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7. Short News

1. India–Zimbabwe Defence Ties

India and Zimbabwe have officially agreed to upgrade their bilateral relationship by expanding existing defence cooperation.

1. **Geographic Location** – Zimbabwe is a landlocked country situated in south-central Africa.
2. **River Boundaries** – It lies precisely between two major African rivers – the Limpopo to the south and the **Zambezi** to the north.
3. **Bordering Nations** – It is completely surrounded by Zambia, South Africa, Mozambique, and Botswana.
4. **Latitudinal Position** – It lies entirely north of the Tropic of Capricorn.
5. **Topography** – The country forms a major part of the massive southern African plateau.
6. **Natural Wonder** – It shares Victoria Falls—the world's largest sheet of falling water—with neighbouring Zambia.
7. **Bilateral Focus** – The new agreement focuses on upgrading military training, defence technology sharing, and security partnerships with India.
8. **Strategic Area** – The country covers a massive area of over 390,000 square kilometres, making it a key geopolitical player in south-central Africa.

2. National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG) 2026

The Government of India has announced the winners of the NAeG 2026, honouring 17 path-breaking digital initiatives across the country.

1. **Award Tally** – A total of 17 initiatives won awards, broken down into 10 Gold, 6 Silver, and 1 Jury Award.
2. **Core Objective** – The awards are presented annually to promote excellence in digital public service delivery, transparency, and accountability.
3. **Nodal Agency** – It is instituted and managed by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).
4. **Wide Scope** – Covers tech initiatives implemented at all levels – Ministries, States, Districts, Urban Local Bodies, and Gram Panchayats.
5. **Agri Stack (Gold)** – A digital ecosystem by the Ministry of Agriculture creating unique farmer IDs linked to land databases for seamless subsidy and credit delivery.
6. **e-Jagriti (Gold)** – A portal designed by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs to streamline the filing and tracking of consumer complaints.
7. **Mahakumbh 2025 Model (Gold)** – Implemented by the Prayagraj Mela Authority, it proved that AI and big data can manage massive human crowds safely.
8. **Blood Bag Traceability (Silver)** – Developed by Kerala (K-DISC), this platform allows end-to-end tracking of blood units from a donor's vein to a patient's transfusion.
9. **eSanjeevani Upgrade (Silver)** – The Ministry of Health integrated an AI-enabled Clinical Decision Support system into its flagship telemedicine service.
10. **Jury Award Winner** – Awarded to the CORS Network project for offering real-time, ultra-precise geospatial positioning services using a network of reference stations.



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3. PAC Flags Gaps in PMKVY

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Parliament raised serious warning flags that India's flagship skill program is training youth for industries that aren't actually hiring.

1. **The Core Issue** – The PAC found a structural mismatch—youth are being skilled in sectors with low employment demand, leading to poor job placement rates.
2. **About PMKVY** – Launched in 2015, the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana is India's flagship skill training scheme.
3. **Nodal Ministry** – It operates under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
4. **Implementing Agency** – Execution is handled on the ground by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).
5. **Target Demographic** – It aims to mobilize and empower India's massive, underemployed young workforce with industry-aligned certifications.
6. **What is the PAC?** The Public Accounts Committee is the oldest parliamentary committee in India, established way back in 1921.
7. **Composition** – It is reconstituted annually and consists of 22 members (15 from Lok Sabha and 7 from Rajya Sabha).
8. **Chairperson Convention** – Since 1967–68, the Chairperson is traditionally chosen from the Opposition party by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
9. **Core Function** – The PAC acts as a financial watchdog, examining CAG reports to ensure public funds are spent exactly as Parliament intended.

4. Prime Minister Research Chair (PMRC) Scheme 2026

The Department of Higher Education has officially opened applications for the PMRC Scheme 2026 to reverse "brain drain" in critical sectors.

1. **Primary Target** – It actively targets Indian-origin researchers, Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs), and PIOs currently working in top labs abroad.
2. **Core Aim** – To bring global talent back to India to conduct high-impact research in priority science and technology sectors.
3. **Nodal Department** – Administered directly by the Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education.
4. **Three-Tier Structure** – The scheme is strictly built around three pillars – Lead Institutions, Host Institutions, and PMRC Fellows.
5. **Category 1 (YRF)** – Young Research Fellows must have less than 5 years of post-PhD experience.
6. **Category 2 (SF)** – Senior Fellows must possess between 5 to 10 years of post-PhD experience.
7. **Category 3 (RC)** – Research Chairs require over 10 years of experience along with proven scientific leadership.
8. **Selection Authority** – An Empowered Committee chaired by the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India oversees all selections.
9. **Host Eligibility** – Limited to top 100 NIRF-ranked higher education institutions or premier national labs (like CSIR, DBT, DST, and ICMR).



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10. **Perks Offered** – Selected fellows get premium fellowships, hefty research grants, top-tier lab access, and direct collaboration with government bodies.

5. Neelkanth Mishra Appointed to World Bank Board

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has appointed prominent economist Neelkanth Mishra as the Executive Director of the World Bank Headquarters in Washington, DC.

1. **Tenure** – The high-profile appointment is fixed for a solid period of three years.
2. **Constituency Represented** – He will not just represent India, but a complete South Asian constituency including India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka.
3. **Succession** – He takes over the role from Parameswaran Iyer, who held the post since 2023.
4. **Role of Executive Director** – They sit on the World Bank's resident board, directly deciding on global policies, massive loan approvals, and development priorities.
5. **World Bank Profile** – Founded in 1944, it acts like a global cooperative owned by 189 member countries to reduce extreme poverty.
6. **Governance** – The ultimate power lies with the Board of Governors, usually consisting of the Finance or Development Ministers of member nations.
7. **IBRD & IDA Arms** – The IBRD lends money to middle-income countries, while the IDA provides near-zero interest loans/grants to the poorest nations.
8. **Private & Dispute Arms** – The IFC supports private sectors, MIGA provides foreign investment guarantees, and ICSID resolves international investment disputes.

6. Biomimicry

Biomimicry is emerging as a hot corporate trend, shifting green business models from simple recycling to nature-inspired structural engineering.

1. **Definition** – Biomimicry is the practice of learning from and replicating nature's 3.8 billion years of evolutionary solutions to solve human design problems.
2. **Philosophy** – It shifts our perspective from viewing nature as a *resource to exploit* to viewing nature as a *mentor and model*.
3. **Classic Example (The Kingfisher)** – Japan's Shinkansen bullet train was reshaped based on a kingfisher's beak, which completely stopped loud sonic booms when exiting tunnels.
4. **Efficiency Gains** – The train redesign not only silenced the noise but made the train 10% faster and 15% more energy-efficient.
5. **Application in Manufacturing** – Used to design ultra-strong, lightweight materials modeled after spider silk or sea shells without toxic chemicals.
6. **Application in Urban Design** – Creating self-cooling buildings based on the complex ventilation systems found in African termite mounds.
7. **Application in Agriculture** – Developing crop patterns and water retention techniques that mimic natural forest ecosystems.
8. **Indian Context** – As India targets a green transition, biomimicry offers a blueprint for zero-waste, circular manufacturing systems that are inherently eco-friendly.

7. India-UK Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory (GSCO)



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India and the UK have formally operationalized the GSCO to shield their high-tech industries from international supply shocks and geopolitical monopolies.

1. **Origin Story** - Originally conceptualized during the 2025 Prime Ministers' bilateral summit and sealed through a March 2026 Research Collaboration Agreement.
2. **Tripartite Operators** - The platform is jointly run by TEXMiN (IIT-ISM Dhanbad), IIT (ISM) Dhanbad, and the University of Cambridge, UK.
3. **Core Objective** - To build resilient, transparent, and secure supply lines for minerals like lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, and Rare Earth Elements (REEs).
4. **Strategic Shielding** - Aims to dramatically reduce vulnerability to geopolitical shocks, export restrictions, and market concentration (e.g., Chinese supply monopolies).
5. **Real-Time Monitoring** - The platform uses advanced data analytics to track minerals all the way from raw extraction to processing and final industrial use.
6. **Early Warning System** - Features predictive tools that alert both governments about upcoming logistical bottlenecks or global supply shortages.
7. **Domestic Alignment** - Directly supports India's National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) to ensure a domestic pipeline for green technology.
8. **About the NCMM** - Approved in January 2025 with a massive ₹16,300 crore budget over 7 years, anchored firmly under India's Ministry of Mines.
9. **Clean Tech Impact** - This entire system is critical for securing the inputs needed for manufacturing EVs, solar panels, defense electronics, and energy storage batteries.

8. Rise of ISWAP in Lake Chad Basin

A successful joint Nigeria-US military operation eliminated a top commander of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), spotlighting the group's dangerous dominance in the region.

1. **Origin** - ISWAP split from the notorious jihadist group Boko Haram in 2016 and immediately pledged allegiance to ISIS.
2. **Geographic Focus** - They operate across the strategic Lake Chad Basin, which crosses the borders of Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.
3. **Core Objective** - The group violently aims to dismantle state authority and establish strict Sharia-based governance.
4. **Advanced Structure** - Unlike Boko Haram, ISWAP is highly organized, operating through a structured *Shura* (consultative council) and regional command networks.
5. **Financial Engine** - They are financially self-sustaining, generating massive revenue by tax-extorting local fishing, farming, and trade routes.
6. **Dominant Status** - Following the death of Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau in 2021, ISWAP effectively absorbed territory to become the top threat in the region.
7. **Hearts and Minds Strategy** - They gained dominance by taxing local economies and providing basic security rather than relying purely on random kidnappings and looting.
8. **Regional Military Response** - They are actively opposed by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), a joint regional military force formed by Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin.

9. ATF Price Stabilization Support Mechanism



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The Union Cabinet cleared a massive ₹10,000 crore package to freeze aviation fuel prices and save Indian airlines from crippling cost spikes caused by the ongoing West Asia crisis.

1. **The Core Mechanism** - The government will temporarily freeze Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices at a steady rate for all participating domestic airlines.
2. **Exclusivity Clause** - To access this protection, Indian airlines must agree to buy their jet fuel *exclusively* from domestic Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs).
3. **Financial backing** - The government is providing ₹10,000 crore as interest-free budgetary support to OMCs to absorb the global price shock.
4. **The Price Stabilisation Fund** - If international crude prices shoot past the frozen rate, OMCs are directly compensated out of this special central fund.
5. **Scheme Duration** - Set to operate for a maximum of 3 years or until the advanced financial package is fully recovered.
6. **Target Scope** - Open to all scheduled Indian airlines operating both domestic routes and international flights.
7. **Why it's needed** - Fuel isn't just a minor cost—ATF routinely makes up 40% to 60% of an airline's total operating expenses.
8. **What is ATF?** It is a highly refined, kerosene-based fuel specifically engineered for performance in jet engines and turbine aircraft.
9. **Citizen Impact** - By absorbing the fuel price shock at the government level, the policy prevents airlines from passing extreme costs down to passengers via sky-high airfares.

10. Blue Micro moon

Stargazers around the world witnessed a rare astronomical convergence on May 31, 2026, when a "Blue Micro moon" illuminated the night sky.

1. **The Phenomenon** - A Blue Micro moon occurs only when a "Blue Moon" happens at the exact same time as a "Micro moon."
2. **The 2026 Spectacle** - The event on May 31, 2026, was officially documented as the smallest and dimmest full moon of the entire year.
3. **What is a Blue Moon?** It is simply the second full moon to fall within a single calendar month.
4. **The Calendar Math** - Because the Moon's cycle is 29.5 days and our months are 30-31 days, this calendar quirk happens naturally once every 2 to 3 years.
5. **Visual Misconception** - Despite the historical name, the moon does not actually turn blue; it retains its normal pearly-grey colour.
6. **What is a Micro moon?** It occurs when a full moon happens while the moon is sitting near its Apogee (the farthest point from Earth in its elliptical orbit).
7. **Apogee vs. Perigee Distance** - At apogee, the moon is roughly 403,945 km away, whereas at perigee (closest point), it is only about 363,711 km away.
8. **Visual Size Difference** - Because it is at its absolute farthest point, a Micro moon looks visibly smaller and noticeably dimmer than an average full moon.
9. **The Opposite Event** - A full moon that happens at perigee is called a Supermoon, appearing significantly larger and brighter than normal.



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10. **Extreme Rarity** – While both events happen independently, their alignment is rare. The world will not see the next Blue Micromoon until the year 2053.

11. Food Planet Prize 2026

The Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) program made global history by winning the prestigious USD 1.5 million Food Planet Prize 2026.

1. **Historical First** – With this win, APCNF has become the first-ever Indian initiative to secure the global prize since its inception.
2. **What is the Food Planet Prize?** Established in 2019 by Swedish entrepreneur Curt Bergfors, it is one of the world's largest environmental awards dedicated purely to sustainable food systems.
3. **Program Roots** – Launched in 2016, the APCNF is run by the *Rythu Sadhikara Samstha* under the state's agriculture department.
4. **Core Mandate** – To transition agriculture completely away from synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides toward local, natural inputs.
5. **Massive Scale** – The program is massive, currently supporting over 1.8 million farming families and 340,000 women's self-help groups (SHGs).
6. **The Peer-to-Peer Model** – It avoids a top-down approach. Instead, it deploys a network of 10,000 community resource persons and "farmer scientists" to teach practices directly to neighbours.
7. **Soil Health Benefits** – Focuses on restoring the natural microbial activity of the soil, ensuring long-term land productivity without toxic runoff.
8. **Climate Shielding** – Natural farming methods help crops retain water better, making farms incredibly resilient against intense droughts and erratic monsoons.

Economic Boost – By replacing expensive, corporate-made agrochemicals with cheap, locally created bio-inputs, the program has drastically reduced farming costs and lifted net rural incomes.