

### 1. Major Corporate and Political Appointments

- **John Ternus** has been appointed as the **8th Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of **Apple Inc.**, effective **September 1, 2026**.
- **Vibha Padalkar's** tenure as **Managing Director (MD)** and **CEO** of **HDFC Life Insurance** has been officially extended for another **5 years**.
- **Sri Lanka's** President **Anura Kumara Dissanayake** appointed **Anura Karunathilake** as the new **Energy Minister**.

### 2. Union Cabinet Approves Dearness Allowance and Relief Hike

- The cabinet approved a **2%** increase in **Dearness Allowance (DA)** for government employees and **Dearness Relief (DR)** for pensioners.
- The hike raises the allowance rate from **58%** to **60%**.
- The increase takes effect from **January 1, 2026**.

### 3. Cabinet Clears Multi-tracking Railway Projects

- Multi-tracking railway projects worth a total of **₹24,815 crores** were formally cleared.
- The approval includes the **Ghaziabad-Sitapur** line in **Uttar Pradesh** covering **403 km** at a cost of **₹14,926 crores**.
- The approval also includes the **Rajahmundry-Visakhapatnam** line in **Andhra Pradesh** covering **198 km** at a cost of **₹9,889 crores**.

### 4. Extension and Allocations for Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

- **Phase 3** of **PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana)** has been extended from **March 2025** to **March 2028** (and up to **March 2029** for hilly areas).
- The financial outlay for **Phase 3** was increased from **₹8,250 crore** to **₹8,397 crore**.
- Additionally, **Phase 4** of **PMGSY (FY25 to FY29)** has been allocated a massive budget of **₹70,125 crore**.
- **Phase 4** aims to construct **62,500 km** of roads.

### 5. Inauguration of Ganga Expressway in Uttar Pradesh

- **PM Narendra Modi** virtually inaugurated the **594 km Ganga Expressway**.
- The expressway connects **Bijauli** in **Meerut** to **Judapur Dandu** in **Prayagraj**.

### 6. Overview of SMILE Scheme for Marginalized Individuals

- Launched on **February 12, 2022**, by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.
- It is officially linked to the broader **Pradhan Mantri DAKSH (PM DAKSH)** scheme.
- **SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise)** aims to uplift transgender persons and individuals engaged in begging.
- It provides comprehensive support including housing, healthcare, education, and skill development.
- The total budget allocated is **₹390 crore** for the operating period from **2021 to 2026**.

### 7. Enhancements in Telecom, Aviation, and Export Facilitation Sectors

- **Samridh Gram Initiative:** A **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** project that delivers integrated "phygital" services to rural areas.
- **Aviation Assistance:** The Central Government provided financial assistance of **₹460 crores** to revive **Alliance Air**.
- **Relief and Logistic Intervention for Export Facilitation:** This government scheme was formally expanded to include **Egypt** and **Jordan** as eligible destinations.
- The **Samridh Gram Initiative** was nominated for the prestigious **World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2026** in the "enabling environment" category.
- Notably, **Alliance Air** is the only airline entirely under central government control.

### 8. Key State-Level Cultural, Legal, and Infrastructure Developments

- **Andhra Pradesh:** A female black panther brought from **Assam** was released into the **Indira Gandhi Zoological Park** in **Visakhapatnam** after a gap of **40 years**.
- **Assam:** The **114th Suwari Festival**, a traditional cultural and dance event, was joyously celebrated in **Boko**.

- **Gujarat:** The **Kankaria Coaching Depot** in **Ahmedabad** became India's first water-neutral railway depot.
- **Ladakh:** India's first petroglyph conservation park was successfully inaugurated in **Leh** to preserve centuries-old rock images.
- **Meghalaya:** The state government canceled a proposed luxury island resort project on **Lumpongden Island** in **Umiam Lake** (near **Shillong**).
- **Odisha:** India's first advanced 3D glass semiconductor packaging unit was launched at **Infovalley** in the **Khurda district** of **Bhubaneswar**.
- **Punjab:** The state enacted a stringent new law, "**Jagrit Jyot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar**".
- **Ladakh's** petroglyph conservation park was explicitly inaugurated on **World Heritage Day (April 18)**.

### 9. GDP Projections, Record Exports, and Unemployment Data

- The **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP)** projected the Indian economy's growth rate at **6.4%** in **2026** and **6.6%** in **2027**.
- India achieved an all-time high of **\$860 billion** in total exports for **FY 2025-26**.
- The **National Statistical Office (NSO)** via the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** reported India's unemployment rate hit a 5-month high of **5.1%** in **March 2026** (up from **4.9%** in **February**).
- The export figure represents a **4.2%** Year-on-Year (YoY) growth from **\$825 billion** in **FY25**, and a massive **84.5%** growth over 12 years compared to **\$466 billion** in **FY 2013-14**.
- The **Worker Population Ratio** for the **15–59 years** demographic was recorded at **52.6%**.
- The **Labour Force Participation Rate** stood at **55.4%**.

### 10. Key Targets and Market Measures by SBI and RBI

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** aims to increase its balance sheet size to equal **25%** of India's GDP by **2030** (up from current **~20%**, valued at **₹71.62 lakh crores** as of **Dec 2025**).
- **SBI** seeks to capture a **25%** overall market share by **2030**.
- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** rolled back its **April 1** restrictions on **Non-Deliverable Forward (NDF)** contracts involving the Indian Rupee.
- **RBI** announced results for its **4th global hackathon**, "**Harbinger - Innovation for Transformation**" (Theme: **Secure Banking Powered by Identity, Integrity, Inclusivity**).
- The hackathon winners include: **EarthID** (tokenized KYC), **Team e-Sparsh** (offline CBDC), and **Bank of Baroda's Team Nidaan** (enhancing trust for disabled customers).

### 11. New Regulations and Initiatives by SEBI and BSE

- **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** and the **DoT** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to prevent telecom-linked financial frauds.
- **BSE Housing Finance Index:** Launched on **20 April 2026**, this new index tracks the performance of mortgage-focused companies. The index is derived from the **BSE 1000 universe** but specifically tracks **11 housing finance stocks**.
- **SEBI** reduced the minimum investment in **Social Impact Funds** from **₹2 lakhs** to **₹1,000** using "**Zero Coupon Zero Principal**" instruments.
- The **BSE Housing Finance Index** data will be published twice a year (**June and December**) to reveal housing loan market trends.

### 12. Updates on NITI Aayog Trade Report, Banking, and Billionaire Index

- **NITI Aayog's "Trade Watch Quarterly"** report revealed India's trade with **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** countries reached **28.8%** of total trade in **2024**.
- **PPFAS Asset Management Company** (a subsidiary of **Parag Parikh Financial Advisory Services**, established **2011**) received **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** approval to act as a sponsor and set up a pension fund entity under the **National Pension System (NPS)** in **Mumbai**.
- **Karnataka Bank** partnered with **Pine Labs** to upgrade its **Point of Sale (PoS)** solutions.

### 13. India-Russia Enact Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS)

- The **Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS)** between **India** and **Russia** officially came into force.
- The operational agreement is valid for a period of **5 years**.

- It introduces a dollar-bypassing barter system for mutual exchanges.

### 14. Advancements in Food Safety Standards

- **Ashwagandha Ban:** The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** banned the use of Ashwagandha leaves in supplements, mandating that strictly only roots be used.
- **FSSAI Details:** Established in **2008**, headquartered in **New Delhi** under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- **FSSAI Leadership:** Chaired by **Punya Salila Srivastava**, with **Rajit Punhani** serving as CEO.

### 15. National and Global Awards and Recognitions

- **Ayushman Bharat Awards:** The **National Health Authority** presented **18 Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)** awards and **5 Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission** excellence awards to states and Union Territories (UTs) at '**Chintan Shivir 2026**' in **Pune, Maharashtra**.
- **Global Green Icon:** Environmentalist and former Member of Parliament (MP) **J. Santosh Kumar** was honored at the **World Climate Leaders Conclave** in the **United Kingdom (UK)**.
- **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) National Award:** **N. Alim Yusuf** from **Kerala** won the award at the **Eko Youth Innovation Summit 2026**.
- **Person of the Year:** Indian film actress **Sayani Gupta** was named the **2026 Person of the Year** by the **Harvard South Asian Association**.
- **Laureus World Sports Awards:** Held in **Madrid, Spain**. Tennis players **Carlos Alcaraz** won **Sportsman of the Year** and **Aryna Sabalenka** won **Sportswoman of the Year**.
- **J. Santosh Kumar** was recognized globally for his impactful work on the **Green India Challenge**.
- **Sayani Gupta** is being honored at **Harvard University** for her representation and film storytelling excellence.

### 16. Recent Achievements in Sports: Chess and Squash

- **Chess:** **Aranyak Ghosh** (hailing from **Kolkata, West Bengal**) became India's **95th chess grandmaster**.
- **Squash:** Indian player **Suraj Kumar Chand** gloriously won the **Men's Singles** title at the **HCL Squash PSA Challenger Tour**.

### 17. Important Days, Themes, and Books in April 2026

- **April 18: World Heritage Day** (this date coincided with the inauguration of India's first petroglyph park).
- **April 19: World Liver Day.** The designated Theme was "**Solid habit strong liver**".
- **April 20: United Nations (UN) Chinese Language Day.** The designated Theme was "**Fluent future forum Chinese learning and the youth engagement for a multilingual UN 2.0 world**".
- **April 21: National Civil Service Day.** The designated Theme was "**Viksit Bharat citizen-centric governance and development at its last mile**".
- **April 22: World Earth Day** The Theme was "**Our Planet, Our Power**".
- **April 22: International Mother Earth Day.** The Theme : "**Our Power, Our Planet**"
- **Book Release:** A new book titled "**Do You Know Your Hinduism,**" authored by **Rajmohan Gandhi**, was recently highlighted.