

International

New initiative launched to revive oceans through community-led protection.

A new global initiative called 'Revive Our Ocean' was launched with a goal to scale up effective, community-led marine protected areas (MPAs) through local action.

The initiative hopes to remove key barriers that prevent coastal communities from protecting and managing their ocean spaces and aims to inspire, enable and equip communities to lead marine conservation efforts. It is rooted in successful models from across the world and will initially focus on seven countries: the UK, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, the Philippines, Indonesia and Mexico.

India's military expenditure was nearly 9 times that of Pakistan: SIPRI.

India's military spending in 2024 was nearly nine times that of Pakistan's expenditure, according to a study released by a leading Swedish think-tank SIPRI. The country's military expenditure, the fifth largest globally, grew by 1.6% to \$86.1 billion while Pakistan spent \$10.2 billion.

The top five military spenders — the United States, China, Russia, Germany and India — accounted for 60% of the global total, with combined spending of \$1,635 billion.

China's military expenditure increased by 7% to an estimated \$314 billion, marking three decades of consecutive growth.

Russia's military expenditure reached an estimated \$149 billion in 2024, a 38% increase from 2023 and double the level in 2015.

Uganda declares end to Ebola Sudan virus outbreak.

Uganda has declared an end to the Ebola Sudan Virus Disease (SVD) outbreak after completing a 42-day mandatory countdown without any new confirmed cases reported. The declaration came in less than three months after the virus was detected in the capital, Kampala. WHO guidelines require that for a country to be declared Ebola-free, it must spend 42 days (two 21-day incubation cycles of the virus) without any new cases reported.

Russia confirms for 1st time North Korean troop dispatch to Ukraine war.

Russia has confirmed for the first time that North Korean troops have been deployed and are fighting alongside Moscow in the war against Ukraine.

The partnership treaty between Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was signed during their summit in June of the previous year, in which both leaders committed to providing military support "without delay" in the event that either of them comes under attack.

Vatican announces papal conclave to elect Pope Francis successor.

The Vatican has announced that the secret conclave to elect a successor to the late Pope Francis will begin on the 7th of next month. The decision was reached during a session of the Congregation for Cardinals, which is currently managing the transition following Pope Francis' death on April 21. As tradition dictates, the voting will be held in the Sistine Chapel, which was closed to tourists to allow for preparations. Of the 225 cardinals worldwide, only 135 under the age of 80 are eligible to participate in the election.

National

India signs deal with France to procure 26 Rafale Marine fighter aircraft.

India signed a defence deal with France to procure 26 Rafale Marine fighter aircraft. The Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) was signed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister of Armed Forces of France Sebastien Lecornu in New Delhi. Out of 26 Rafale Marine aircraft, 22 will be single-seater and four double-seater and these will be designed and prepared as per the requirement of the Indian Navy. The delivery of these aircraft would be completed by 2030.

The agreement includes training, a simulator, associated equipment, weapons and performance-based logistics. It also includes additional equipment for the existing Rafale fleet of the Indian Air Force.

Karnataka-based humanitarian Madhusudan Sai awarded Fiji's highest honour.

Fiji's highest honour, the 'Companion of the Order of Fiji', was conferred on Karnataka-based humanitarian Madhusudan Sai. The award was presented by the President of Fiji, Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu. Sai was conferred the award for establishing the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital in Fiji.

Previous recipients of the 'Companion of the Order of Fiji' include Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of India Droupadi Murmu.

President Droupadi Murmu presents Padma Awards to 71 eminent personalities of various disciplines & fields.

President Droupadi Murmu has conferred upon Padma Awards to 71 eminent personalities for the year 2025 at the first Civil Investiture Ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. Of them four were conferred with Padma Vibhushan, 10 with Padma Bhushan and 57 personalities were conferred with Padma Shri.

For the year 2025, the President has approved conferment of 139 Padma Awards including 1 duo case. The list comprises 7 Padma Vibhushan, 19 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Shri Awards.

List of Padma Vibhushan awardees 2025:

1. Duvvur Nageshwar Reddy- Medicine-Telangana
2. Justice (Retd.) Shri Jagdish Singh Khehar- Public Affairs- Chandigarh
3. Kumudini Rajnikant Lakhia- Art- Gujarat
4. Lakshminarayana Subramaniam- Art- Karnataka
5. M. T. Vasudevan Nair (Posthumous)- Literature and Education- Kerala
6. Osamu Suzuki (Posthumous)- Trade and Industry- Japan
7. Sharda Sinha (Posthumous)- Art- Bihar

Padma Bhushan Awardees 2025

1. A Surya Prakash- Literature and Education- Journalism- Karnataka
2. Anant Nag- Art- Karnataka
3. Bibek Debroy (Posthumous)- Literature and Education- NCT Delhi
4. Jatin Goswami- Art- Assam

5. Jose Chacko Periappuram- Medicine- Kerala
6. Kailash Nath Dikshit- Others- Archaeology- NCT Delhi
7. Manohar Joshi (Posthumous)- Public Affairs- Maharashtra
8. Nalli Kuppuswami Chetti- Trade and Industry- Tamil Nadu
9. Nandamuri Balakrishna- Art- Andhra Pradesh
10. P R Sreejesh- Sports- Kerala
11. Pankaj Patel- Trade and Industry- Gujarat
12. Pankaj Udhas (Posthumous)- Art- Maharashtra
13. Rambhadrur Rai- Literature and Education- Journalism- Uttar Pradesh
14. Sadhvi Ritambhara- Social Work- Uttar Pradesh
15. S Ajith Kumar- Art- Tamil Nadu
16. Shekhar Kapur- Art- Maharashtra
17. Shobana Chandrakumar- Art- Tamil Nadu
18. Sushil Kumar Modi (Posthumous)- Public Affairs- Bihar
19. Vinod Dham- Science and Engineering- USA

India bans 16 Pakistani YouTube channels for spreading misinformation.

India has banned 16 Pakistani YouTube channels, including Dawn News, Samaa TV, Ary News and Geo News, for disseminating misinformation against India in the backdrop of the recent Pahalgam terror attack. The YouTube channels have been banned for spreading provocative and communally sensitive content, false and misleading narratives against India, its Army and security agencies. The banned channels have subscribers of over 63 million.

Gyan Post service to deliver books & study material across the country.

Minister of Communications, Jyotiraditya Scindia has announced the Gyan Post service, which enables affordable delivery of books and study material through post offices across the country. Books and printed educational material sent under Gyan Post will be trackable and transported through surface mode to ensure cost-effective delivery. He added that these services will be operational from 1st May, 2025.

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri & Delhi CM launch Ayushman Vay Vandana Cards

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri, along with Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, launched the Ayushman Vay Vandana Cards for Delhiites in New Delhi. The scheme provides 5 lakh rupees free health cover to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above, irrespective of their socio-economic status. The senior citizens aged 70 years and above belonging to families already covered under AB PM-JAY get an additional top-up cover of up to 5 lakh rupees per year for themselves.

Lt. Gen. S. Pattabhiraman, Former Vice Chief of Army Staff, passes away.

Former Vice Chief of Army Staff and Colonel Commandant of the Bombay Sappers, Lt. Gen. S Pattabhiraman, passed away at the Military Hospital, Wellington in the Nilgiris District. He was 78. He had superannuated as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff (VCOAS) in 2006 after serving for 40 years in various prestigious appointments that included the first Director General of Information Systems of the Indian Army and army commander of the largest operational command of the Indian Army, namely the Western Command.

Business and Economy

FM Sitharaman targets one billion UPI transactions per day to broaden its reach and impact.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has underscored the need to achieve the target of one billion UPI transactions per day within the next two to three years. She has stressed the importance of accelerating the internationalisation of UPI with the development of interoperable frameworks. The Finance Minister earlier chaired a meeting in New Delhi to review various aspects and the way ahead for the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) ecosystem. The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Finance Ministry, Reserve Bank of India, and National Payments Corporation of India.

UPI is witnessing significant growth. From the financial year 2019-20 to 2024-25, UPI transactions registered a compound annual growth rate of 72 percent. Around 26 crore new users and 5.5 crore new merchants have been successfully onboarded onto the UPI platform between the financial years 2021-22 and 2024-25. UPI now has approximately 45 crore active users.

In the last financial year, UPI transactions amounted to 261 lakh crore rupees, registering a 30 percent year-on-year growth.

Foreign investors infuse over ₹17,000 crore in Indian equities

Foreign investors infused over 17,000 crore rupees in the Indian equity markets last week. This came following a net investment of 8,500 crore rupees in the preceding holiday-truncated week ended April 18. According to the depository's data, Foreign Portfolio Investors, or FPIs, made a net investment of 17,425 crore rupees in equities during April 21 to April 25. However, FPIs pulled out 5,678 crore rupees from the equities in April so far.

Neeraj Kumar Gupta appointed Head of NSE Int. Exchange

Former Secretary in the Union Finance Ministry, Neeraj Kumar Gupta has been appointed Chairman and Public Interest Director of the NSE International Exchange (NSE IX), effective April 19, 2025.

His appointment was approved by the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA). Gupta succeeds Rajeev Mehrishi at NSE IX, which operates from the GIFT City in Ahmedabad — envisioned as a global financial hub

Sports

Vaibhav Suryavanshi becomes youngest centurion in IPL history.

Fourteen-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi became the youngest centurion in men's Twenty20 cricket as he guided Rajasthan Royals to an eight-wicket victory over the Gujarat Titans in an Indian Premier League match in Jaipur. Batting first, Gujarat Titans made 209 for four wickets in the stipulated twenty overs.

Suryavanshi hit 11 sixes and seven fours in his 101 off 38 balls, as the hosts chased down a 209-run target in 15.5 overs. He reached his 100 in 35 balls to register the second-fastest century in IPL history. Chris Gayle hit the fastest hundred in 30 deliveries,

Spanish MotoGP 2025: Alex Marquez claims win in Spain.

Gresini Racing's Alex Marquez claimed his first MotoGP race victory at the Spanish Grand Prix to snatch the championship lead from his elder brother Marc, who crashed early in the race and finished 12th. Fabio Quartararo finished second to give Yamaha their first podium since the 2023 Indonesian Grand Prix, while Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia came in third.

India defeats Sri Lanka by 9 wickets in Tri-Nation Women's Cricket ODI

In the first ODI match of the Tri-Nation Women's Cricket at Colombo, India defeated the hosts by 9 wickets. India achieved the target of 148 runs, scoring 149 for one in 29.4 overs. Pratika Rawal remained unbeaten on 50 while Harleen Deol made 48 not out.

Earlier, put into bat, Sri Lanka were all out for 147 runs in 38.1 overs.

Niemann wins LIV Mexico City, secures US Open berth.

Joaquin Niemann charged to victory at LIV Golf Mexico City, claiming his third victory of the season and securing his berth at the US Open at Oakmont in June. Chilean had seven birdies and one bogey in a six-under 65 at Club de Golf Chapultepec, adding the title to those he won in Singapore and Adelaide.