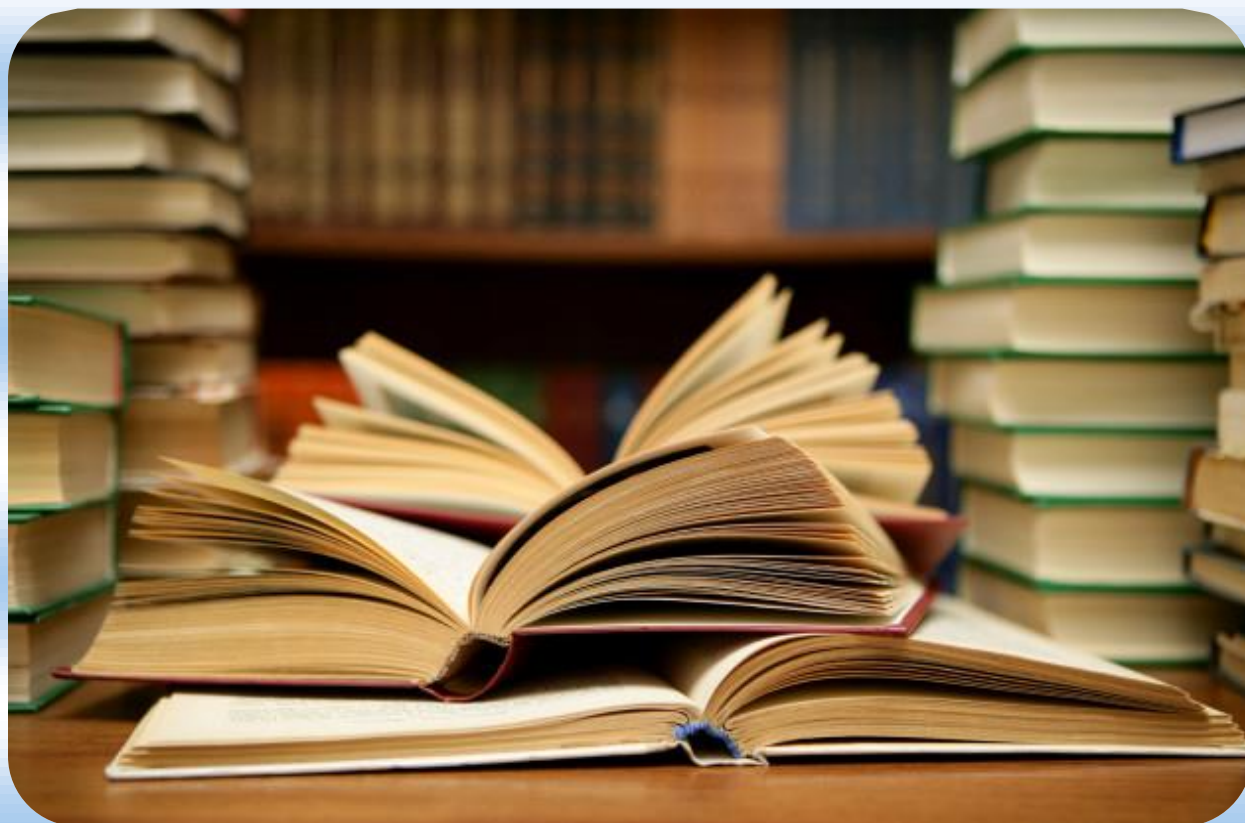


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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY

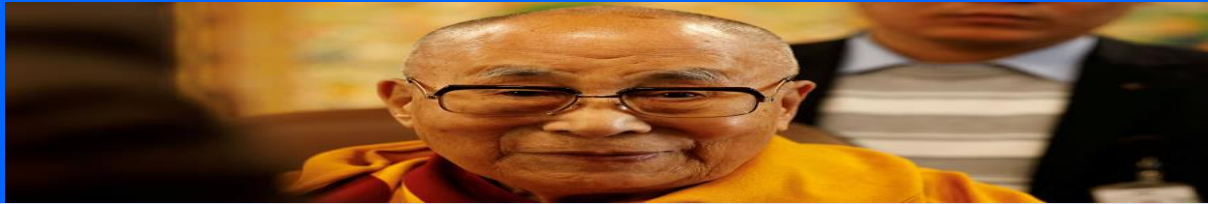


APRIL-2025

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Dalai Lama Honored with Gold Mercury Award for Peace and Sustainability

Dharamshala: Tibetan spiritual leader The Dalai Lama was awarded the prestigious Gold Mercury Award for Peace and Sustainability at a special ceremony held at his residence in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh on Monday.



Free Bus Service for Women in Jammu & Kashmir

Women in Jammu and Kashmir have a reason to smile. In a first such initiative, the J&K government on Tuesday (April 1, 2025) flagged off the free bus service for women, which has come as a shot in the arm for working women in the Union Territory.



Aditya Birla Capital Merged with Aditya Birla Finance Ltd

Aditya Birla Capital on Monday said it has completed the amalgamation of its wholly-owned subsidiary Aditya Birla Finance with itself to create a unified larger operating NBFC. This follows the order of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Ahmedabad Bench, dated March 24, and the scheme of amalgamation is effective from April 1, Aditya Birla Capital Ltd (ABCL) said in a statement.

Tamil Nadu Sets a New High with 9.69% Growth

Tamil Nadu's real economic growth rate of 9.69% for 2024-25 marks the highest for any State in the country, besides being the highest for the State in the past 10 years. At constant prices (base year: 2011-12), the value of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of Tamil Nadu, estimated at ₹15,71,368 crore for 2023-24, had risen to ₹17,23,698 crore for 2024-25, according to the latest data available on the website .

RBI Keeps FPI Investment Caps Unchanged for FY2025-26

India's central bank on Thursday kept the investment limits unchanged for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) in government and corporate bonds for the fiscal year 2025-26. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) maintained the existing caps of 6 per cent for government securities, 2 per cent for state government securities and 15 per cent for corporate bonds for the current year starting April 1, the central bank said in a press release.

HIL Ltd Rebrands as BirlaNu Limited

HIL Limited has officially rebranded as BirlaNu Limited, marking a significant step in its growth strategy and commitment to delivering high-quality building products and solutions, the company announced in a press release. "The company has 32 manufacturing facilities across India and Europe, with customers and partners in over 80 countries," the press release stated. BirlaNu Limited announced a \$150 million investment as part of its strategy to achieve \$1 billion in revenue by 2028.

Excise Duty Hiked on Petrol and Diesel

The government on Monday increased excise duty each on petrol and diesel by Rs 2 per litre, effective April 8, 2025. The decision comes amid ongoing fluctuations in global oil prices and Trump's tariffs, boosting the Union government's revenue collection. Although the recent order did not specify how and when it would affect retail prices, the Oil Ministry confirmed that it will not be affecting Indian consumers.

Sudarsan Pattnaik Wins Fred Darrington Award for Excellence in Art and Culture

NEW DELHI: With waves crashing behind him and a 10-foot sculpture of Lord Ganesha rising from the sand, Sudarsan Pattnaik made history on the shores of southern England. The world-renowned Indian sand artist was honoured with the Fred Darrington Sand Master Award at the Sandworld 2025 International Sand Art Festival in Weymouth, Dorset — becoming the first Indian to receive the prestigious title named after the legendary British sculptor. "This recognition is a testament to my 10-foot sand sculpture of Lord Ganesha.

Meta Launches Llama-4 AI Suite: Scout, Maverick & Behemoth to Rival ChatGPT, Gemini

Mark Zuckerberg led Meta has launched its latest AI models in the Llama 4 series that will power its chatbot by the same name on WhatsApp, Instagram and other company services. The two new Llama 4 models: Llama 4 Scout and Llama 4 Maverick are available to download from today from Meta website and Hugging Face. Apart from these models, Meta also previewed another model called Llama 4 Behemoth which it says is "one of the smartest LLMs in the world and our most powerful yet to serve as a teacher for our new models."

India-UAE Strengthen to Enhance Strategic Partnership

India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Tuesday agreed to enhance defence and Coast Guard cooperation, even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Dubai Crown Prince Sheikh Hamdan explored ways to bolster bilateral ties in key areas such as trade, technology and connectivity.



IIM-Ahmedabad to Set Up Campus in Dubai

The Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA) on Wednesday signed an agreement to set up its Dubai branch campus at the Dubai International Academic City (DIAC) and the commencement of the full-time one-year master's in business administration (MBA) programme in September 2025. IIMA director Bharat Bhasker signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Helal Saeed Almarri, director general of Dubai's department of economy and tourism in Mumbai on Tuesday for the establishment of the IIMA Dubai campus.

Bandhan Bank's Elite Plus, Bank of Baroda's New Deposit Scheme, and PMMY Expansion

Bandhan Bank on Tuesday said it has launched the Elite Plus Savings Account, targeting high net-worth individuals (HNIs). The savings account will allow customers to deposit unlimited cash each month, with free RTGS, NEFT, and IMPS transactions. The account will carry enhanced debit card insurance coverage and personal accident cover of up to Rs 15 lakh. Separately, state-owned Bank of Baroda has launched a new retail term deposit scheme — the bob Square Drive Deposit Scheme — offering an interest rate of 7.15 per cent per annum, with 50 basis points more for senior citizens, for a 444-day tenor.

Juspay Becomes India's First Unicorn of 2025: \$1 Billion Valuation Achieved

Juspay Becomes India's First Unicorn of 2025: Juspay, the Bengaluru-based payments infrastructure startup, has proudly emerged as India's first unicorn of 2025, marking a significant milestone not just for the company but for the broader Indian fintech ecosystem. This achievement follows a \$60 million Series D funding round, spearheaded by Kedaara Capital, with continued support from existing stakeholders SoftBank and Accel. The round solidifies Juspay's leadership in backend payment technologies and signals strong investor confidence in its future vision.

BlackRock Backs \$750 Million Adani Private Bond Issue

A clutch of premier US and European financial institutions, hedge funds and private credit institutions have joined Blackrock, the world's largest asset management firm, to subscribe to Adani Group's recent \$750 million private bond issue underscoring the rising comfort levels of high street money managers towards the infrastructure conglomerate. The capital raise would be the group's biggest since the U.S. Department of Justice indicted Adani over an alleged bribery plot in November.

ADB Projected India Economy Grow By 6.7% in FY2025

In India, growth is projected to accelerate to 6.7% in fiscal year (FY) 2025 and 6.8% in FY2026, according to the latest forecast by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Growth in the sub-region is expected to rise from 5.8% in 2024 to 6.0% in 2025 and 6.2% in 2026. Falling inflation, monetary policy easing, improved agricultural production boosting rural income, and more favorable fiscal policy including tax cuts for middle-income households will support domestic demand in India. Consumption will be a major driver of growth, rising on the growth in rural incomes, the report noted.

Razorpay Launches Turbo UPI Plugin to Revolutionize Digital Payments

Fintech firm Razorpay has partnered with NPCI BHIM Services Ltd (NBSL) and Axis Bank to launch the Razorpay Turbo UPI plugin on the BHIM Vega platform. The solution enables businesses to offer seamless in-app payment experiences, allowing customers to complete transactions instantly without switching to third-party apps. "BHIM Vega -- Razorpay's Partner Businesses can now accept in-app payments, and end-customers can complete payments instantly within the app without switching to third-party apps, reducing friction in online transactions and delivering a high-speed payment experience," a company statement said.

Virat Kohli Creates History: Becomes First Player to Score 1000 Fours and Sixes in IPL

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) are hosting Delhi Capitals (DC) in their fifth match of IPL 2025. With 3 wins from 4 matches, RCB are at the third spot in the points table and they can climb to the top spot with a win over DC. DC have 3 wins from as many matches and they can also finish the day as the top team if they defeat RCB.



India-Italy Strengthen Strategic Partnership with Focus on Trade, Defence, and IMEEC

India and Italy have decided to expand cooperation in areas of trade, defence, clean energy and high technology while agreeing to work jointly in implementing the ambitious India-Middle-East-Europe-Economic Corridor (IMEEC).



Milkfed Launches 'Veera' Mascot for Verka to Boost Nationwide Presence

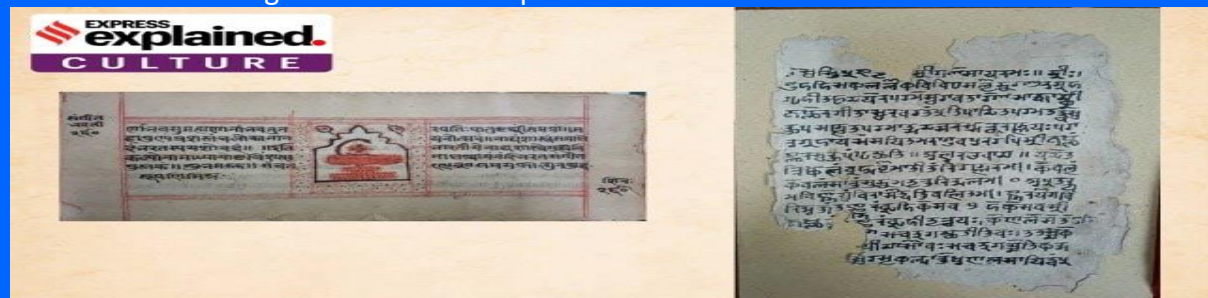
Dairy brand Verka on Wednesday got a face as Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann unveiled a mascot "Veera" for it. The mascot depicts a young Sikh boy, sporting a blue "patka" with a T-shirt, extending greetings with folded hands. An official cited Amul's popular mascot — Amul Girl — when asked about the inspiration behind the launch of "Veera", which means "brother" in English.

SEBI Action Against Gensol Engineering Ltd (GEL)

Gensol Engineering's promoters treated the listed company as a proprietary firm, diverting corporate funds to buy a high-end apartment in The Camellias, DLF Gurgaon, splurging on a luxury golf set, paying off credit cards, and transferring money to close relatives, SEBI revealed in its interim order. At the core of SEBI's findings is an alarming pattern of fund diversion by Gensol's promoters — Anmol Singh Jaggi and Puneet Singh Jaggi — pointing to governance failures within the company.

Bhagavad Gita & Natyashastra Added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

Manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita and Bharata's Natyashastra are among the 74 new additions to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register this year. Hailing their inclusion as "a proud moment for every Indian across the world", Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote on X on Friday: "The Gita and Natyashastra have nurtured civilisation, and consciousness for centuries. Their insights continue to inspire the world."



India's Pharma Exports in FY25 Cross \$30 Billion Mark

India's annual drug and pharmaceutical exports touched a record \$30 billion in FY25 bolstered by a 31% year-on-year surge in March. At \$30467.32 million, the exports were 9.39% higher than the \$27851.70 million clocked in FY24, official trade data recently released showed. Pharma exports touched \$30 billion for the first time. FY25 target was \$29.38 billion, Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council Director General Raja Bhanu said.

Government Clarifies No GST on UPI Transactions Above ₹2,000

Government remains committed to promoting digital payments via UPI. Photo: X/@UPI_NPCI
The Government on Friday (April 18, 2025) clarified that it is not mulling to levy GST on UPI transactions above ₹2,000. Clarifying on reports, which said that the government is considering levying Goods and Services Tax (GST) on UPI transactions over ₹2,000, the Finance Ministry said they are completely false, misleading, and without any basis.

PM Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Vizhinjam International Seaport

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will likely inaugurate the Vizhinjam international seaport on May 2. Governor Rajendra Arlekar and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will attend the function with other dignitaries.



Amaravati: World's First Fully Renewable-Powered City in the Making

Amaravati, the planned capital of Andhra Pradesh, is set to create history as it targets to become the world's first city to be powered entirely by renewable energy as town planners look to build an ultra-modern yet environmentally sustainable 'people's capital'.



SBI Deploys 'Grahak Mitras' to Boost Alternate Banking Channel Adoption

State Bank of India (SBI) plans to engage the services of personnel from its wholly-owned subsidiary, State Bank Operations Support Services (SBOSS), to shepherd its customers towards alternate banking channels. The role of the "Grahak Mitra" (customers' friend) from SBOSS will be to encourage customers to utilise the services available through self-service channels and also provide them first level assistance at SBI's branches.

SECL Pioneers Paste Fill Technology for Sustainable Coal Mining in India

In a step toward sustainable and environmentally friendly mining practices, South Eastern Coalfields or SECL is set to become the first coal public sector undertaking (PSU) in India to adopt paste fill technology for coal mining.



Zepto Renames Parent Entity Ahead of IPO: Aligning Brand and Business Strategy

Quick-commerce startup Zepto is changing the name of its parent company from Kiranakart Technologies Private Limited to Zepto Private Limited, according to a report by *Moneycontrol*, which accessed regulatory filings on the matter. The move, approved by the Registrar of Companies (RoC) in Mumbai, comes as the company gears up for a likely stock market debut in the coming months. In India, to change a company's legal name, owners must receive shareholder approval, followed by filings with the RoC and clearance from the central government.

India's Smartphone Export Boom in FY25: A Record-Breaking Leap Beyond ₹2 Lakh Crore

NEW DELHI: Led by Apple's iPhone, India's mobile phone exports crossed Rs 2 lakh crore mark in fiscal 2024-25, growing by a strong 54% over the previous year. The share of iPhone in the exports stood at Rs 1.5 lakh crore, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Tuesday as he forecast a doubling of electronics exports over the next five years. "Smartphones are now among the top exported goods out of India," Vaishnaw said. Apart from Apple, Samsung also exports smartphones out of India, and other companies include Motorola.

RBI Permits Minors Above 10 to Operate Bank Accounts Independently

NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released revised guidelines for the opening and operation of deposit accounts for minors, aiming to rationalise and harmonise existing rules.



MSDE and Microsoft Launch 'AI Careers for Women'

New Delhi [India], April 25: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and Microsoft have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch AI Careers for Women--a pioneering skilling initiative aimed at empowering women in higher education institutions to pursue careers in Artificial Intelligence (AI). This strategic collaboration seeks to bridge the gender gap in emerging tech by equipping women with industry-aligned AI skills.

Pahalgam Terror Attack Coward Attack by Terrorists on Tourists

JK Pahalgam Terror Attack: At least 26 people were killed and several others injured in a terrorist attack in south Kashmir's Pahalgam on Tuesday. Police sources said that at least two of the injured are in critical condition.



India's 5-Point Action Plan Against Pakistan After Pahalgam Terror Attack

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), India's highest decision-making body on national security, has taken stringent actions against Pakistan following the discovery of cross-border links in the terror attack that killed 26 people.



SEBI Revises Cut-Off Timing for Overnight Mutual Funds

The market regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), has announced the change in cut-off timings to determine applicable NAV with respect to repurchase of units in overnight fund schemes. This is in order to operationalize the upstreaming of clients' funds in the form of pledge of units of Mutual Fund Overnight Schemes (MFOS). The new timings will be effective from June 1.

Campbell Wilson to Step Down as Air India Express Chairman

Air India's Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Campbell Wilson will step down as the chairman of the Tata group's budget airline Air India Express, and will be replaced by Air India's Chief Commercial Officer Nipun Aggarwal in an effort to facilitate better synergy and coordination between the two airlines' network and commercial efforts.



Anant Ambani appointed executive director of Reliance Industries for 5 yrs

Anant Ambani, the youngest son of billionaire Mukesh Ambani, has been appointed as the executive director of Reliance Industries Ltd for a five-year term starting May 1, the company said in an exchange filing.



India to Allow 49% Foreign Stake Investment in Nuclear Power

The Indian government is contemplating permitting foreign firms to acquire up to 49% ownership in nuclear power facilities, according to three government officials. This strategic shift aims to expand India's closely monitored nuclear sector, supporting India's objectives to reduce carbon emissions. Since 2023, the government has been evaluating modifications to its nuclear foreign investment structure.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Shirley Botchwey Becomes First African Woman Secretary General of the Commonwealth

Hon Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, former Ghanaian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, assumed office as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth yesterday, pledging to advance the values of the Commonwealth Charter at a time of growing global tensions and shifting alliances.



Saudi Arabia Ban 14 Countries for Temporary Visa

Saudi Arabia visa ban: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has imposed new travel restrictions, suspending the issuance of certain visas to people of 14 countries including Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, as per reports.



Kazakhstan's Major Rare Earth Elements Are Discovered

Kazakhstan has uncovered its largest rare earth deposit to date, located in the Kuirektykol site within the Karaganda region. The discovery, announced by the Ministry of Industry and Construction, estimates resources of nearly one million tons of rare earth metals, a critical component for green energy technologies and modern electronics.



Max Verstappen Triumphs at the Japanese GP for Fourth Consecutive Win

While it may have been short on thrills, the Japanese Grand Prix was at the very least a demonstration of intent from Max Verstappen. -Formula One might prefer the spectacle and drama but it is all a bagatelle to -Verstappen in his pursuit of a fifth consecutive world title.

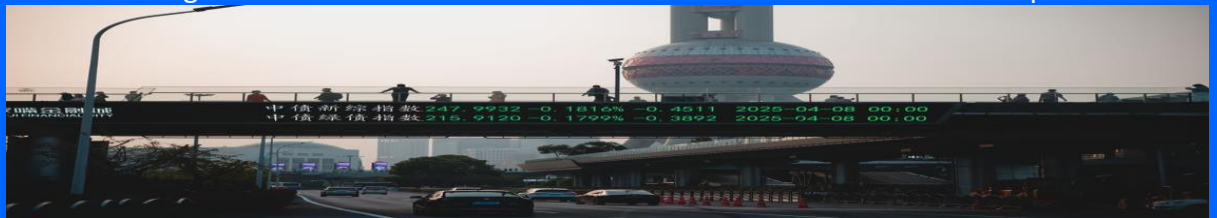


US Pauses Higher Tariffs for Most Countries but Hits China Harder

President Donald Trump has announced a 90-day pause for countries hit by higher US tariffs but a trade war with China has escalated. In a dramatic change of policy, just hours after levies against roughly 60 of America's trading partners kicked in, Trump said he was authorising a universal "lowered reciprocal tariff of 10%" as negotiations continued. At the same time he increased tariffs on goods from China to 125%, accusing Beijing of a "lack of respect" after it retaliated by saying it would impose tariffs of 84% on US imports.

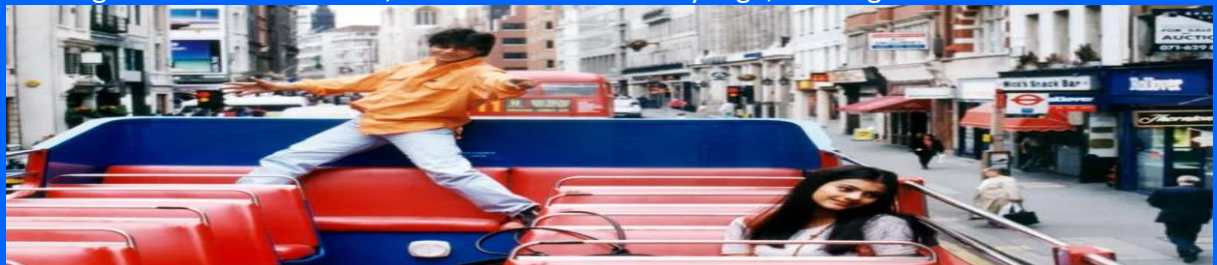
China Announces 84% Tariffs on US Goods in Response to Trade War Escalation

China has announced new tariffs of 84% on imports of all US goods in a move that sent stock markets falling further and will raise fears of further escalation of Donald Trump's trade war.



DDLJ Statue To Be Unveiled at London's Leicester Square

A statue of the "King of Bollywood" Shah Rukh Khan and one of his co-stars Kajol will be unveiled in London's Leicester Square later this year. The statue marks 30 years of the longest-running film in Indian cinema, Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, starring both actors.



Japan Builds World's First 3D-Printed Train Station in Record Time

In a world first, the West Japan Railway Company has constructed a 3D-printed train station in Arida City, marking a significant step forward in rail infrastructure innovation. The new Hatsushima Station was built to replace an ageing wooden structure dating back to 1948 and was assembled in just under six hours on-site, reported the New York Times.



Mauritius Becomes First African Country to Sign ISA's Country Partnership Framework

Port Louis (Mauritius): The intergovernmental organisation International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Republic of Mauritius signed a Country Partnership Framework (CPF) here on Thursday to further advance solar cooperation leading to a clean energy transition. The CPF provides a structured approach for ISA and the Republic of Mauritius to collaborate on solar energy initiatives and support Mauritius's clean energy transition.

Carlos Alcaraz Wins 2025 Monte Carlo Masters

Carlos Alcaraz overcame a slow start to beat Lorenzo Musetti 3-6, 6-1, 6-0 in the Monte Carlo Masters final on Sunday, clinching his first title at the prestigious claycourt event and gaining momentum ahead of next month's French Open. It marks a sixth Masters title for the Spaniard and his most prestigious crown he since winning Wimbledon last year.



Trump Administration Freezes \$2.3 Billion in Funding to Harvard University

The US education department is freezing about \$2.3bn in federal funds to Harvard University, the agency said on Monday. The announcement comes as the Ivy League school has decided to fight the White House's demands that it crack down on antisemitism and alleged civil rights violations, including shutting down diversity, equity and inclusion programs. "Harvard's statement today reinforces the troubling entitlement mindset that is endemic in our nation's most prestigious universities and colleges .

Beijing Halts Boeing Orders Amid Escalating US-China Trade War

China has reportedly ordered its airlines not to take any further deliveries of Boeing jets in response to United States President Donald Trump's decision to impose 145 percent tariffs on Chinese goods.



Trump, Musk, Yunus Shine in TIME's 2025 Influential People List

From political powerhouses to cultural icons, TIME magazine's 2025 list of the 100 Most Influential People is as star-studded as ever—but with one striking omission. For the first time in recent years, not a single Indian citizen features in the influential lineup.



Klaus Schwab Resigns as Chairman of World Economic Forum After Five Decades

Austrian executive Peter Brabeck-Letmathe has been appointed interim chairman of the World Economic Forum, stepping in for Klaus Schwab amid an ongoing investigation into financial and ethical misconduct allegations. In a board meeting on April 20, 2025, the board members took note of the resignation by Klaus Schwab. In a statement on the WEF website, he wrote, "Following my recent announcement, and as I enter my 88th year, I have decided to step down from the position of Chair and as a member of the Board of Trustees, with immediate effect."

Pakistan Suspends Simla Agreement and Closes Border, Airspace, Trade with India

Pakistan on Thursday suspended the 1972 Simla Agreement, blocked its airspace for Indian airlines, closed the Wagah border crossing, paused all trade with India, and said any attempt to divert water meant for Pakistan under the Indus Water Treaty will be considered an Act of War. The announcements were made after a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to formulate the country's response to India's move to suspend the Indus Water Treaty and downgrade diplomatic ties after the Pahalgam terror attack.

China Has Tested A Revolutionary Type Of Hydrogen Bomb

In a significant advancement in weapon technology, China has successfully detonated a new hydrogen-based explosive device. This breakthrough, developed by the China State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC), marks a step forward in China's military capabilities. Unlike traditional hydrogen bombs, which rely on nuclear fusion, this device uses a chemical reaction involving magnesium hydride. The result is a powerful fireball capable of producing sustained heat, with no nuclear materials involved.

