficiencies in these nutrients.

History of jaggery:

- ❖ Jaggery is considered an indigenous Indian sweetener with origins linked to the Vedic period.
- ❖ References to sugarcane cultivation in India date back to around 1400–1000 BCE.
- ❖ Early thin varieties of sugarcane are believed to have evolved in north-eastern India.
- ❖ Sugarcane cultivation later spread across tropical and subtropical regions worldwide.
- ❖ The word “sugar” is derived from the Sanskrit term *sarkara*.
- ❖ India has deep cultural roots in sweetener production and sugarcane processing.
- ❖ In 647 AD, a Chinese mission visited Magadha to learn sugarcane processing techniques.
- ❖ India played a major role in the early global diffusion of sweetener-production knowledge.
- ❖ The long tradition of cultivation and processing established India as a leading jaggery producer.

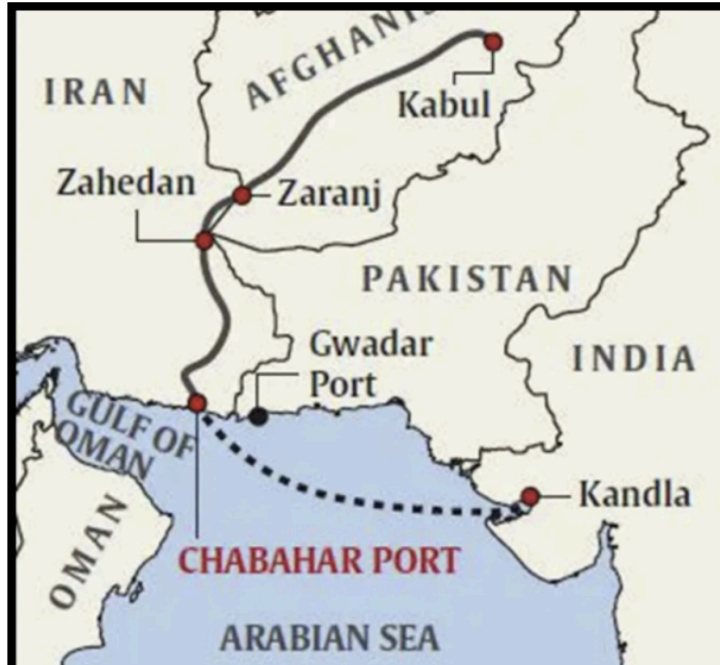


4. Chabahar Port:

Context: Iran's Foreign Minister highlighted Chabahar Port as a key India-Iran cooperation symbol, calling it a golden gate to Central Asia.

About Chabahar Port:

- ❖ It is a seaport in the Sistan-Baluchistan province of Iran, on the Gulf of Oman, at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz.
- ❖ It can potentially help Tehran ward off the effect of Western sanctions.



- ❖ Offers India an alternative route that bypasses Pakistan, which does not allow India land access for trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- ❖ It is also part of the proposed International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)
- ❖ There are two distinct ports in the Chabahar project, Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari.
- ❖ India's investment is restricted to the Shahid Beheshti port.
- ❖ India, Iran, and Afghanistan signed a trilateral agreement in April 2016.
- ❖ In December 2017, the first phase of Shahid Beheshti port was inaugurated, and India sent its first consignment of wheat to Afghanistan through Chabahar.
- ❖ In December 2018, India Ports Global Limited took over a part of the operations at Shahid Beheshti.

5. *Hamsaanandini Nanduri v. Union of India:*

Context: The Supreme Court of India delivered a judgment on 17 March 2026 in *Hamsaanandini Nanduri v. Union of India*. A two-judge bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan struck down Section 60(4) of the Code on Social Security, 2020.

More details:

- ❖ The Supreme Court ruled that adoptive mothers are entitled to 12 weeks of maternity leave irrespective of the child's age at adoption.
- ❖ Section 60(4) of the Code on Social Security, 2020 had earlier limited maternity benefits to adoptions of children below three months of age.
- ❖ The Court held that the three-month age restriction was unconstitutional.
- ❖ The restriction was found inconsistent with Article 14, which guarantees equality before law.

- ❖ The Court also held that the provision violated Article 21, which protects life, personal liberty, and dignity.
- ❖ The Code on Social Security, 2020 is one of the four labour codes enacted by Parliament.
- ❖ The Code consolidates laws related to maternity benefit, provident fund, gratuity, employees' compensation, and other social security measures.

6. *Indus Water Treaty:*

Context: India on Saturday rejected an award on the Indus Water Treaty reportedly issued by the Court of Arbitration (CoA) at The Hague on Friday, reiterating that it does not recognise the tribunal as legitimately constituted. The CoA is a five-member arbitral panel, chaired by Sean D. Murphy, constituted in January 2023. It was set up at Pakistan's request after Islamabad challenged the design of India's Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects. India has refused to participate, arguing that the technical questions involved fall within the remit of a Neutral Expert appointed in parallel by the World Bank.

About Indus Water Treaty:

- ❖ It was signed in 1960 as a water-distribution arrangement between India and Pakistan.
- ❖ It develops plans to utilise the Indus and its tributaries as a source of water.
- ❖ The World Bank mediated the agreement.
- ❖ Under the treaty signed between India and Pakistan in 1960, all the waters of three rivers, namely Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas (Eastern Rivers) were allocated to India for exclusive use.
- ❖ While, the waters of Western rivers – Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab were allocated to Pakistan except for specified domestic, non-consumptive, and agricultural use permitted to India as provided in the Treaty.

7. *Amur falcons:*

Context: Two of the three Amur falcons which were satellite-tagged in Manipur's Tamenglong district in November 2025, are returning to their breeding grounds in the Far East through India, after migrating to the warmer southern Africa region during the winter.

About Amur falcons:

- ❖ Amur Falcon is a migratory raptor belonging to the falcon family.
- ❖ Scientific name of the Amur Falcon is *Falco amurensis*.
- ❖ It is also known as Eastern Red-footed Falcon, Manchurian Falcon, and Red-legged Falcon.
- ❖ The bird breeds in southeastern Siberia and northern China.
- ❖ It migrates to southern and eastern Africa during winter.
- ❖ Large flocks pass through India, especially the northeastern states, during migration.
- ❖ The Amur Falcon undertakes the longest regular overwater migration among raptors.
- ❖ It is an average-sized falcon with a wingspan of 63–71 cm and weighs about 120 g.
- ❖ Male and female Amur Falcons show distinct physical differences.
- ❖ The male is dark sooty grey with reddish-brown thighs and vent.
- ❖ The female has a spotted chest and white underparts with a grey back.
- ❖ Both sexes have distinctive orange eye-rings, cere, and feet.

- ❖ The male is smaller than the female, similar to many birds of prey.
- ❖ Amur Falcons possess sharp eyesight for detecting prey during flight.
- ❖ The species is classified as “Least Concern” under the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ Defence Minister laid the foundation stone for the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme facility in Andhra Pradesh. Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft is India’s indigenous 5th-generation medium-weight stealth multirole fighter jet being developed by the Aeronautical Development Agency under Defence Research and Development Organisation. The AMCA Mk1 variant will be powered by GE-F414 engines, while the Mk2 variant is planned with indigenous engines. The prototype is expected by 2028–29, with induction into the Indian Air Force targeted by 2034–35.
- ☐ Shaheed Sukhdev Thapar’s birth anniversary was observed on May 15. Born in 1907 in Ludhiana, Punjab, he was a prominent revolutionary freedom fighter and a key strategist of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA). Sukhdev played an important role in revolutionary activities against British rule and was arrested along with Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru in the Lahore Conspiracy Case related to the assassination of British police officer J.P. Saunders. He was executed in 1931 at the age of 23.
- ☐ India and the United Arab Emirates agreed on 15 May 2026 to expand energy cooperation through crude oil storage in India’s Strategic Petroleum Reserve.
- ☐ The Netherlands returned the 11th-century Anaimangalam Copper Plates to India on 15 May 2026. Also known as the Leiden Plates, these artefacts belong to the Chola dynasty period in South India and date to the reign of Rajaraja Chola I, who ruled from 985 CE to 1014 CE. The copper plates record land grants and tax arrangements made for the Chudamani Vihara, a Buddhist monastery located at Nagapattinam in present-day Tamil Nadu.
- ☐ Scientists working in Antarctica have identified the oldest directly dated ice and air sample on Earth from the Allan Hills region of East Antarctica. The sample contains tiny air bubbles in 6-million-year-old ice and was dated through argon isotope analysis of trapped air.
- ☐ The barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) is a widespread synanthrope that has expanded its range across continents. In India, two subspecies of barn swallows are reported to breed in the Himalayas, while one is believed to winter in parts of the country’s northeastern region. The researchers note that the study provides the first documentation of a resident breeding population of barn swallows in Manipur, extending the species’ known breeding range in the Indian subcontinent.