

1. South Coast Railway Zone — India's 18th Railway Zone to Begin Operations from June 1, 2026

- India currently has **17 railway zones**, with the addition of the South Coast Railway Zone making it the **18th**.
- Government officially notified the creation of the **South Coast Railway Zone**, India's **18th railway zone**.
- **Announced by: Union Minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw.**
- **Operations Begin: June 1, 2026.**
- **Headquarters: Mudasarlova, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.**
- **Divisions Included:** The zone integrates the **Guntakal, Guntur, and Vijayawada** divisions (formerly of South Central Railway) and a newly formed **Visakhapatnam division** (a portion of the truncated Waltair division)

2. Ministry of Power Revises Make in India Norms for HVDC (High Voltage Direct Current) Substations — 60% Localization by FY35

3. Cell Broadcast System Launched by Jyotiraditya Scindia — Real-Time Geo-Targeted Emergency Alerts

- **Union Minister of Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia** launched the **Cell Broadcast System**.
- **Developed jointly by: C-DOT (Centre for Development of Telematics) and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).**
- **Function:** Delivers real-time, **geo-targeted siren alerts** to mobile phones nationwide during emergencies such as floods or earthquakes.

4. Fire Safety Week Observed Across Hospitals and Schools — May 4 to 10, 2026

- **Theme: "Safe School, Safe Hospital, Safe Fire Awareness Society".**

5. FDI Rules Relaxed — Companies from Bordering Nations (Up to 10% Stake) Can Invest via Automatic Route

- **In 2020**, India imposed a strict rule mandating government approval for even a **1% stake** from bordering countries (such as China) — particularly in response to growing Chinese investment concerns.
- **Indian Government** relaxed **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** rules under the **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)**.
- **New Rule:** Overseas companies with up to a **10% non-controlling stake** from bordering nations (such as **China**) can now invest in India via the **automatic route** — without prior government approval.
- **Old Rule:** Government approval was mandatory for even a **1% Chinese stake**.

6. Mission for Cotton Productivity Approved — ₹5,659.22 Crore Outlay; Target 755 kg/Hectare by 2031

- **Union Cabinet** approved the **Mission for Cotton Productivity**.
- **Budget: ₹5,659.22 crore.**
- **Duration: 5 years (FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31).**
- **Implemented jointly by: Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Textiles.**
- **Yield Target:** Increase cotton yield from **440 kg/hectare** to **755 kg/hectare** by March 2031.
- **Brand:** Promotes premium Indian cotton under the "**Kasturi Cotton**" brand.
- **Vision:** Aligns with the "**5F Vision**" — Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Factory, Factory to Fashion, Fashion to Foreign.

7. India Semiconductor Mission: 2 New Units Approved — Total 12 Projects Worth ₹1.64 Lakh Crore

- **Union Cabinet** approved **two new semiconductor manufacturing units** with a combined investment of **₹3,936 crore**.
- **New Units:**
- **Crystal Matrix Limited** — in **Dholera, Gujarat**.
- **Suchi Semicon Pvt. Ltd.** — in **Surat, Gujarat**.

- **National Total:** Now **12 approved semiconductor projects** worth a total investment of **₹1.64 lakh crore**.

8. Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0 Extended to December 2028 — Revised Budget ₹8.69 Lakh Crore; MoU Signed with 3 States

- **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** aims to provide **100% functional tap water connections** to all rural households in India.
- **Ministry of Jal Shakti** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with three states:
- **States:** Uttarakhand, Karnataka, and Tripura.
- **Objective:** To achieve **100% functional tap connection coverage** under **JJM 2.0**.
- **Extended Timeline:** Mission framework extended to **December 2028**.
- **Revised Budget:** **₹8.69 lakh crore**.

9. 'Padma Doree' Initiative — Blending North-East Eri Silk with Chanderi Handloom of Madhya Pradesh

- **"Padma Doree" Initiative** launched by the **North Eastern Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation**.
- **Unique Blend:** Blends the **Eri silk textile of North-East India** with the **Chanderi handloom craftsmanship of Madhya Pradesh**.
- **Objective:** To manufacture unique, **export-quality fabrics**.

10. Hazaribagh, Jharkhand Identified as India's First Pearl Farming Cluster

11. Karnataka Launches India's First State-Led Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Space Technology in Bengaluru

12. Odisha Inaugurates Advanced Power System Simulation Lab in Bhubaneswar

13. Punjab Launches 250 'Pendu Khed Maidan' Rural Sports Grounds — CM Bhagwant Mann

- **Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann** inaugurated **250 rural sports grounds** named **"Pendu Khed Maidan"**.
- **Objective:** To foster a healthy sporting culture and protect youth from drug abuse.

14. Andaman & Nicobar Islands Sets Guinness World Record — World's Largest Underwater National Flag at Havelock Island

- **Andaman & Nicobar Islands administration** set a **Guinness World Record** by deploying the world's **largest underwater national flag**.
- **Flag Dimensions:** **60 × 40 meters**.
- **Location:** **Havelock Island (Swaraj Dweep)**.
- **Led by:** **Lieutenant Governor D.K. Joshi**, supported by the **Indian Navy** and professional divers.

15. USA Launches 'Project Freedom' in Strait of Hormuz; Iran's IRGC Declares Strict Naval Control Zone

- **USA** launched **"Project Freedom"**, a naval operation to safely escort commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz.
- **In Retaliation:** Iran's **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)** published a new map defining a **strict naval control zone** over the Strait.
- **Iran's Declaration:** No foreign vessels — including US-escorted ones — can pass without **Iranian permission**.

16. UNGA President Annalena Baerbock Visits India — Meets External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar

- **Annalena Baerbock**, German diplomat and **President of the 80th Session of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**, visited India at the invitation of **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar**.

United Nations (UN) Key Facts

- **Established:** **October 24, 1945**.
- **Headquarters:** **New York**.
- **Member Nations:** **193**.
- **Secretary-General:** **Antonio Guterres**.

- **Official Languages: 6** — Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish.
- **Principal Organs: 6** — UNGA, UNSC, ECOSOC, ICJ, etc.

17. 3rd India-Japan Joint Committee Meeting on Healthcare Held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

- **Venue: Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.**
- **Co-chaired by: JP Nadda** (India) and **Kimie Onoda** (Japan).
- **Discussion Topics: AI-enabled health systems**, resilient medical infrastructure, and healthcare innovation.
- **Edition: 3rd India-Japan Joint Committee Meeting on Healthcare.**

18. Maldives President Muizzu Visits Sri Lanka — 7 Agreements Signed; Marks 60 Years of Diplomatic Relations

- **Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu** visited Sri Lankan President **Anura Kumara Dissanayake**.
- **Milestone: Visit marks 60 years of diplomatic relations** between Maldives and Sri Lanka.
- **Agreements Signed: 7 agreements** covering tourism, defense, education, and youth development.

19. ADB 59th Annual Meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan — \$70 Billion Infrastructure Plan & Critical Minerals Initiative

- **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** held its **59th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors** in **Samarkand, Uzbekistan**.
- **Announcement 1 : \$70 Billion Infrastructure Plan:**
- Announced a **\$70 billion infrastructure plan** for digital and energy sectors across Asia and Asia-Pacific.
- **Goals by 2035: Integrate 20 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy** and offer first-time broadband access to **200 million individuals**.
- **Funding: ADB will fund 50%**; the remainder from co-financing and the private sector.
- **Announcement 2 : Critical Minerals Initiative:**
- Launched the "**Critical Minerals to Manufacturing Financing Partnership Facility**" and a **critical mineral database** to fortify Asia's supply chain.

20. Scotland Becomes First UK Country to Legalize Water Cremation (Alkaline Hydrolysis)

21. Brazil Enacts Law in 2026 to Restrict Social Media Access for Minors Under 16 Years

22. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) Collaborates with Indonesia to Restore Prambanan Temple

23. NSE Launches Electronic Gold Receipts (EGR) Segment with SEBI Approval — Digital Gold Trading

- **Electronic Gold Receipts (EGR)** are dematerialized digital certificates representing ownership of physical gold stored in **SEBI-accredited vaults**.
- **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** launched the **EGR segment** with approval from the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**.
- **How It Works:** Investors can hold, buy, and sell EGRs in their **Demat accounts** at prevailing market rates — without holding physical gold at home.
- **GST Rule: No GST** applies to digital trading of EGRs; **GST is only levied when converting EGRs into physical gold**.

24. RBI Adds 104.23 Metric Tons of Gold to Domestic Reserves — 77% of Total Gold Now Held Domestically

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** strategically added **104.23 metric tons of gold** to its domestic reserves over six months.
- **Total Reserves: Marginal overall increase (from 880.18 to 880.52 metric tons)** because the RBI simultaneously **sold gold stored abroad** to shift storage back to India.
- **Current Domestic Storage: Approximately 77%** of the RBI's total gold is kept domestically.

25. RBI Reassigns Portfolios Among 4 Deputy Governors — Rohit Jain Gets Fintech, Forex & IT

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** reassigned departments among its **four Deputy Governors**.
- **J. Swaminathan** (Senior-most Deputy Governor): Oversees **11 departments**, including **DICGC (Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation)**.
- **Poonam Gupta:** In charge of **Monetary Policy**.

- **Rohit Jain** (newly appointed): Responsible for **Fintech, Forex, and IT (Information Technology)**.
- 26. Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) Conference Held — Focus on Resolving NPAs Above ₹20 Lakh; India Has 39 DRTs & 5 DRATs**
- **Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT)** is a specialized tribunal for resolving bank loan recovery disputes.
 - **Department of Financial Services (Ministry of Finance)** hosted a conference for **DRT officials, banks, and the Indian Banks' Association (IBA)**.
 - **Focus:** Expediting resolution of pending individual **Non-Performing Asset (NPA)** cases where disputed loans exceed **₹20 lakh**.
 - India currently operates **39 DRTs (Debt Recovery Tribunals)** and **5 DRATs (Debt Recovery Appellate Tribunals)**.
- 27. SEBI Chairman Issues Cyber Security Advisory on 'Mythos' AI — Threatens Financial Market Security**
- **SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey** issued a severe **cyber security advisory** regarding "Mythos", an AI model.
 - **Threat:** Mythos detects and exploits software vulnerabilities, threatening **financial market security systems**.
- 28. Federal Bank Acquires Credit Card Portfolio of 4.5 Lakh Customers from Standard Chartered India — ₹1,500 Crore**
- 29. Tata AIA Launches 'Shubh Health Credi' — ULIP Blending Life Insurance with Market-Linked Health Fund**
- **Tata AIA Life Insurance** introduced "Shubh Health Credi", a **Unit Linked Insurance Plan (ULIP)**.
 - **Product Design:** Blends life insurance with a mutual fund to create a "**market-linked health fund**".
 - **Coverage:** Covers medical expenses and **60 critical illnesses**.
- 30. DRDO Transfers 2,200 Technologies to Industry — Waives 20% Transfer Fee; 25% R&D Budget for Startups**
- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** announced that the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** transferred **2,200 technologies** to private and government industries.
 - **Fee Waiver:** DRDO waived its former **20% technology transfer fee**, granting free access.
 - **R&D Budget Allocation:** **25%** of the defense R&D budget is designated for **academia and startups**.
 - **India's Defense Production:** Currently at **₹1.54 lakh crore**.
 - **India's Defense Exports:** **₹38,424 crore**.
- 31. MoD Signs ₹1,476 Crore Contract with BEL for 5 Ground-Based Mobile Electronic Systems for Indian Army**
- **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** finalized a **₹1,476 crore agreement** with **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**.
 - **Procurement:** **Five ground-based mobile electronic systems** for the Indian Army.
- 32. Siemens Delivers First 9000 HP Electric Freight Locomotive to Indian Railways — Part of €3 Billion Contract (2023)**
- 33. Rajasthan Royals Acquired by Lakshmi Mittal Family (75%) & Adar Poonawalla (18%) — Valued at \$1.6 Billion**
- A consortium led by the **Lakshmi Mittal family** and **Adar Poonawalla (Serum Institute)** will acquire a majority stake in the **IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals**.
 - **Stake Distribution:**
 - **Lakshmi Mittal family:** **75% stake**.
 - **Adar Poonawalla:** **18% stake**.
 - **Franchise Valuation:** **\$1.65 billion**.

34. Elon Musk Files Lawsuit Against OpenAI for Shifting from Open-Access Mission to Paid Platform

35. SpaceX ((Elon Musk's company))Falcon 9 Launches South Korea's CAS5002 Earth Observation Satellite and 45 Payloads

36. Thomas & Uber Cup 2026 — China Wins Thomas Cup (13th Title); South Korea Wins Uber Cup

- **Thomas Cup** and **Uber Cup** are premier international badminton team championships organized by the **Badminton World Federation (BWF)**.
- **Host: Denmark.**
- **Duration: April 24 to May 3, 2026.**
- **Thomas Cup (Men's — 34th Edition):** Won by **China** — their **13th overall title**.
- **Uber Cup (Women's — 31st Edition):** Won by the **Republic of Korea (South Korea)**.
- **Overall Standings:**
- **1st: China, 2nd: South Korea, 3rd: France, 4th: Denmark.**

37. 14-Year-Old Apaar Saxena from Karnataka Earns FIDE International Master (IM) Title in Just 5 Weeks

- **Apaar Saxena**, a **14-year-old** chess prodigy from **Karnataka**, earned the **International Master (IM)** title from the **International Chess Federation (FIDE)**.
- **Achievement:** Secured outstanding performances in Europe, achieving an **ELO rating exceeding 2,450** and secured all **three mandatory norms** in just **five weeks**.

38. Pulitzer Prize 2025/2026 (110th Edition) — Indian Journalists Win; NYT Secures 3 Awards (Total 142)

- **Pulitzer Prize**, often called the "**Nobel Prize of Journalism**", is administered by **Columbia University** since **1917**.
- This is the **110th edition**.
- Indian journalists **Anand R.K.** and **Suparna Sharma**, along with Bloomberg's **Natalie Obiko Pearson** (also referred to as **Nethily Obiko Pearson — Japan**), won the award.
- Collaborative project: "**trAPPED**" (Bloomberg) — exposed massive cybercrime networks and digital surveillance.
- **Highlighted incident:** A Lucknow neurologist lost **₹2.8 crore** under digital house arrest.
- **Indian Finalist: Devjyot Ghoshal** — named a finalist for reporting on Southeast Asian trafficking networks.
- **The New York Times:** Secured **3 awards** (including investigative reporting); historical total now **142 awards**.
- **Reuters:** Won **2 awards**, featuring beat reporting by **Jeff Horvitz** and **Enen Theman**.
- **The Washington Post:** Won for **public service**.
- **Minnesota Star Tribune (Staff):** Won for **breaking news reporting**.

39. Javed Akhtar Conferred 33rd PC Chandra Puraskar — ₹20 Lakh Tax-Free Cash Prize

40. Prasoon Joshi Appointed as Chairman of Prasar Bharati — Launches 'Waves OTT' Platform

41. Kumar Mangalam Birla Appointed as Chairman of Vodafone Idea — Succeeds Ravinder Takkar

42. Ravi K Appointed as Chairperson of HAL (Maharatna Company) — Replaces D.K. Sunil

43. R. Vijay Anand Appointed as MD & CEO of City Union Bank for 3 Years — Succeeds N. Kamakodi

44. World Press Freedom Index 2026 — India Ranks 157th out of 180 Countries; Norway Tops, Eritrea Last

- **Published by: Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**, headquartered in **Paris, France**.
- Evaluates **180 countries** on five pillars: Political, Legal, Economic, Socio-cultural, and Safety.
- **India's Rank: 157th** out of 180 countries — one of India's worst historical rankings.
- **Top Rank: Norway (1st)**.
- **Bottom Rank: Eritrea (180th)**.

45. Important Days — May 3, 4, 5, and 6, 2026

- **May 3 — World Laughter Day:** Celebrated on the **first Sunday of May**. Theme: "**World Peace through Laughter**".
- **May 4 — International Firefighters Day:** Honoring the sacrifice and bravery of firefighters globally.
- **May 5 — World Portuguese Language Day:** Marked its **30th anniversary** in 2026.
- **May 5 — World Asthma Day:** Observed on the **first Tuesday of May**.
- **May 6 — International No Diet Day:** Celebrated to fight body shaming and extreme diet culture.
- **2026 Theme:** "**Embracing Every Body: Health, Healing, and Liberation**".
- **Originally established:** **1992** by **Mary Evans Young**, a British feminist and eating disorder survivor.

46. Obituary: Alex Zanardi — Former Italian Formula 1 Driver and Paralympic Champion Passes Away at 59