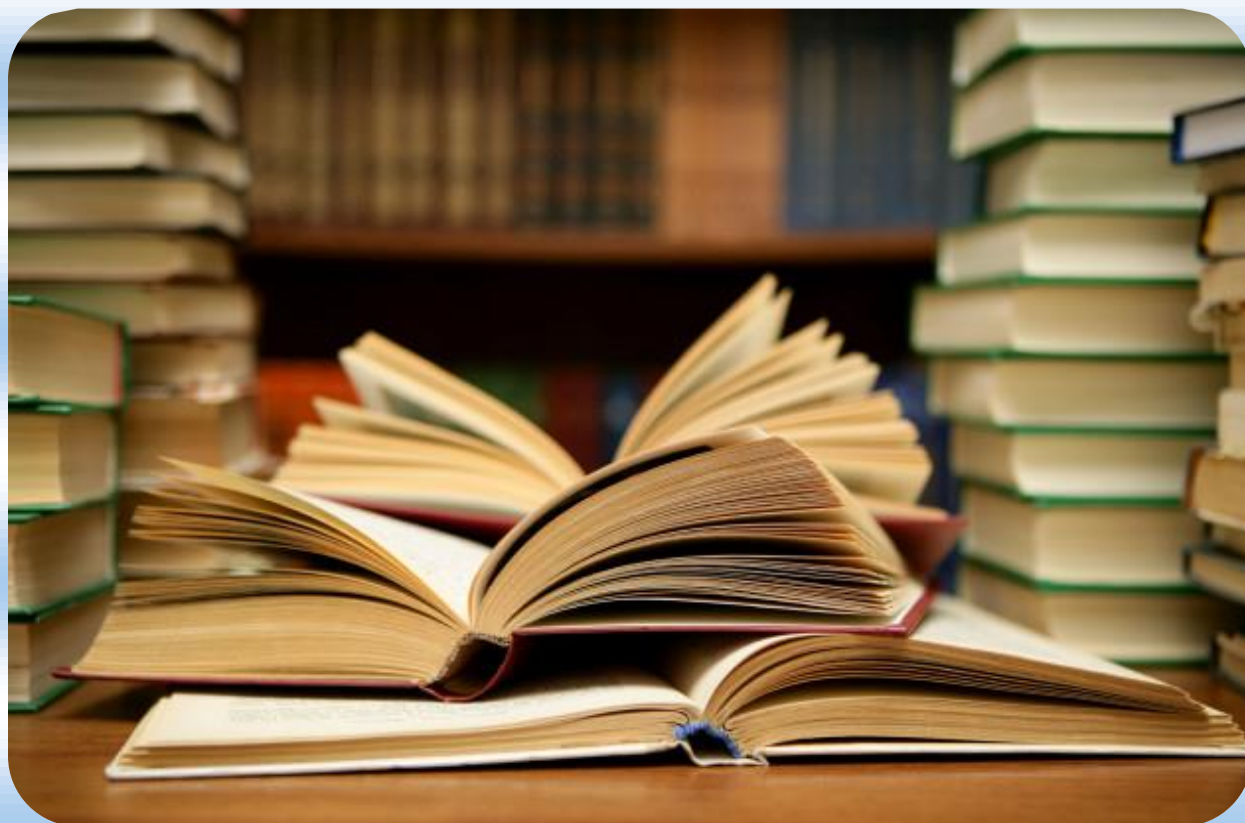


LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



MAY-2025

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Right to Digital Access: Supreme Court Directs Changes in KYC Process for Disabled Persons

Underlining that “right to digital access” is “an instinctive component” of the right to life and liberty, the Supreme Court Wednesday ordered the revision of digital Know Your Customer (KYC) norms to make it accessible to persons with disabilities, particularly those with visual disabilities and facial disfigurement.



RBI Launches 3 Key Surveys for Monetary Policy Input

The Reserve Bank on Tuesday launched three key surveys, including inflation expectations, to gather useful inputs for monetary policy decisions. The RBI normally holds six bi-monthly monetary policy reviews in a financial year. The last meeting was held earlier this month, and the next meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee is scheduled for June 4-6. The May round of the Inflation Expectations Survey of Households (IESH) aims at capturing subjective assessments on price movements and inflation, based on their individual consumption baskets, across 19 cities.

Centre Clears Greenfield NH-6 Corridor Linking Meghalaya and Assam

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs Wednesday approved the 166.8 km access controlled greenfield high-speed corridor between Meghalaya and Assam at a capital cost of Rs 22,864 crore, aimed at improving road connectivity to Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur and the Barak valley region of Assam from mainland and Guwahati.



Madhya Pradesh Introduced India's First AI-Powered Real-Time Forest Alert System

Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to implement an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based real-time forest alert system designed for active forest management. The initiative, which integrates satellite imagery, machine learning, and mobile-based field feedback, enables prompt detection of illegal land encroachments, unauthorised land use changes, and forest degradation.



Election Commission Unveiled Three New Voter-Centric Reforms

New Delhi: In a significant move to bolster the integrity and accuracy of electoral rolls, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has unveiled three major initiatives. These reforms aim to streamline voter data management and enhance the efficiency of electoral processes. In a press release, the Election Commission of India said, "These measures are in line with the initiatives as envisaged by the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India Shri Gyanesh Kumar during the Conference of Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs), in the presence of Election Commissioners Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Dr. Vivek Joshi in March this year."

India's Coal Sector Records Growth in April 2025

India's overall coal production increased 3.63 per cent to 81.57 million tonnes (MT) in April 2025, up from 78.71 MT during the corresponding period in the previous year. "India's coal production and dispatch witnessed steady growth in April 2025, compared to the same period last year," the coal ministry said in a statement on Thursday. Output from captive and other non-Coal India Ltd (CIL) mines reached 14.51 MT (provisional) in April 2025, marking a 26.6 per cent increase over the 11.46 MT recorded in April last year.

India Remains 4th Largest Economy in World, US at No. 1

NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam said on Saturday that India has overtaken Japan to become the fourth-largest economy in the world. Speaking at a press briefing after the 10th governing council meeting of NITI Aayog, Subrahmanyam said India's economy is now worth \$4 trillion and only the United States, China, and Germany have larger economies. India crosses the \$4 trillion mark and overtakes Japan to become the world's fourth largest economy, said NITI Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam.(PTI)

CCI Greenlights Major Stake Acquisition in Coca-Cola India Arm by Jubilant and Goldman Sachs

Fair trade regulator CCI on Thursday cleared Jubilant Beverages' proposal to acquire a 40 per cent stake in Hindustan Coca-Cola Holdings Pvt Ltd (HCCH). "The proposed combination relates to inter alia, JBL (Jubilant Beverages Ltd) proposed acquisition of 40 per cent of the shareholding of HCCH from Hindustan Coca-Cola Overseas Holdings Pte Ltd, and Bharat CocaCola Overseas Holdings Pte Ltd," the Competition Commission of India (CCI) said in a release.

PM Modi Dedicates ₹8,800 Crore Vizhinjam International Seaport to the Nation

Helping the country explore new horizons in the global maritime trade, the newly built all-weather Vizhinjam International Seaport, was dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Friday (May 2, 2025). Positioned hardly 10 nautical miles from the international shipping routes connecting Europe, the Gulf region and the Far East, the east-west shipping axis, the port is expected to significantly reduce India's dependence on other international ports for transshipment of cargo.

RBI's Gold Reserves Soar with 57.5 Tonne Purchase in FY25

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) added 57.49 tonnes of gold to its foreign exchange kitty during the fiscal ended March 2025 with the value of the gold holding rising by 48.41 per cent amid the rise in the prices of the yellow metal. The country's central bank also brought 38.64 tonnes of its gold holding back to India from Bank of England and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) in FY 2025. With this, the RBI has brought back 88.60 tonnes of gold to India in the last two years.

India's Exports Hit Record \$824.9 Billion in FY 2024-25: RBI Data

India's exports rose 6.01% year-on-year to an all-time high of \$824.9 billion in 2024-25, propelled by a 13.6% on-year rise in services exports to a record \$387.5 billion, showed the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) final services trade data released on Friday. March alone saw services exports surge 18.6% on-year to \$35.6 billion, reflecting continued global demand for India's IT, business, financial, and travel-related services, the RBI said.



Sunil Bharti Mittal Joins World Bank's Investment Lab to Boost Job Creation

Bharti Enterprises Chairperson Sunil Bharti Mittal has joined the World Bank's Private Sector Investment Lab (PSIL) initiative, which brings together global industry leaders to drive solutions at scale. The World Bank Group on Thursday announced the launch of the next phase of PSIL.



Forbes W-Power List 2025 Recognizes India's Leading Women Achievers

Significant strides have been made in India Inc towards inclusivity and gender equity. However, according to a recent report by TeamLease, women hold only 19 percent of C-suite positions in the country. While women occupy 46 percent of entry-level positions, their participation drops significantly at higher leadership levels, it says.



India Closes Chenab Water Through Baglihar Dam Gates

India has halted the flow of water to Pakistan from the Baglihar Dam on the Chenab River and is preparing to curb runoff from the Kishanganga project on the Jhelum River, aligning with its stated policy to prevent "a single drop" from reaching the neighbouring country through the Indus river system.

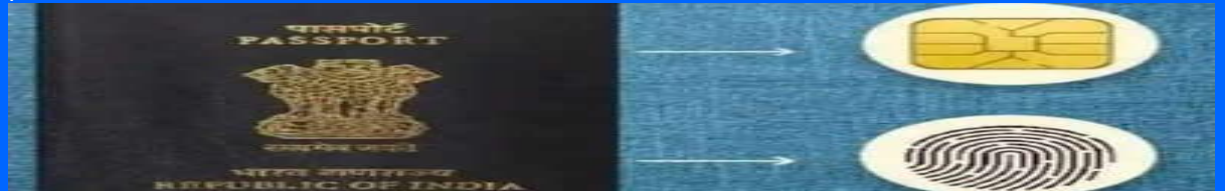


SBI Reports Q4 Dip in Profit, Plans ₹25,000 Crore Equity Raise in FY26

India's largest public sector lender, State Bank of India (SBI), reported a 10% year-on-year (YoY) drop in net profit for the fourth quarter of FY25. The bank posted a net profit of Rs 18,642.59 crore, compared to Rs 20,698.35 crore in the same period last year. Despite the decline in profit, the bank's Net Interest Income (NII) rose 2.7% YoY to Rs 42,774.55 crore. However, the Net Interest Margin (NIM) for the domestic book dropped by 32 basis points YoY, settling at 3.15%, compared to 3.47% in Q4FY24.

India Launches Chip-Based E-Passports to Enhance Travel Security

India has formally joined the list of more than 120 nations, such as the United States, Canada, France, Japan, and Australia, in issuing biometric e-passports to its citizens. The move is a historic shift in enhancing national security, streamlining international travel, and keeping pace with ICAO international standards.



India Launches Non-Ferrous Metal Recycling Portal to Boost Circular Economy

New Delhi: Union Minister of Coal and Mines, G Kishan Reddy, on Wednesday launched a dedicated non-ferrous metal recycling website and stakeholders' portal, to promote a structured, transparent and sustainable recycling ecosystem in India. It was launched in the presence of Minister of State for Coal and Mines, Satish Chandra Dubey and senior officials from the Ministry of Mines and JNARDDC.

Arunachal Pradesh Drills First Geothermal Production Well

The Centre for Earth Sciences and Himalayan Studies (CESHS) has successfully drilled Northeast India's first geothermal production well at Dirang in Arunachal Pradesh's West Kameng district, an official said on Monday. The successful drilling marks a major milestone in the region's quest for sustainable energy and represents a first-of-its-kind initiative in the Northeast, CESHS geosciences division head Rupankar Rajkhowa said.



Amex and HSBC Top Credit Card Additions Among Foreign Banks in FY25

HSBC and American Express led foreign banks in net credit card additions in FY25, with HSBC adding 216,997 cards and American Express adding 107,086 cards during the period, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data shows. During this period, the banking industry added over 8 million credit cards. Standard Chartered Bank's outstanding credit cards at the end of FY25 declined by 158,322 cards.

Rohit Sharma Announces Retirement from Test Cricket

Rohit Sharma has retired from Test cricket with immediate effect, meaning India will need to name a new full-time captain almost immediately after the end of IPL 2025, with India's five-Test series in England scheduled to begin on June 20 at Headingley.



Ladakh Now Home to 477 Snow Leopards: A Conservation Milestone

New Delhi: Home to 477 snow leopards, Ladakh has one of the world's highest densities of the big cat, representing nearly 70 per cent of India's species population, a study by the union territory's Department of Wildlife Protection has estimated.



Kartarpur Corridor Closed After Indian Strikes Under 'Operation Sindoor'

NEW DELHI: The Kartarpur corridor at Dera Baba Nanak in Punjab's Gurdaspur district was reportedly shut on Wednesday. The suspension of the cross-border pilgrimage route came shortly after the Indian armed forces carried out precision missile strikes on nine terrorist camps located in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), news agency PTI reported. The strikes were part of Operation Sindoor, launched in the early hours of Wednesday, just two weeks after the terror attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir, on April 22 that claimed the lives of 26 people.

Starlink Gets Government Nod: A New Era in Satellite Connectivity

Billionaire Elon Musk-owned Starlink, which provides satellite internet services, has received regulatory approval from the government—nearly three years after first applying for an operator licence—paving the way for the company to start offering the service in the country, The Indian Express has learnt.



Kotak Bank Launches Solitaire Credit Card for Premium Travellers

The travel segment has been growing by leaps and bounds in the last few years. As more and more Indians travel within and outside India, banks have been launching travel-centric credit cards. Kotak Bank is the latest bank to launch a travel-centric card – the Kotak Solitaire Credit Card.



Actor Sonu Sood Honoured for Philanthropic Work During COVID-19

The Miss World Organisation has announced that celebrated actor and founder of the Sood Charity Foundation, Sonu Sood, will be presented with the prestigious Humanitarian Award at the Grand Finale of the 72nd Miss World Festival in Telangana for his philanthropic work during COVID-19. This special honour recognises his exceptional service to humanity and unwavering commitment to social upliftment through his foundation. The award will be conferred on May 31, 2025, at the HITEX Arena in Hyderabad as part of the festival's final celebrations.

BrahMos Missile Production to Begin in Lucknow

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh will on Sunday inaugurate virtually a BrahMos supersonic cruise missile production unit that is part of the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor. Singh was earlier scheduled to visit Lucknow in this regard but this was cancelled in the wake of Operation Sindoor, officials said on Saturday. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be present at the unit on the occasion.



IBM-TCS Collaboration Anchors Quantum Future in Amaravati

IBM and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) have joined forces with the government of Andhra Pradesh to deploy India's largest quantum computer at the Quantum Valley Tech Park in Amaravati. This initiative aims to unlock applications capable of quantum advantage in solving practical industry problems that are currently beyond the reach of classical computing. The Quantum Valley Tech Park — country's first — will be anchored by an IBM Quantum System Two installation. TCS will assist in creating algorithms and applications to aid Indian industries and academic institutions, according to a company statement.

Public Sector Banks Clock Record ₹1.78 Lakh Crore Profit in FY25

Public sector banks' cumulative profit rose to a record level of Rs 1.78 lakh crore in the fiscal year ended March 2025, registering a growth of 26 per cent over the previous year. All 12 public sector banks had earned a total profit of Rs 1.41 lakh crore in FY24. The year-on-year increase in profit in absolute terms rose by about Rs 37,100 crore in FY25. Out of the total profit of Rs 1,78,364 crore earned during the FY25, market leader State Bank of India (SBI) alone contributed over 40 per cent of the total earnings, as per the published numbers on stock exchanges.

India Secures 'BBB' Rating with Stable Outlook from Morningstar DBRS

The global sovereign credit rating agency, Morningstar DBRS on Friday upgraded India's Long-Term Foreign and Local Currency – Issuer Ratings from BBB (low) to BBB with a Stable trend. India's Short-Term Foreign and Local Currency Issuer Ratings were also upgraded to R-2 (high) from R-2 (middle) with a Stable trend. Key drivers for the upgrade include India's structural reforms through infrastructure investments, digitalisation etc., all of which facilitated fiscal consolidation (declining debt and deficit) and sustained high growth.

Sarvam AI Launches Bulbul-v2 with Realistic Indian Accents

Indian AI startup Sarvam has unveiled its latest AI model called Bulbul-V2. It is a text-to-speech (TTS) model that supports 11 Indian languages. The Bengaluru-based AI startup claims that the AI model comes with authentic accents that sound 'just like India'. In its post on LinkedIn, the company said that the AI-generated voice sounds real and not robotic or rehearsed. It also offers lightning-fast performance and comes with custom voices that are ideal for brands and businesses.

Virat Kohli Retires from Test Cricket: End of an Iconic Era

Legendary India batter Virat Kohli has announced his immediate retirement from Test cricket. His decision comes before this summer's five-Test tour of England, which starts on 20 June, and follows captain Rohit Sharma's retirement on Wednesday. Kohli, 36, has played 123 Tests for India and scored 9,230 runs at an average of 46.85.



India Ranks Among Top Six Patent Filers in 6G Technology

India entered amongst top six countries globally in 6G patent filing, said Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, the Minister of State for Communications at the BHARAT 6G 2025 conference. The country has sanctioned over Rs 300 crore (USD 35.14 million) for over 111 research projects, marking a significant milestone in pursuing 6G technology. "6G will operate on TeraHertz frequency bands, enabling data rates up to one terabit per second, 100 times faster than 5G," the minister added.

Blackstone's ₹5,127 Cr Investment to Boost Maharashtra's Logistics Infrastructure

The Maharashtra government on Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Blackstone Group's subsidiaries, XSIIO Logistics Parks and Horizon Industrial Parks, which will bring ₹5,127 crore FDI and create 27,510 jobs, officials said. The MoU was signed at the Sahyadri Guest House between Industries Secretary Dr P Anbalagan and president of Horizon Industrial Parks R K Narayanan. This MoU aims to develop modern logistics and industrial parks across Maharashtra's key industrial and multimodal logistics hubs, a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

India Successfully Tests Bhargavastra: Indigenous System to Counter Drone Swarms

NAGPUR: After its kamikaze drone Nagastra 1 wreaked havoc during Operation Sindoor, Nagpur's Solar Defence and Aerospace Ltd (SDAL) successfully conducted trials of its anti-drone system, "Bhargavastra", at the Seaward Firing Range in Odisha's Gopalpur in the presence of the Army's air defence brass. The indigenously built "Bhargavastra" can fire 64 micro rockets in a single salvo, bringing down a swarm of drones and jam UAVs.



India's Exports Surge 9% in April 2025 Amid US Tariff Uncertainty

India's exports rose by 9 per cent to \$38.49 billion in April — the highest in six months — driven by increased shipments of electronics and engineering goods to the US, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Thursday. Tariff uncertainty in the US prompted a 27 per cent surge in India's exports to Washington DC, reaching \$8.4 billion in April 2025, compared to \$6.6 billion in the same month last year.

Neeraj Chopra Crosses 90m Mark, Finishes Second in Doha Diamond League 2025

It was Neeraj Chopra's Everest but not enough to win him the Diamond League again. While Neeraj Chopra achieved his highly-anticipated dream of crossing 90m mark, he still had to settle for second position at Doha's Diamond League after Weber turned the situation around with his 92m throw. A two-time Olympic medallist and reigning World Champion in javelin throw, Neeraj Chopra opened the 2025 season with a bang, completing his long dream of crossing 90m. But the memory of crossing 90 metre-mark was marred by the second position for Chopra.

Supreme Court Mandates Three Years of Legal Practice for Judicial Service Entry

The Supreme Court on Tuesday restored the condition requiring candidates applying for civil judge recruitment to have a minimum of three years of law practice, saying there is no substitute for first-hand experience of courts and administration of justice. In 2002, the court ended the three-year condition to attract the best talent. A bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Bhushan R Gavai and justices AG Masih and K Vinod Chandran cited the experience of high courts over 20 years since the 2002 order and added that the recruitment of just law graduates has not been successful. "It has led to many problems."

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Nepal to Restrict Mt. Everest Permits: New Law to Limit Access

Nepal is planning to restrict expeditions to Mount Everest only to those mountaineers who have climbed at least one peak above 7,000 metres aimed at reducing deaths in the high altitude zone, a media report said.



Nvidia's \$500 Billion AI Push: U.S. to Become Chip Manufacturing Hub

At a White House event, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang outlined the company's \$500 billion investment in artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure in the United States. This marks a significant shift from Nvidia's previous reliance on Taiwan for chip production.



Kamla Persad-Bissessar's Historic Return as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago

Kamla Persad Bissessar, 73, etched her name into the annals of Caribbean political history on Thursday, becoming the first woman to be sworn in twice as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.



"Victory of Faith": Vietnam Marks 50 Years Since the End of the Vietnam War

HO CHI MINH CITY (Reuters) -Thousands of Vietnamese celebrated the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War on Wednesday, in what the country's communist leader said was a "victory of faith". Celebrations culminated in a grand parade in Ho Chi Minh City with thousands of marching troops and an air show featuring Russian-made fighter jets and helicopters, as Vietnamese waved red flags and sang patriotic songs.



Warren Buffett Step down As CEO of Berkshire End of Legacy

Warren Buffett has announced he will retire as chief executive of Berkshire Hathaway at the end of the year. The veteran investor, known as the Oracle of Omaha, told his company's annual meeting he would hand over the reins to Vice-Chairman Greg Abel.



India Shines at Archery World Cup 2025 with 7 Medals

Shanghai [China], May 11 (ANI): India wrapped up their campaign at the Archery World Cup 2025 in Shanghai with a total of seven medals, including bronze medals for Olympian Deepika Kumari and Parth Salunkhe in the individual recurve events, as per Olympics.com.



World's First Commercial-Scale E-Methanol Plant Begins Operations in Denmark

The world's first commercial-scale e-methanol plant began operations in Denmark on Tuesday, with shipping giant Maersk set to buy part of the production as a low-emission fuel for its fleet of container ships.



Vietnam Launches 10-Year Golden Visa to Attract Indian Investors and Tourists

Vietnam has become a popular destination for billionaires and super-rich individuals seeking vacations in recent times. To attract professionals, artists, and the ultra-wealthy to Vietnam, the Vietnam Tourism Advisory Board (TAB) in a letter to the government suggested three distinct visa categories.



Robert Francis Prevost Becomes Elected Next Pope, Takes Name Leo XIV

Even before his name was announced from the balcony of St Peter's Basilica, the crowds below were chanting "Viva il Papa" - Long live the Pope. Robert Francis Prevost, 69, has become the 267th occupant of the throne of St Peter and he will be known as Leo XIV.



FIFA Announces Host Cities for 2027 Women's World Cup in Brazil

The Maracana Stadium will be one of eight venues across Brazil to host matches at the 2027 Women's World Cup, the first edition to be held in Latin America, FIFA announced on Wednesday. In addition to the iconic venue in Rio de Janeiro, the 64 matches of the competition will be played in Belo Horizonte (Mineirao Stadium), Brasilia (National Stadium), Fortaleza (Castelao Arena), Porto Alegre (Beira-Rio Stadium), Recife (Pernambuco Arena), Salvador (Fonte Nova Arena) and Sao Paulo (Itaquera Arena).



US-China Trade Talks Conclude with Promising Deal in Geneva

Both China and the United States have said they have made progress at trade talks between the two countries in Switzerland. The US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent described the discussions as "productive and constructive," while China's Vice Premier He Lifeng said the talks were "in-depth" and "candid". The White House called it a "trade deal" but gave no further details. A joint statement with full details is expected on Monday.



Bill Gates Pledges to Give Away 99% of His Fortune by 2045

Microsoft founder Bill Gates said he intends to give away 99% of his vast fortune over the next 20 years. Gates said he would accelerate his giving via his foundation, with plans to end its operations in 2045. "People will say a lot of things about me when I die, but I am determined that 'he died rich' will not be one of them," he wrote in a blog post on Thursday. Mr Gates, 69, said his eponymous foundation has already given \$100bn (£75bn) towards health and development projects, and that he expects it will spend another \$200bn, depending on markets and inflation, over the next two decades.

FaceAge: AI Tool Uses Selfies to Predict Biological Age and Cancer Outcomes

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming healthcare, with new tools emerging that can assess patients' health in innovative ways. One of the latest advancements is FaceAge, an AI-driven system capable of estimating a person's biological age—a measure of how their body is aging—using just a facial photograph. Unlike chronological age, which simply counts the number of years a person has lived, biological age reflects the cumulative wear and tear on the body, influenced by genetics, lifestyle, and environment.

US-China Agree to Slash Tariffs Amid Trade War De-escalation

The United States and China took a step on Monday to defuse the trade war between the world's two largest economies, agreeing to temporarily reduce the punishing tariffs they have imposed on each other. The move by the United States, after President Trump had repeatedly declared that he would not lower tariffs without concessions from China, represented an acknowledgment of the costs of an all-out trade war with China.

Bhutan Becomes First Country to Integrate Crypto Payments in Tourism

Bhutan has collaborated with Binance Pay and DK Bank to introduce the first-ever national cryptocurrency tourism payment system globally. This initiative allows travelers with Binance accounts to utilize digital assets for nearly all aspects of their journey in Bhutan, including airline tickets, visa fees, hotel accommodations, entry to monuments, tour guides, and even purchasing fresh fruit from roadside vendors. With over 100 local merchants already integrated by DK Bank and Binance Pay, tourists can now experience a completely cashless and cardless environment in one of the most distinctive travel destinations worldwide.

US and Saudi Arabia Sign Historic \$142 Billion Arms Deal During Trump's Riyadh Visit

The United States and Saudi Arabia on Tuesday signed a defence agreement worth nearly \$142 billion, according to the White House. The deal will allow Riyadh to purchase advanced equipment and services from American companies. The agreement was part of a broader commitment by Saudi Arabia to invest \$600 billion in the US, the White House said in a factsheet, as reported by *Reuters*.



