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1. Kohinoor Diamond Issue Raised During King Charles' Visit

New York City Mayor Zoran Mamdani has stated that he would urge King Charles III of Britain, who is on an official visit to the United States, to return the Kohinoor diamond to India when they meet.

(i) As part of the first leg of his U.S. visit, King Charles arrived in Washington. Along with Queen Camilla, he attended a banquet hosted by President Donald Trump and also addressed a joint session of the U.S. Congress. He then traveled to New York City to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

(ii) Ahead of his meeting with King Charles in New York, Mayor Mamdani told reporters that it is important to bring this historically significant issue to the King's attention.

(iii) This statement has once again drawn attention to the Kohinoor diamond. However, there is no official information yet on whether the issue was discussed during their meeting.

(iv) The world-famous Kohinoor diamond, weighing 105.6 carats, was handed over in 1849 by Indian ruler Duleep Singh to Queen Victoria and is now part of the British Crown Jewels.

(v) While the Government of India has been making continuous diplomatic efforts to bring back the diamond, which is considered a symbol of the nation's cultural heritage, Britain has firmly maintained that it will not return it, stating that it was received as a gift.

2. India's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Reaches New High

The Government of India has announced that the country's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is expected to exceed \$90 billion in the financial year 2025–26, reaching a new high. Amar Deep Singh Bhatia, Secretary of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), said the following:

(i) The Central Government has undertaken several reforms to attract foreign investment. Additionally, Free Trade Agreements with various countries and India's rapid economic growth have significantly attracted global investors.

(ii) In just the first 11 months—from April to February of the previous year—the total FDI inflow into the country has already exceeded \$88 billion.

(iii) Based on estimates for the full financial year ending in March, the total FDI is expected to surpass \$90 billion, he said.

3. U.S. Federal Reserve Keeps Interest Rates Unchanged

The U.S. Federal Reserve has announced that it will keep its interest rates unchanged at 3.50% to 3.75%.

(i) This decision was taken during the two-day meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), which concluded last Wednesday. Notably, the decision was not unanimous.

(ii) Eight members voted in Favor of maintaining the current interest rates. However, four members—including Stephen Miran, Philip Jefferson, and Anna Paulson—supported a rate cut. This marks the first time

since 1992 that such a significant division of opinion has occurred within the committee. In a statement issued after the meeting, it was noted that the Middle East conflict has created economic uncertainty. Additionally, disruptions in global fuel supply due to the conflict have contributed to rising inflation. To control this increasing inflation, the Fed decided to keep interest rates unchanged.

(iii) In March, U.S. inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose to 3.3%, the highest level in the past 22 months. This is a sharp increase from 2.4% in February, raising concerns.

(iv) Jerome Powell to Continue on the Board:

- The current Federal Reserve Chair, Jerome Powell, has formally announced that he will step down from his position. Kevin Warsh, recommended by President Donald Trump, is set to take over as the new Chair.
- However, Powell has stated that he will not immediately resign from his position as a member of the Federal Reserve Board. His name has been linked to allegations of irregularities in renovation work at the Federal Reserve building. He clarified that he will remain on the board until the investigation is fully completed.
- "I will step down at the appropriate time; current circumstances require me to remain," he told reporters.

4. Medals Unveiled for Glasgow Commonwealth Games

The medals for the 23rd Commonwealth Games, to be held this year in Glasgow, Scotland, have been unveiled.

(i) The medals were introduced at an event held at a college of arts in Glasgow, in the presence of Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh, who is also the Vice President of the Commonwealth Games Federation.

(ii) The medals have been designed based on Glasgow's historic landmarks and the royal seal of Edinburgh.

(iii) The medals were created by award-winning designer Milica Milenkova.

(iv) For the first time in Commonwealth Games history, the medals include Braille features, allowing visually impaired athletes to feel and recognize them. A total of 215 gold medals will be awarded across 10 sports and 6 para-sports events. Of these, 47 medals are reserved exclusively for para-sports—the highest in the history of the Games.

(v) The Glasgow Commonwealth Games will be held from July 23 to August 2.

5. Urea Production in India Amid West Asia Tensions

Despite the ongoing tensions in West Asia, the Government of India has stated that the country's urea production reached 3.749 million tonnes during March–April. Speaking in New Delhi, Aparna S. Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Department of Fertilizers, said:

- In March, India produced 1.649 million tonnes of urea, and in April, 2.1 million tonnes, totaling 3.749 million tonnes. This is nearly the same level of production as in the corresponding period last year.
- To address any shortage, a global tender was issued, and around 3.7 million tonnes of urea have been imported.

- For the current Kharif season, the total fertilizer requirement is estimated at 39.045 million tonnes, of which about 50% (19.338 million tonnes) is already in stock.
- Overall, the availability of fertilizers in the country remains strong.

6. Survey on LPG and PNG Dual Connections

The Central Government has announced that a survey is being conducted to identify households that have both LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) and PNG (Piped Natural Gas) connections. Speaking in New Delhi, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said:

- (i) A study is underway to determine how many households in the country have both LPG and PNG connections.
- (ii) So far, more than 43,000 LPG users who also have PNG connections have voluntarily surrendered their LPG connections.
- (iii) This number is still relatively low, and the Government expects it to increase further.
- (iv) Due to the conflict involving Iran, the United States, and Israel, LPG supply from West Asia has been affected. As a result:
 - Households with both LPG and PNG connections have been instructed to surrender LPG connections immediately.
 - Homes located near pipeline infrastructure are encouraged to switch to PNG usage.
 - Households that already have PNG connections are not allowed to obtain new LPG connections.

7. Vietnam President To Lam's Visit to India

Vietnam President To Lam will visit India on a three-day official trip starting May 5.

- (i) Amid geopolitical tensions and global trade disruptions, he will hold bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- (ii) To Lam, who also serves as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, will be accompanied by members of his cabinet and senior officials.
- (iii) This will be his first official visit to India after assuming office as President in April.
- (iv) Under the framework of a comprehensive strategic partnership, discussions will focus on strengthening cooperation in defense, trade, and key technologies.
- (v) The two leaders are also expected to discuss regional and international issues of mutual interest, according to the Ministry of External Affairs. Topics may include the West Asia situation and developments in the South China Sea, where China is attempting to assert dominance.
- (vi) As China claims almost the entire South China Sea—rich in hydrocarbon resources—countries like Vietnam, the Philippines, and Brunei have raised objections. India and other democratic nations have emphasized that the dispute should be resolved peacefully in accordance with international law. In this context, Modi and To Lam are expected to explore ways to enhance maritime cooperation.

(vii) During his visit, the Vietnamese President will also travel to Bodh Gaya in Bihar and Mumbai in Maharashtra.

8. Prime Minister Modi's Upcoming Europe Visit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to undertake a six-day official visit from May 15 to May 20 to four European countries—Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and Italy—according to informed sources.

(i) Sources further stated that Modi will participate in the third India–Nordic Summit to be held in Norway on May 15 and 16. The summit was originally scheduled for May last year but was cancelled due to the Pahalgam terror attack.

(ii) As part of the summit, Modi is expected to hold separate bilateral meetings with leaders of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Norway, Finland, Iceland, and Sweden.

(iii) Discussions with European leaders are likely to focus on finding immediate solutions to energy supply disruptions and trade impacts caused by the West Asia conflict.

(iv) During his visit to the Netherlands, Modi is expected to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in sectors such as semiconductors, artificial intelligence, and green hydrogen. With Sweden, discussions may focus on sustainable innovation, while talks with Italy are expected to cover trade, defense, and investments.

(v) There is also a possibility that Modi may visit the United Arab Emirates during this trip. However, no official announcement has yet been made regarding the European tour.

9. Return of Stolen Indian Antiquities by the United States

The United States has returned 657 stolen antiquities worth ₹133 crore to India.

(i) The announcement was made by Alvin Bragg, the Manhattan District Attorney. The artifacts were officially handed over during an event held in New York City, attended by Indian Consulate official Raj Lakshmi Kadam.

(ii) Among the returned items are:

- A bronze statue of Avalokiteshvara seated on a double lotus pedestal flanked by lions, valued at ₹19 crore.
- A sandstone sculpture of Ganesha in a dancing pose.
- A red sandstone statue of Buddha in the Abhaya Mudra (gesture of protection), valued at ₹72 crore.

These artifacts have now been officially repatriated to India.

10. Tamil Nadu Tops Marine Fish Production in India

Indian Council of Agricultural Research – Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute has reported that Tamil Nadu has secured the top position in marine fish production in India.

(i) With a production of 685,000 tonnes, Tamil Nadu has overtaken Gujarat to claim first place. According to the report:

- India's total marine fish production reached 3.57 million tonnes in 2025, marking a 3% increase compared to 2024.
- Tamil Nadu recorded the highest production at 685,000 tonnes. Gujarat slipped to second place with a 1.5% decline due to factors such as climate conditions, extended fishing ban periods, and cyclones.
- Kerala ranked third with 624,000 tonnes, registering a 2% growth. Among other major states, Karnataka recorded a 44% growth, while Maharashtra saw an 18% increase.
- The most caught fish species in 2025 included:
 - Indian mackerel (270,000 tonnes) – 1st place
 - Ribbonfish (257,000 tonnes) – 2nd place
 - Oil sardine (253,000 tonnes) – 3rd place
- Kerala accounted for 17% of the country's total marine production.

11. India-Italy Agreement on Joint Defence Production

India and Italy have agreed to formulate industrial rules for the joint production of military equipment.

(i) This agreement was reached after a meeting between Rajnath Singh and Guido Crosetto, who is currently on a visit to India.

(ii) In a post shared on X (formerly Twitter), Rajnath Singh stated that discussions were held on various international issues, including developments in West Asia.

(iii) Both sides discussed framing industrial guidelines for co-producing defence equipment under India's "self-reliant India" initiative and Italy's defence cooperation framework.

(iv) They also deliberated on a bilateral defence cooperation plan for 2026–2027 aimed at enhancing joint military operations between the two countries.

(v) According to a statement from the Defence Ministry, the discussions also included information sharing through the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) located in Gurugram.

12. Anti-defection law in India and globally.

(i) Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

- Current Crisis: Out of the 10 Rajya Sabha members belonging to the Aam Aadmi Party, seven have left to join the BJP.
- Raghav Chadha was seen as a key figure in AAP's "giant growth" in Punjab and was considered a next-generation leader. However, internal conflicts surfaced when he was removed from key responsibilities, highlighting a struggle for power within the party.
- AAP's founder, Arvind Kejriwal, sought to create a unified leadership that did not allow room for internal democratic dissent. This led to the early departure of founding leaders such as Yogendra Yadav, Prashant Bhushan, and Kiran Bedi.
- Since the seven defecting members are from Punjab, this shift is expected to impact the party's strength not only in Parliament but also in the upcoming state assembly elections.

(ii) Anti-Defection Law: Global and Historical Context

- Party splits and defections are not unique to India. In British Parliamentary history, prominent

leaders like Winston Churchill, Ramsay MacDonald, and William Gladstone changed party affiliations due to disagreements with party leadership.

- Similar political splits have occurred in the United States, Australia, Canada, and various European Parliaments.
- During India's Constituent Assembly debates, members like K.T. Shah and Lupun Lal Saksena argued that once elected, representatives are representatives of the people, not just the party, and should be free to act in the public interest.

(iii) Anti-Defection Law in India

- The "Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram" Era: Between 1967 and 1983, there were approximately 2,700 recorded defections in State Assemblies. Notably, 116 out of 210 defecting members were rewarded with ministerial positions. The term originated from Haryana MLA Gaya Lal, who changed his party affiliation three times in a single day.
- 1985 (52nd Amendment): To curb this, the 10th Schedule was added to the Constitution. It mandated that a member would be disqualified for voluntarily leaving their party or voting against party whips, unless one-third of the members split simultaneously.
- 2003 (91st Amendment): The law was further tightened to require that two-thirds of a party's legislative members must move together for the split to be legally recognized, thereby avoiding disqualification.
- Impact of the AAP Split: Because the seven members leaving AAP constitute two-thirds of their 10-member Rajya Sabha strength, their move is viewed as a legal "split" rather than a violation of the current Anti-defection law.

(iv) Impact on Democracy

- Pressure from Agencies: While internal dissatisfaction is a factor, the pressure from investigative agencies like the CBI and ED has played a role in pushing opposition members toward the ruling party since 2024.
- Erosion of Internal Democracy: When parties fail to provide space for internal democracy and focus on a single leader, splits become inevitable.
- Ultimately, the "Aam Aadmi" (the common man) who voted for these representatives is left as a silent spectator to these political maneuvers.

13. Buddha Purnima (celebrated on May 1, 2026)

(i) Core Principles of Buddha's Teachings

- The Four Noble Truths: Buddha realized that desire is the cause of all suffering; by removing desire, one can end suffering; and this can be achieved by following the Eightfold Path.
- The Five Precepts (Pancha Sheela): These are the essential duties for a moral life: avoiding killing, avoiding stealing, avoiding desiring another's spouse, avoiding lying, and avoiding the consumption of alcohol.
- The Path of Wisdom: Buddha taught that "truth is power" and that the mind is the cause of all actions; therefore, one must practice positive thinking and never stop learning.
- Universal Values: His teachings emphasize Love (Anbu) and Non-violence (Ahimsa) as essential forces for the world, noting that "Love is the light of the world".
- Self-Conquest: As noted in the sources referencing Prime Minister Modi's "Mann Ki Baat," Buddha taught that conquering oneself is the greatest victory of all.

(ii) Presence in Tamil Literature

- Major Epics: Two of the five great Tamil epics, Manimekalai and Kundalakesi, are entirely dedicated to explaining and upholding Buddha's principles.
- Ethical Guidance: Manimekalai specifically details the essence of Buddhist ethics and the importance of social service, famously stating that those who give food to the hungry are the ones who truly give life.
- Academic Works: The grammar treatise Veerasoliyam serves as a significant source for historical research into Buddhism's presence in Tamil Nadu.
- Geographic Evidence: Locations across Tamil Nadu, such as Arittapatti (near Madurai), Kaveripoompattinam, Kanchipuram, and Nagapattinam, still retain Buddhist historical identities and archaeological evidence.

(iii) Global and Historical Presence

- Emperor Ashoka played a vital role in spreading Buddha's message across Asia. His son, Mahendra, is credited with taking these teachings to Sri Lanka.
- Symbols of this era, such as the Lion Capital at Sarnath, remain integral to India's national identity as the National Emblem.
- India became a global center for learning through universities like Nalanda, which in the 5th century housed 10,000 students and 1,500 teachers. Kanchipuram was also a world-renowned university for Buddhist studies.
- Famous Chinese monks like Faxian and Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang) traveled to India for years to study at these universities and collect Buddhist texts to take back to China.

(iv) Social and Institutional Impact

- Buddhist schools (Pallis) were known for teaching students regardless of their social background or discrimination.
- Buddhist monks were pioneers in providing free medicine and medical care to the public while teaching meditation to increase awareness.
- Establishing "Annadana" (food donation) centers was considered a primary duty, a principle that helped spread the faith among the common people.