

30/05/2026 Daily Current News

1. Special Economic Zones (SEZs):

Context: The Government has notified two new Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in the Union Territory of Puducherry. Out of these two SEZs, one IT/ITES SEZ will be developed by M/s Oulgaret Municipality at Thattanchavady village in Oulgaret Taluk. This will be the first SEZ in India to be developed by an Urban Local Body, namely a Municipality. The other, a Multi-Sector SEZ, will be developed by M/s Pondicherry Industrial Promotion Development and Investment Corporation (PIPDIC) at Karasur village in Villianur Taluk.

About Special Economic Zones (SEZs):



- ❖ SEZ is a specifically delineated duty-free enclave and deemed to be a territory outside the customs territory of India for authorized operations.
- ❖ SEZ units are set up for the manufacture of goods, for rendering of services and providing warehousing services through Free Trade Warehousing Zones.
- ❖ Since the enactment of the SEZ Act in May 2005, these zones have significantly accelerated export growth while fostering industrial expansion across sectors.
- ❖ India was among the first Asian countries to adopt the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) model to promote exports, establishing Asia's first EPZ at Kandla in 1965.
- ❖ However, challenges such as multiple regulatory controls, procedural delays, inadequate infrastructure, and an unstable fiscal regime limited its effectiveness.
- ❖ To address these shortcomings and attract greater foreign investment, the Government announced the SEZ Policy in April 2000.
- ❖ The Special Economic Zones Act, 2005 came into effect in 2005. Following extensive consultations, the Act, along with the SEZ Rules, 2006, came into force on 10 February 2006.

- ❖ This ushered a simplified regulatory framework with single-window clearances for matters relating to both Central and State Governments.
- ❖ The Act lays down clear guiding principles for SEZs- generation of economic activity, infrastructure development, and employment creation.
- ❖ Currently, there are 368 notified SEZs across India as of 28th February, 2026.

2. *SkyCast System:*

Context: Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh today inaugurated India's first "SkyCast System" at Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi, calling it the beginning of a new era in Indian aviation. The Minister informed that only 18 such advanced systems exist across the world so far and India has now become the 19th in the world to install this integrated atmospheric remote sensing system for aviation weather monitoring. After IGI Airport Delhi, the second such facility will come up at Jewar Airport, Noida, followed by expansion to other airports across India.

About SkyCast System:

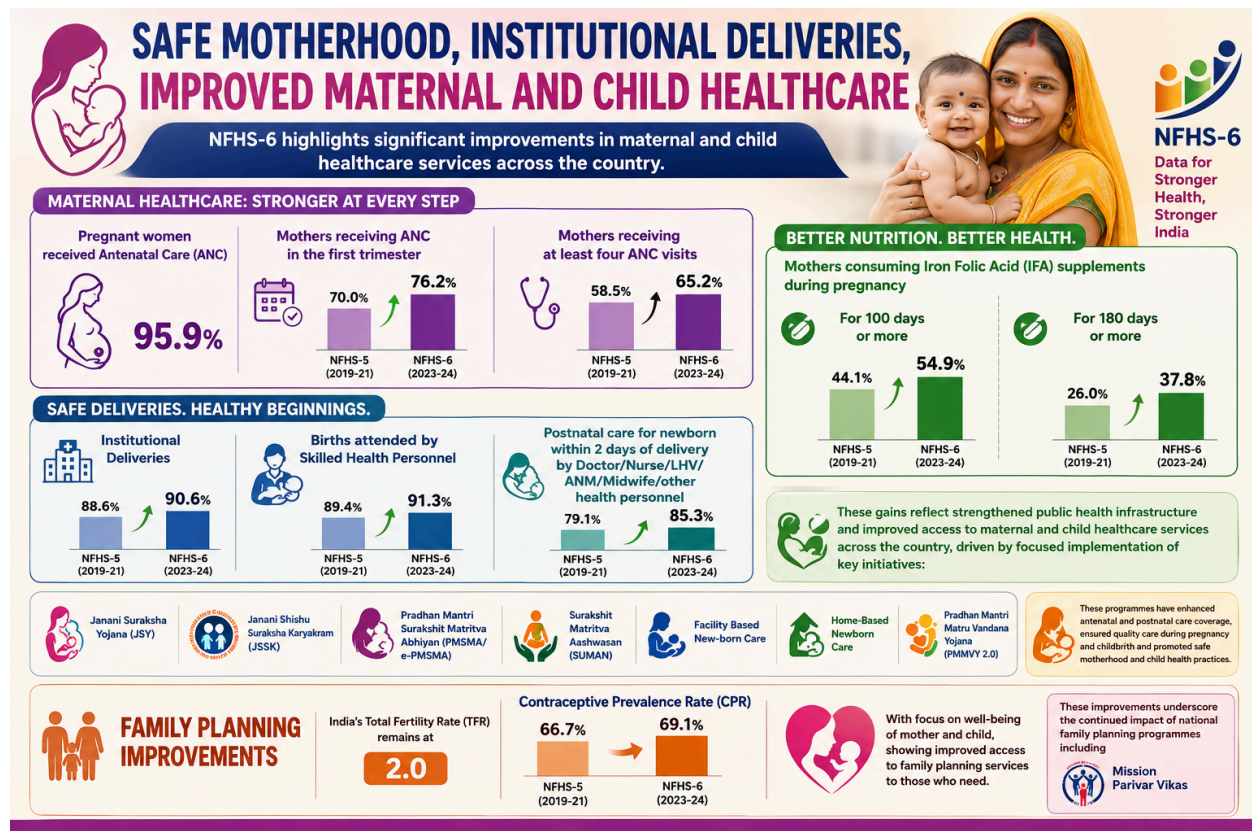
- ❖ It combines multiple atmospheric observation technologies for fog monitoring, turbulence detection and high-impact weather forecasting.
- ❖ The system integrates state-of-the-art atmospheric remote sensing technologies, including Radar Wind Profiler, SODAR, Microwave Radiometer, Ground-based Fog Aerosol Spectrometer (GFAS) and CL61 Lidar-based Ceilometer to provide comprehensive real-time atmospheric intelligence.
- ❖ The facility will strengthen monitoring and warning capabilities across runways, making take-offs and landings safer.
- ❖ The core of SkyCast is an advanced boundary layer Radar Wind Profiler, which continuously measures wind speed, wind direction, turbulence, vertical velocity and boundary-layer dynamics up to nearly 3 kilometres above the airport.
- ❖ These parameters are crucial during aircraft descent and landing operations, where precise atmospheric information helps improve safety.
- ❖ The SkyCast facility also includes advanced fog monitoring instruments such as the Ground-based Fog Aerosol Spectrometer (GFAS), which provides detailed information on fog droplets, aerosols and aerosol-fog interactions.
- ❖ The scientific foundation of SkyCast comes from the Winter Fog Experiment (WiFEX), jointly initiated by IITM and IMD under the Ministry of Earth Sciences at IGI Airport in 2015.
- ❖ WiFEX generated critical understanding of fog formation, aerosol-cloud interaction, visibility reduction and urban boundary-layer processes, which contributed to the development of this next-generation operational system.
- ❖ The SkyCast System under Mission Mausam reflects India's commitment towards building weather-smart infrastructure, strengthening aviation resilience and ensuring safer and more reliable services through scientific innovation.

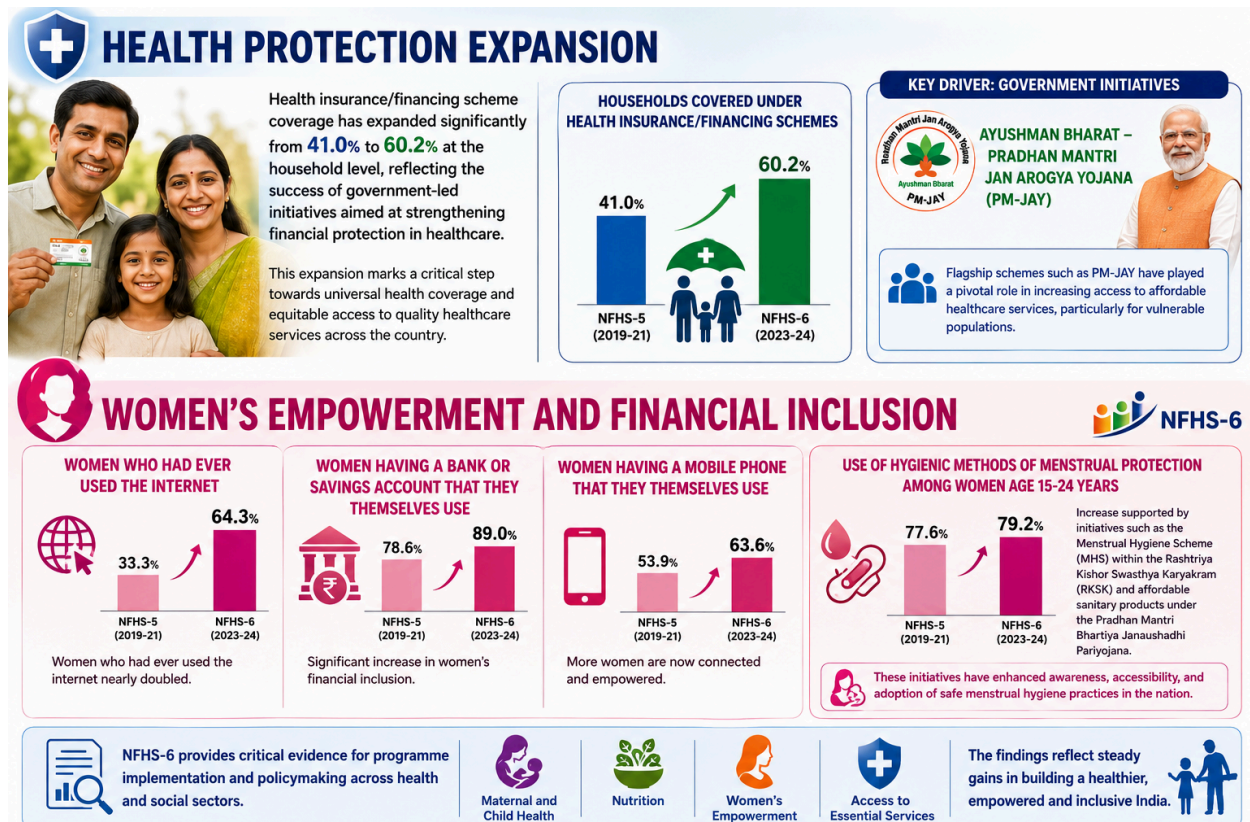
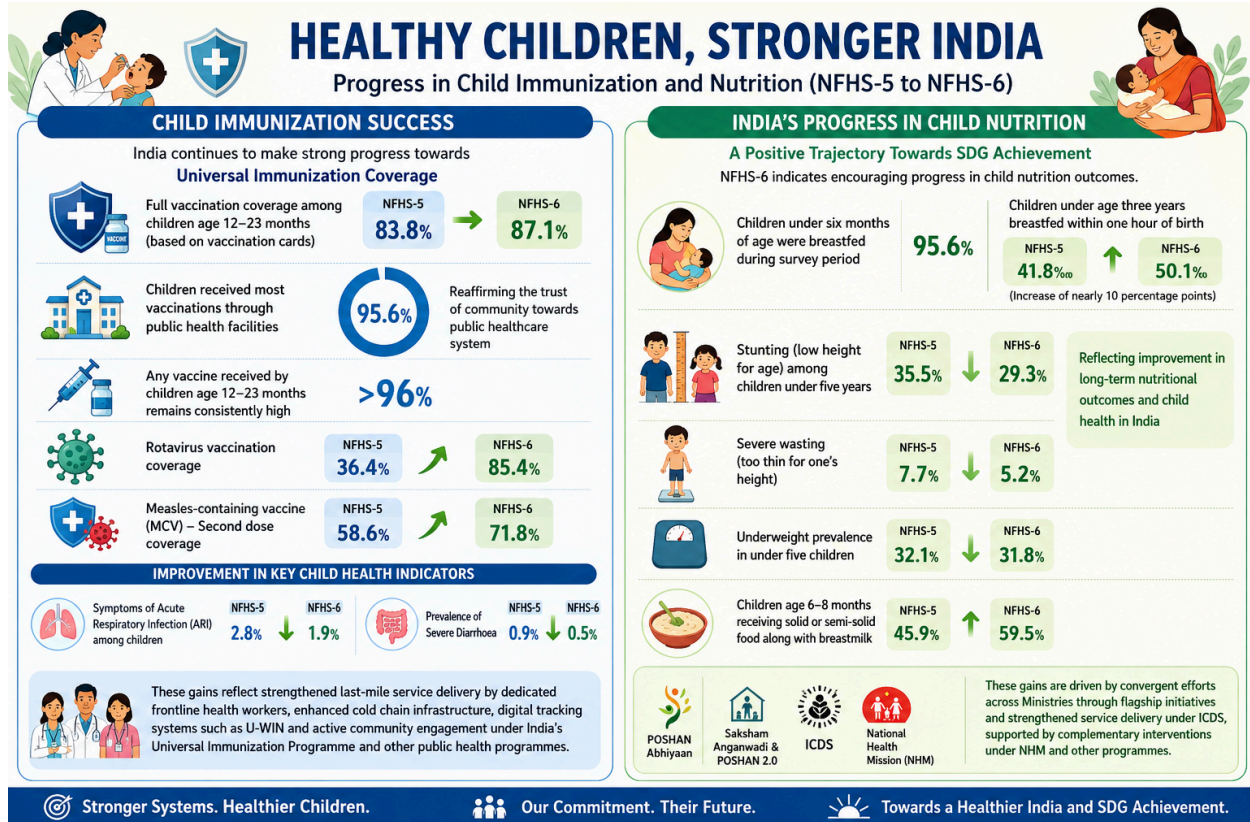
3. *National Family Health Survey – 6:*

Context: Union Health Ministry Releases National Family Health Survey – 6. The National Family Health Survey 2023-24 (NFHS-6), the sixth in the NFHS series, provides information on population, health, and nutrition for India and each State/Union Territory (UT) except Manipur.

Major highlights:

- ❖ The NFHS-6 was conducted during 2023-24 by MoHFW with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai as the nodal agency.
- ❖ Covering nearly 6.79 lakh households across 715 districts, the survey provides vital evidence on population, health, nutrition and family welfare indicators and supports evidence-based planning and programme implementation up to the district level.





4. *Lavender Festival 2026:*

Context: The CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM), Jammu, is set to organize the 4th Lavender Festival on 6th-7th June, under the theme, "Lavender goes global", at the Government Degree College, Bhaderwah, Doda, celebrating the continued success of the Purple Revolution and lavender-based rural entrepreneurship in Jammu and Kashmir.

About Lavender cultivation:

- ❖ Lavender Festival has emerged as a national platform showcasing the transformation brought by the CSIR-Aroma Mission in remote Himalayan regions, especially Bhaderwah, which has become a major lavender cultivation hub under the Purple Revolution initiative.
- ❖ Native Region: Europe; introduced in the temperate regions of Jammu & Kashmir under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Aroma Mission.
- ❖ Type: Small perennial aromatic herb/shrub.
- ❖ Uses: Widely used in fragrance, specialty food, pharmaceutical, therapeutic, cosmetic, and industrial sectors.
- ❖ Propagation: Through seeds, rooted cuttings, tissue culture, and layering.
- ❖ Soil Requirement: Prefers light, well-aerated, organic matter-rich, neutral to alkaline, well-drained soils; sensitive to waterlogging.
- ❖ Rainfall Requirement: Suitable for areas receiving 300–1400 mm annual rainfall.
- ❖ Climate Requirement: Hardy temperate crop; tolerant to drought and frost; grows best under cool winters, cool summers, and ample sunlight.
- ❖ Suitable Areas: Can be cultivated in hilly regions experiencing snowfall and on degraded or eroded soils.

5. *Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI):*

Context: India took another step towards modernising its maritime sector with the launch of the Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI) for FY 2024-25 and FOUR major digital initiatives aimed at improving governance, transparency and ease of doing business across the shipping ecosystem.

More details:

- ❖ The LPPI, developed under the Sagar Aankalan framework, is a national benchmarking mechanism designed to assess and improve the operational performance of Indian ports.
- ❖ The index aligns with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, Maritime India Vision 2030 and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, and seeks to strengthen India's position in global logistics and maritime trade.
- ❖ The LPPI evaluates ports across three cargo segments dry bulk, liquid bulk and container cargo using operational indicators such as cargo handled, vessel turnaround time, berth idle time, pre-berthing waiting time, container dwell time and ship berth day output.
- ❖ Among major performers, Paradip Port Authority topped the Dry Bulk Cargo category handling more than 5 million tonnes, while Sikka Port and Terminals led the Liquid Bulk Cargo segment. Mundra Port emerged as the highest-ranked port in the Container Cargo category handling more

than 0.5 million TEUs. Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority secured the second position among major container ports in the same category.

- ❖ The framework assigns equal weightage to absolute performance and year-on-year improvement, encouraging continuous enhancement of port operations.
- ❖ Alongside the LPPI, Sonowal launched four digital initiatives developed by the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) to improve service delivery, transparency and accountability for seafarers and maritime stakeholders.
- ❖ The initiatives include a 24x7 Grievance Redressal Module under the e-Navik platform, a Ship Registration Module on the e-Samudra platform, a Medical Practitioner Module and a Unified Ship Recycling Credit Note Module.
- ❖ Another key reform unveiled during the event was the Unified Ship Recycling Portal for Ship Recycling Credit scheme, part of the Government's ₹70,000-crore maritime development package announced in 2025.
- ❖ Under the scheme, ship owners recycling vessels at Hong Kong Convention-compliant Indian yards can receive a credit note equivalent to 40 per cent of the vessel's scrap value, redeemable against new shipbuilding projects in India.

6. *InSPA-StemCellEX-H2 Investigation:*

Context: Astronauts aboard the International Space Station are continuing research efforts to manufacture large quantities of stem cells for therapies on Earth through the Hematopoietic Stem Cell Expansion in Space (InSPA-StemCellEX-H2) investigation. InSPA-StemCellEX-H2 Investigation aims to demonstrate large-scale production of blood stem cells for pharmaceutical and clinical use.

About Stem cells:

- ❖ Definition: Stem cells are undifferentiated foundational cells capable of giving rise to specialized cells such as blood, nerve, and muscle cells.
- ❖ Self-Renewal: They can divide repeatedly to produce identical copies of themselves.
- ❖ Differentiation: They can develop into various specialized cell types that perform specific functions in the body.
- ❖ Types by Source: Embryonic Stem Cells (ESCs), Adult/Somatic Stem Cells, Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells (iPSCs), etc.
- ❖ Types by Differentiation Potential: Totipotent cells (can form all cell types), Pluripotent cells (can form most body tissues), Multipotent cells (can form a limited range of related cell types), etc.
- ❖ Importance: Stem cells play a crucial role in growth, tissue repair, regeneration, and regenerative medicine research.

7. *RBI Annual Report 2025-26:*

Context: The domestic economy in 2026-27 is expected to remain resilient, despite a challenging external environment characterised by elevated energy and commodity prices, rising logistics costs, volatility in global financial markets, and uncertainties surrounding global trade policies, the RBI said in its Annual Report 2025-26 released on Friday.

Major highlights:

- ❖ **RBI Growth Outlook:** The RBI stated that India's growth prospects remain strong due to robust domestic demand, lower dependence on exports, and a stable policy environment.
- ❖ **Global Economic Concerns:** Geopolitical tensions, particularly the conflict in West Asia, have emerged as a major risk to global economic growth in 2026.
- ❖ **IMF Growth Projection:** The IMF has lowered its global growth forecast for 2026 to **3.1%**, from the earlier estimate of 3.3%.
- ❖ **Trade Slowdown:** Global merchandise and services trade volume is projected to slow to **2.8% in 2026**.
- ❖ **Balance of Payments (BoP) Deficit:** India recorded a **BoP deficit of \$30.8 billion in 2025-26**, more than six times higher than the previous year.
- ❖ **Shift from Surplus to Deficit:** India's BoP was in surplus as recently as 2023-24 but has now moved into deficit territory.
- ❖ **Main Causes of Deficit:** The deficit resulted from a widening current account deficit and a sharp decline in capital inflows.
- ❖ **Use of Forex Reserves:** The entire BoP deficit was financed through RBI's foreign exchange reserves, leading to a significant drawdown.
- ❖ **BoP Components:** The Balance of Payments consists of the **Current Account** and the **Capital Account**.
- ❖ **Current Account Explained:** It records trade in goods and services along with certain cross-border income and transfer transactions.
- ❖ **Capital Account Explained:** It includes foreign investments, external borrowings, external assistance, and asset transfers.
- ❖ **Current Account Deficit (CAD):** India's CAD reached a three-year high of **\$30.2 billion in 2025-26**.
- ❖ **Merchandise Trade Deficit:** Imports exceeded exports by **\$251.6 billion** in 2025-26.
- ❖ **Decline in Invisibles Surplus:** The surplus from services and other invisibles fell to **\$221.4 billion** from \$263.9 billion in the previous year.
- ❖ **Widening CAD:** The fall in services surplus was larger than the improvement in merchandise trade deficit, resulting in a wider CAD.
- ❖ **2023-24 BoP Surplus:** India recorded a BoP surplus of **\$63.7 billion** due to a large capital account surplus that outweighed the CAD.
- ❖ **Collapse in Capital Surplus:** The capital account surplus plunged to just **\$72 million in 2025-26**, from \$16.6 billion in 2024-25.
- ❖ **Other Capital Outflows:** Net outflows under the "other capital" category rose to **\$22.6 billion**, reflecting delayed export receipts, advance import payments, and funds parked abroad.
- ❖ **Indians Investing Abroad:** Increased overseas investments by Indians contributed significantly to capital outflows.
- ❖ **FPI Outflows:** Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) withdrew **\$4.3 billion more than they invested**, reversing the inflow trend of the previous two years.
- ❖ **Dollar Outflow Concern:** Rising outflows of dollars have become a major concern for both the government and the RBI.

- ❖ **Oil Import Dependence:** India imports nearly **90% of its crude oil requirement**, making it vulnerable to large foreign exchange outflows.
- ❖ **Gold Import Burden:** India has substantial gold demand despite having negligible domestic gold production.
- ❖ **Government Response:** The government has urged citizens to reduce fuel consumption and gold purchases to ease pressure on external accounts.
- ❖ **Import Duty Hike:** Import duty on gold and silver was increased from **6% to 15%** to discourage imports.
- ❖ **Silver Import Restrictions:** The government has also imposed restrictions on the import of most categories of silver.
- ❖ **Economic Significance:** Sustained BoP deficits can weaken forex reserves, increase external vulnerability, and affect macroeconomic stability.

Quick Bites:

- ☐ The Reserve Bank of India and the State Bank of Vietnam on 05.05.2026 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote cooperation in financial innovation and digital payments, including information sharing, regulatory coordination, and payment system connectivity for cross-border QR Code-based merchant payments.
- ☐ A team of scientists from Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST), Mohali, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) have developed a nanocomposite that works as a light-driven catalyst by combining gold and palladium nanoparticles, and a light-absorbing molecule BODIPY. This hybrid material uses light energy to speed up chemical reactions more efficiently than traditional catalysts.
- ☐ Team India has made the nation proud at the prestigious Taipei Capital Cup 2026, an international skilling competition held in Taipei, Taiwan, from 26–28 May 2026, by securing two Silver Medals and three Merit Awards across multiple skill categories.
- ☐ NITI Aayog's Frontier Tech Hub today released India's first comprehensive 10-year roadmap - "Future of India's Semiconductor Industry". Developed in deep consultation with some of the best minds from industry and government, the roadmap lays out a clear, actionable vision for India to build a USD 120–150 billion semiconductor value chain by 2035. The NITI Frontier Tech Hub was created as an action tank for Viksit Bharat to anticipate emerging mega-technology shifts and shape India's preparedness to unlock their potential for faster economic growth, inclusive societal outcomes, and strategic resilience—advancing the country's journey towards becoming a frontier-technology nation.
- ☐ The Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update 2026-2035 report warns of exceptional global heat and climate extremes for the next five years (2026-2030) released by World Meteorological Organization (WMO), produced by the UK's Met Office.
- ☐ Recently, an albino Hog Deer was sighted in Kaziranga National Park. Albinism is a rare inherited genetic condition characterized by little or no production of melanin, the pigment responsible for the color of skin, hair, and eyes. The Hog Deer derives its name from its hog-like running style, moving with its head held low. It is distributed across the Indo-Gangetic plains and parts of South and Southeast Asia, including India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. The species is classified as Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature

Red List and receives the highest level of protection under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

- ☐ The Forest Advisory Committee of the Environment Ministry has granted in-principle forest clearance to the Kalai-II Hydel Project in Arunachal Pradesh's Anjaw district on the Lohit River, amid concerns over its impact on the White-bellied Heron. Also known as the Imperial Heron or Great White-bellied Heron, it is one of the world's rarest birds, found mainly in the southern foothills of the eastern Himalayas across Bhutan, Northeast India (Assam and Arunachal Pradesh), and northern Myanmar. Its global population is estimated at fewer than 60 individuals, with only about 10 remaining in India. The species is listed as Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ☐ Supply uncertainties arising from the West Asia conflict have raised concerns over the availability of Nickel, a mineral classified as a critical mineral by India. Nickel is a lustrous silvery-white metal with relatively low thermal and electrical conductivity and is generally not found in its pure native state. It is refined into high-purity metal through the Mond (carbonyl) process, which uses a two-step thermal decomposition method. Nickel is an essential input for electric vehicle batteries and stainless-steel production. Globally, Indonesia possesses the largest nickel resources (about 42%) and accounts for around 54% of global production. In India, the entire nickel demand is met through imports, while the largest reserves are located in Odisha (about 93%), followed by Jharkhand.
- ☐ Recently, India's National Security Advisor participated in the 1st International Security Forum, held in Moscow under the aegis of the Security Council of the Russian Federation. The forum brought together representatives from around 120 countries to deliberate on emerging global and regional security challenges. Its primary objective was to promote dialogue, cooperation, and collective approaches to addressing contemporary threats to international peace, stability, and security.
- ☐ The Indian Air Force signed three contracts with the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay on 27 May 2026 for predictive maintenance technologies for the Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jet fleet. The agreements cover prognostic and prescriptive maintenance systems for military aviation applications in India. The Su-30MKI is a twin-engine, multirole fighter aircraft operated by the Indian Air Force. The aircraft was developed by Sukhoi and customised for India under a licence-production arrangement with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
- ☐ India ranked 4th globally in Artificial Intelligence performance and 5th in digital economy rankings in the State of India's Digital Economy 2026 report. India improved its digital economy position from 8th in 2025 to 5th in 2026, and it stood behind the United States, China and Singapore in AI performance. The State of India's Digital Economy 2026 report was released on 29 May 2026 by the ICRIER-Prosus Centre for Internet and Digital Economy.
- ☐ Teenaged high jump star Pooja Singh shattered the National senior record en route winning the gold medal to lead a strong Indian show on the second day of the Asian U-20 athletics championships on Friday. The 19-year-old sailed over 1.93m to better Sahana Kumari's mark of 1.92m that had stood since 2012.