

7. Short News

1. Mundial do Queijo do Brasil 2026

PM Modi congratulated Indian cheesemakers on winning 4 medals during India's debut participation in this international dairy competition in Brazil.

India's Success – India secured a total of 4 medals (1 Super Gold, 2 Gold, and 1 Silver), marking a major milestone for its artisanal cheese sector.

Super Gold Winner – *Eleftheria Gulmarg*, a Brie-style cheese, achieved the highest category of excellence.

Gold Winners – *Yak Churpi-Soft* (from Leh, Ladakh) and *Eleftheria Brunost* both won gold medals.

Silver Winner – *Eleftheria Kaali Miri* (Belper Knolle-style) was awarded a silver medal.

Significance – This global recognition highlights the innovation and growth of India's small-scale and traditional dairy producers.

2. Extreme Heat Threatens Global Food Systems

A joint report by the FAO and WMO highlights that record-breaking heatwaves are pushing global agriculture to its limits, threatening over 1 billion people.

Record Heat – Following 2025 (one of the three hottest years), heatwaves have become more frequent and intense due to climate change.

Yield Loss – For every 1 C rise in global temperature, yields of rice, wheat, and maize drop by approximately 6%.

Livestock & Fisheries – Extreme heat causes cardiovascular failure in livestock and oxygen depletion in oceans, leading to massive fish stock declines.

Risk Multiplier – Heat intensifies other disasters like "flash droughts," wildfires, and pest outbreaks, further destabilizing food prices.

Future Warning – Heat intensity is projected to double at 2C warming and quadruple at 4 C, breaching biological limits of many crops.

3. India–Sri Lanka Diving Exercise (DIVEX 2026)

The 4th edition of the bilateral naval exercise was held in Colombo, involving specialized underwater operations and humanitarian assistance.

Vessel Involved – India's INS Nireekshak, a Dive Support and Submarine Rescue Vessel, participated in the week-long drill.

Humanitarian Aid – India presented two BHISM (Bharat Health Initiative) cubes—portable medical units—to Sri Lanka under the *Aarogya Maitri* initiative.

Security Aid – As a gesture of cooperation, the Indian Navy handed over 50,000 rounds of 9 mm ammunition to the Sri Lankan Navy.

Training Focus – Activities included submarine rescue training, salvage missions, and sharing "Best Practices" for maritime safety.

Strategic Vision – The exercise aligns with India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and MAHASAGAR visions.

4. Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS)

The government expanded the scheme in April 2026 to include final-year students, boosting early career industry exposure.

Eligibility Expansion – Final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students can now apply, provided they have a No Objection Certificate (NOC).

Financial Support – Interns receive a monthly stipend of ₹5,000 (Govt) and ₹500 (Company), plus a one-time grant of ₹6,000.

Top Companies – The scheme provides 12-month training in India's top 500 companies across sectors like AI, robotics, and finance.

Objective - Aimed at bridging the "skill gap" and aligning with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for experiential learning.

Target Group - Generally, targets youth aged 18–25 who are not in full-time employment or education.

5. Atal Pension Yojana (APY)

The scheme surpassed a massive milestone of 9 crore total enrolments on April 21, 2026.

Record Year - In the financial year 2025–26 alone, the scheme added 1.35 crore new subscribers.

Target Sector - A voluntary, contributory scheme primarily focused on poor and underprivileged workers in the unorganized sector.

Benefits - Guarantees a monthly pension ranging from ₹1,000 to ₹5,000 after the subscriber reaches 60 years of age.

Eligibility - Open to Indian citizens aged 18–40 who are not income tax payers.

Social Security - Provides family security through spouse pension and return of the corpus to the nominee after death.

6. The Druzhba Pipeline

Resumption of Russian oil through the Ukrainian section prompted Hungary to lift its veto on a €90 billion EU loan to Ukraine.

Infrastructure - One of the world's longest crude oil pipeline networks, connecting Russia to Central and Eastern Europe.

Operational Conflict - Deliveries were halted earlier in 2026 due to regional tensions and damage claims between Ukraine and Russia.

Vital Artery - It remains the primary energy source for refineries in Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.

Historical Context - Built during the Soviet era (1964) to integrate Eastern European economies.

Political Shift - The restart allowed the EU to proceed with significant liquidity support for Ukraine through 2027.

7. Technology Development & Investment Promotion (TDIP)

The Government released revised guidelines for the TDIP scheme with an outlay of ₹203 crore for the 2026–31 period.

Focus Areas - The scheme promotes indigenous R&D in next-gen technologies like 5G Advanced and 6G.

Global Influence - Aims to enhance India's participation in international telecom standard-setting bodies like the ITU and 3GPP.

Broad Inclusion - The revised scope now includes startups, MSMEs, academia, and research institutions alongside industry players.

Implementation - Managed through bodies like the Telecommunications Standards Development Society India (TSDSI).

Economic Goal - Seeks to build a self-reliant telecom ecosystem and increase India's share in the global tech market.

8. RBI Rupee Derivative Trades

The RBI partially rolled back curbs on Non-Deliverable Forwards (NDFs) as volatility linked to the West Asia crisis stabilized.

Currency Support - Restrictions were originally placed to prevent the Rupee from depreciating excessively (beyond 95 per dollar).

NDF Definition - Cash-settled derivative contracts where the underlying currency is not physically delivered, usually settled in US Dollars.

Market Context - These contracts are mostly traded in offshore hubs like London, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

Hedging Advantage - Easing these curbs allows Indian businesses to better manage currency risks and trade more freely.

Volatility Management - The move signals the RBI's confidence in the current stability of the Indian foreign exchange market.

9. Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train (J-Slab)

India's first bullet train project (MAHSR) has officially begin deploying the J-Slab ballastless track system.

Japanese Tech - The system is adapted from Japan's Shinkansen technology, marking its first use in India.

Ballastless Design - Unlike traditional gravel tracks, J-Slab uses a rigid concrete base, allowing for higher speeds and lower maintenance.

Key Components - Consists of a track bed, cement asphalt mortar (CAM), pre-cast track slabs, and fasteners.

Manufacturing - Two state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities in Surat and Anand produce these slabs locally.

Project Speed - Designed to support train operations at speeds up to 320 km/h.

10. Methane Emissions from Landfills

A UCLA study identified Indian landfills in Secunderabad (4th) and Mumbai (12th) as among the top 25 global methane emitters.

Environmental Impact - Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, 86 times more effective at trapping heat than CO_2 over a 20-year span.

Anaerobic Decay - Emissions occur when organic waste decomposes in the absence of oxygen at unmanaged dumpsites.

Global Context - The highest emitter globally is located near Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Climate Goal - Reducing landfill methane is considered the fastest way to slow short-term global warming.

Indian Statistics - The Secunderabad site alone is a significant contributor to the global "methane plume" detections.

11. Dolphin Friends Initiative

The Forest Department in Prayagraj launched this volunteer network to protect the endangered Gangetic Dolphin.

Community Monitoring - Local volunteers assist in tracking the movement, breeding, and habitat conditions of the dolphins.

Bioindicator - Often called the "Tiger of the Ganges," its presence indicates a healthy, clean freshwater ecosystem.

National Status - It was declared India's National Aquatic Animal in 2009.

Adaptation - The species is functionally blind and relies on a sophisticated echolocation system to hunt in turbid waters.

Legal Protection - It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, the highest level of protection in India.

12. Montreux Record

Two Indian sites remain listed in this register of "threatened" wetlands under the Ramsar Convention.

Definition - A register of Ramsar sites where ecological character changes have occurred due to pollution or human interference.

India's Sites - Currently, Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) and Loktak Lake (Manipur) are the only Indian sites listed.

Chilika Success - Chilika Lake (Odisha) was previously listed but was removed after successful restoration efforts.

Monitoring – Sites on this record receive priority conservation attention and technical monitoring from the Ramsar Secretariat.

Global Origin – The record was established in 1990 to track deteriorating wetlands of international importance.

