

26/05/2026 Daily Current News

1. *WorldSkills Invitational Tournament 2026:*

Context: Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Minister of State for Education, Government of India, Shri Jayant Chaudhary sent off the Indian contingent participating in the international vocational and technical skills competition, 2026 Taipei Capital Cup WorldSkills Invitational Tournament, being held in Taipei, Taiwan, from 26–28 May 2026.

About WorldSkills Invitational Tournament 2026:

- ❖ WorldSkills Invitational Tournament is a high-level, warm-up event that gives young vocational talents international exposure before the primary global championship.
- ❖ The five-member Indian contingent, the future global champions, will compete with participants from around 15 countries in the tournament organised as a warm-up event ahead of WorldSkills Shanghai 2026.
- ❖ The competition promotes global skills development, technical excellence, international collaboration, and workforce innovation while helping participants gain real-world competitive experience at an international level.
- ❖ India will compete in five skill categories at the 2026 Taipei Capital Cup WorldSkills Competition, with Arjun Sumathi Vijayabashkar representing the country in Mobile Applications Development, Mohamed Mafaz Poonaikannan Rabi Ahamed in Software Applications Development, Muskan in Painting & Decorating, Md Seraj in Automobile Technology, and Suresh Kumar Ganesan Meena in Digital Construction.
- ❖ This year's edition of the competition features 10 skill categories spanning critical sectors linked to smart manufacturing and digital transformation, including Industrial Mechanics, IT Network Systems Administration, Mobile Applications Development, Industry 4.0, Automobile Technology, and Digital Construction (BIM).
- ❖ India's participation in the tournament marks an important step in the country's preparation journey towards the 48th WorldSkills Shanghai 2026.
- ❖ The competition will provide Team India with early exposure to international standards and act as a crucial warm-up platform ahead of the global competition

2. *Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojna (PM-AJAY):*

Context: PM-AJAY portal and AJAY mobile app will be launched by Hon'ble Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment. The portal is designed to facilitate seamless coordination among stakeholders while ensuring faster and more accountable service delivery to beneficiaries.

About Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojna (PM-AJAY):

- ❖ PM-AJAY (Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana) aims to reduce poverty among Scheduled Caste (SC) communities through skill development, employment generation, and income-enhancing initiatives.
- ❖ The Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojna (PM-AJAY) falls under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

- ❖ The scheme also focuses on increasing literacy and improving enrolment of SC students in schools and higher educational institutions by providing quality residential facilities.
- ❖ It gives special attention to aspirational districts, SC-majority blocks, and other SC-concentrated regions across India.
- ❖ One major component is the development of SC-dominated villages into “Adarsh Grams”, earlier known as Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY).
- ❖ The Adarsh Gram component aims to ensure integrated socio-economic development of SC-majority villages through adequate infrastructure and welfare measures.
- ❖ Progress under the scheme is monitored through socio-economic indicators spread across 10 domains such as education, health, sanitation, roads, electricity, financial inclusion, digitization, agriculture, and skill development.
- ❖ The scheme seeks to eliminate disparities between SC and non-SC populations in access to basic services and development opportunities.
- ❖ It emphasizes ensuring secondary-level education for all SC children and addressing maternal mortality, infant mortality, and malnutrition among women and children.
- ❖ During FY 2023–24, a total of 1834 villages were declared as Adarsh Grams under the scheme.
- ❖ Another component provides Grants-in-Aid for District and State-level projects, earlier known as Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Caste Sub Plan.
- ❖ These grants support comprehensive livelihood projects that create sustainable income opportunities and social advancement exclusively for SC communities.
- ❖ The scheme supports skill development programmes aligned with the norms of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and also funds skill training infrastructure and institutions.
- ❖ Beneficiaries can receive financial assistance for livelihood assets, up to ₹50,000 or 50% of the asset cost, whichever is lower, as part of integrated livelihood projects.
- ❖ Funds can also be used for infrastructure development, including hostels and residential schools related to livelihood and educational projects.
- ❖ Special provisions include:
 - Up to 15% of grants reserved for SC women-focused economic schemes,
 - Up to 30% for infrastructure development,
 - At least 10% for skill development activities,
 - Promotion of SC women cooperatives engaged in production and marketing activities.

3. Index of Industrial Production:

Context: The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the report of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC-IIP) on revising the base year of the All-India Index of Industrial Production (IIP). The committee, chaired by Mridul K. Sagar and constituted in September 2024, held 11 meetings to improve the methodology, accuracy, and relevance of the IIP.

About Index of Industrial Production (IIP):

- ❖ The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) measures short-term changes in the volume of industrial production in India.
- ❖ It is an important indicator used to assess the growth or slowdown of industrial activity and overall economic performance.

- ❖ The IIP is published by the Central Statistics Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- ❖ The previous base year of the IIP is 2011–12, adopted to better reflect the modern industrial structure and production trends.
- ❖ The base year of the index has been revised periodically since earlier base years such as 1937, 1946, 1951, and 1956.
- ❖ The IIP is divided into three major sectors: Manufacturing – 77.63% weight, Mining – 14.37% weight and Electricity – 7.99% weight
- ❖ Manufacturing has the highest weight in the index with 809 items, followed by Mining with 29 items and Electricity with 1 item.

About Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI):

- ❖ The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) is released by the Office of Economic Advisor under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- ❖ The ICI measures the production performance of eight core industries: Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement, and Electricity.
- ❖ These eight industries together account for 40.27% weight in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), making them crucial indicators of industrial growth.
- ❖ Among the core industries, Refinery Products have the highest weight (28.04%), followed by Electricity (19.85%) and Steel (17.92%).
- ❖ The remaining sectors and their weights are: Coal (10.33%), Crude Oil (8.98%), Natural Gas (6.88%), Cement (5.37%), and Fertilizers (2.63%).

Major Changes in New Series of IIP with base 2022-23:

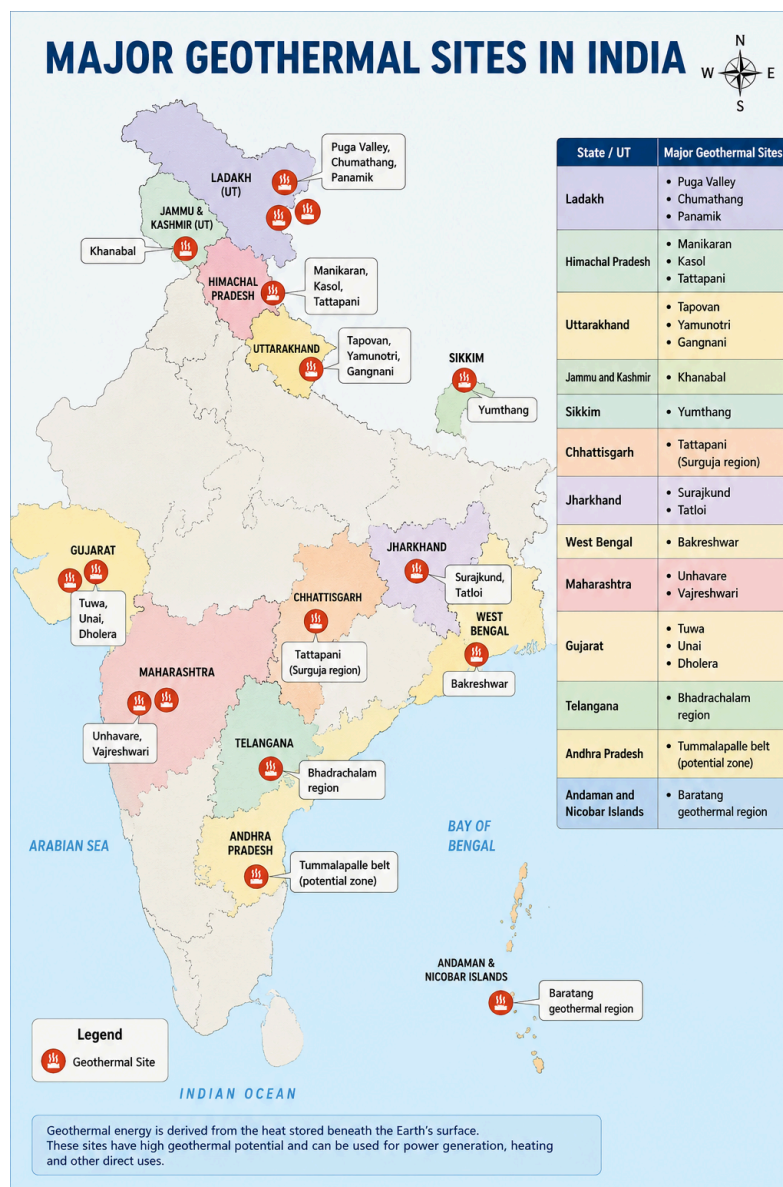
- ❖ The new IIP series expands its scope by including Minor Minerals, Rare Earth Minerals, Gas Supply, Water Supply and Sewerage & Waste Management, thereby broadening the overall coverage of the index.
- ❖ The item basket and weights have been revised to add relevant commodities and remove outdated ones, ensuring that each item or sector is assigned appropriate significance.
- ❖ The revised basket consists of 1,042 products mapped to 463 item groups. The updated IIP series is aligned with the National Industrial Classification (NIC-2025).
- ❖ The new series also introduces greater granularity through sub-indices, including separate indices for electricity generated from renewable and non-renewable sources.
- ❖ Similarly, the Mining and Quarrying sector is now divided into three sub-indices covering Fuel Minerals, Metallic Minerals (including Rare Earth Minerals), and Non-Metallic Minerals (including Minor Minerals).
- ❖ In addition, methodological enhancements have been proposed in index compilation. These include the substitution of factories that are permanently closed or have significantly altered their production lines with comparable units, as well as the augmentation of panel of the factories by incorporating newly commissioned large-scale factories that begin producing relevant items during the currency of the IIP series.

- ❖ The new series will adopt the Geometric Mean method for linking the 2011–12 series with the new 2022–23 series. The linking factors will be computed at aggregated levels, namely for the General Index and the Sectoral Indices.

4. *Geothermal Energy:*

Context: Ladakh to Host India's First Geothermal Power Plant. Ladakh's Lt. Governor approved a five-year extension to MoU with Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) to set up this plant at an altitude of 14, 000 feet in Puga Valley. Under the revised MoU, ONGC will establish a 1-MWe pilot geothermal power plant and prepare a detailed project report (DPR) for large-scale commercial exploitation of geothermal resources in Ladakh.

About Geothermal Energy:



- ❖ Geothermal energy harnesses heat stored within the Earth's crust for power generation and direct-use applications.
- ❖ A geothermal system includes production and reinjection wells, pumps, pipelines, heat exchangers, and end-use distribution systems.
- ❖ High-enthalpy geothermal resources such as volcanic regions, geysers, and hot springs are mainly used for electricity generation.
- ❖ Low- and medium-enthalpy resources like hot rocks and shallow ground layers are suitable for heating, cooling, agriculture, food processing, and aquaculture.
- ❖ The Geological Survey of India has identified 381 hot springs in India with temperatures ranging from 35°C to 89°C.
- ❖ India has 10 geothermal provinces, including the Himalayan Geothermal Province and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands region.
- ❖ India's estimated geothermal power potential is around 10,600 MW.
- ❖ The Puga and Chumathang regions in Ladakh are considered the most promising geothermal energy sites.
- ❖ The National Policy on Geothermal Energy (2025) aims to develop geothermal energy as a key part of India's renewable energy mix.
- ❖ The policy supports India's 2070 Net Zero target, energy security, and sustainable clean energy transition.

5. ***Pratas Island:***

Context: A Chinese Coast Guard ship was recently spotted near Taiwan's strategically located Pratas Islands at top of South China Sea.

About Pratas Island:

- ❖ The **Pratas Islands**, also known as the **Dongsha Islands**, are a group of three islands located in the northern part of the South China Sea.
- ❖ The islands form a circular atoll structure, with **Dongsha Island** being the only island above sea level, while the other two remain submerged.
- ❖ The atoll is mainly made of coral reefs and reef flats spread over about 24 km in diameter, enclosing a lagoon around 16 km wide.
- ❖ The islands were known since the ancient Han Dynasty period and served as an important point along historic trade and fishing routes.
- ❖ They are located near key maritime passages such as the Taiwan Strait and the Bashi Channel.
- ❖ The islands hold strategic importance because they lie along major sea routes connecting the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean.
- ❖ The Pratas Islands are located about 445 km southwest of Kaohsiung in Taiwan and around 320 km southeast of Hong Kong.
- ❖ China claims the islands, but they are currently controlled by Taiwan as part of the Dongsha Atoll National Park.
- ❖ The islands have no permanent civilian population, though Taiwanese marines are stationed there.

6. *Abraham Accords:*

Context: Donald Trump stated that countries such as Qatar, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey, and Jordan should mandatorily join the Abraham Accords, which were brokered by the U.S. in 2020 to normalize relations with Israel. He said the agreements were important for strengthening regional peace and cooperation in West Asia.

About Abraham Accords:

- ❖ The Abraham Accords are a series of agreements signed in 2020 to normalize diplomatic relations between Israel and several Arab nations.
- ❖ The accords were first announced on August 13, 2020, involving Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States.
- ❖ The official signing ceremony took place on September 15, 2020, in Washington D.C.
- ❖ The initial signatories included UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Bahrain Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.
- ❖ Later, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco also joined the accords.
- ❖ The name “Abraham Accords” refers to Abraham, a revered figure in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, symbolizing shared cultural and religious heritage.
- ❖ The agreements marked a major shift in West Asian geopolitics, as Arab countries moved toward open cooperation with Israel after decades of strained relations.
- ❖ Under the accords, countries agreed to establish embassies, exchange ambassadors, and strengthen diplomatic relations.
- ❖ The accords promoted cooperation in sectors such as trade, tourism, healthcare, technology, defence, and security.
- ❖ The agreements also facilitated access for Muslims worldwide to visit religious sites in Jerusalem, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque.
- ❖ The accords signaled that several Arab states were willing to engage with Israel despite the unresolved Palestine issue.
- ❖ The agreements aim to promote peace, coexistence, interfaith dialogue, tolerance, and mutual respect among nations.
- ❖ The accords emphasize resolving conflicts through cooperation and diplomacy rather than confrontation.
- ❖ They also focus on countering radicalization, strengthening regional security, and promoting prosperity in West Asia.
- ❖ For India, the accords provide greater diplomatic flexibility to maintain strong relations with both Israel and Arab countries while expanding cooperation in trade, energy, technology, and defence.

7. *Memflation:*

Context: The semiconductor industry globally is experiencing a severe structural ‘memflation’ (inflation caused by memory chips shortage), with skyrocketing prices leading to huge disruptions in price sensitive consumer electronics and mobile phone markets in India, said industry experts.

About Memflation:

- ❖ Meaning: Memflation (memory inflation) refers to the rapid rise in prices of semiconductor memory chips, especially DRAM (Dynamic Random Access Memory) and NAND (Not AND) Flash Memory.
- ❖ Cause: The trend is driven by rising demand from AI, cloud computing, and data-centre infrastructure, which is straining global memory chip supply chains.
- ❖ DRAM Price Rise: DRAM prices are projected to increase by nearly 125% year-on-year.
- ❖ NAND Flash Price Rise: NAND flash memory prices are expected to rise by over 230%.
- ❖ Impact on Electronics: Higher memory chip costs are increasing prices of smartphones, PCs, and other electronic devices.
- ❖ Impact in India: Entry-level smartphone prices have risen by around 30–40% in price-sensitive markets.
- ❖ Frequent Price Revisions: Electronics brands are frequently revising prices because of rising component costs.
- ❖ Retailer Effect: Retailers initially gain temporary profits by selling older inventory at newer inflated prices.
- ❖ Distributor Challenge: Distributors face increased working capital pressure due to higher procurement costs.
- ❖ Consumer Behaviour: Rising prices are reducing overall sales as consumers postpone purchases of electronic goods.

8. *Amber fort:*

Context: United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited the Amber Fort in Jaipur along with his wife Jeanette Rubio and U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor.

About Amber fort:

- ❖ Location: Amber Fort (also called Amer Fort) is located in Amer, about 11 km from Jaipur, and is built on the Aravalli Hills.
- ❖ Strategic Setting: The fort's hilltop position provides strong strategic defence and a commanding view of the surrounding region.
- ❖ Builder: It was initially constructed by Raja Man Singh I of the Kachwaha Rajputs in the late 16th century.
- ❖ Historical Link: Raja Man Singh I was a trusted general of Emperor Akbar and one of the Navaratnas in his court.
- ❖ Capital History: Amer served as the capital of the Kachwaha Rajputs before it was shifted to Jaipur.
- ❖ Construction Start: The construction of the fort began in 1592.
- ❖ Expansion: Significant expansion was carried out under Jai Singh I (1621–1667), who enhanced its architectural grandeur.
- ❖ Key Structures: Jai Singh I is credited with adding the Diwan-i-Khas (Hall of Private Audience) and the Sheesh Mahal (Mirror Palace).
- ❖ Continued Development: Successive Kachwaha rulers further developed the fort until the capital shifted to Jaipur in 1727.

- ❖ Heritage Status: Amber Fort is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with Bharti Institute of Public Policy at the Indian School of Business (ISB), on 23 May 2026, hosted the Governance Summit 2026: Inclusive AI for Viksit Bharat at the ISB Mohali Campus.
- ☐ The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), under the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, successfully organized “Medical Innovations Patent Mitra: Innovators-to-Industry (I2I) Connect”—India’s largest biomedical and technology transfer facilitation event today, at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.
- ☐ The 1st BRICS 2026 Tourism Working Group (TWG) Meeting was successfully convened in virtual mode on 25 May 2026, under India's BRICS 2026 Chairship. The meeting was chaired by the Joint Secretary (Tourism), Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.
- ☐ Oil India Limited recently discovered a new natural gas reserve in the Dandewala field of Rajasthan, marking the first confirmed gas presence in the Sanu Formation. Natural gas is a fossil fuel mainly composed of methane (CH₄), along with small quantities of natural gas liquids and non-hydrocarbon gases such as carbon dioxide and water vapour.
- ☐ China launched the Shenzhou-23 mission on 24 May 2026 with a three-member crew aboard a Long March 2-F rocket from the Jiuquan launch centre in north-western China. The spacecraft docked with the Tiangong space station about 3.5 hours after liftoff on 25 May 2026.
- ☐ Gurindervir Singh set the men’s 100 metres national record at 10.09 seconds on 23 May 2026 at the National Senior Athletics Federation Competition in Ranchi.
- ☐ The Reserve Bank of India formed the Q-SAFE panel to protect the financial sector from quantum-related risks. The committee is convened (chaired) by Dr. Anil Prabhakar, Professor at the Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Madras.
- ☐ 28 At least 28 people died when a landslide hit an illegal gold mining site in Angola’s Bengo province, one of the country’s deadliest of such accidents. Illegal mining in Angola had historically been associated with the diamond industry. But the country's mining diversification drive has fuelled a boom in artisanal mining of other metals such as gold. Angola, a third major diamond producer after Russia and Botswana and is diversifying into metals such as copper and gold as diamond prices fall and synthetic diamonds rise.

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