

Short news

1. Pingali Venkayya

Recently, the Indian PM paid tribute to Shri Pingali Venkayya on his 149th birth anniversary.

Early Life and Career

Born on August 2, 1876, in a Telugu Brahmin family in Bhatlapenumarru, near Machilipatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Joined British Indian Army at age 19; participated in the Second Boer War (1899–1902) in South Africa. Taught at Andhra National College (1918–1921).

Contribution to the National Flag

He is known as the “Father of the Tiranga” for designing the Indian national flag symbolizing unity and freedom. Published a booklet in 1916 titled “A National Flag for India” (Bharatha Deshaniki Oka Jatiya Patakam) with ~30 designs. Original design included saffron and green (Hindus and Muslims); later revised to include white and charkha. Actively promoted the flag concept at Indian National Congress sessions.

Involvement in Freedom Struggle

Participated in Vande Mataram Movement and Home Rule Movement. Briefly served as a plague officer before returning to activism full-time.

Post-Independence Contributions

Settled in Nellore; served as advisor to Govt. of India's Mineral Research Department. Published “The Mother of Diamonds” (1955), a significant work on minerals and diamonds.

Titles and Recognition

1. ‘Jhanda Venkayya’: For his role in designing the national flag.
2. ‘Japan Venkayya’: Delivered a full speech in Japanese in Bapatla (1913).
3. ‘Diamond Venkayya’: For work in geology and diamond mining.
4. ‘Patti Venkayya’ (Cotton Venkayya): For research in cotton varieties, especially Cambodia Cotton.
5. Also called ‘Patti Venkayya’ (Cotton Venkayya) for research on staple cotton varieties, especially Cambodia Cotton.

Recognition and Honors

1. 2009: Commemorative postage stamp released.
2. 2021: Bronze statue unveiled in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

2. AI-POWERED ANGANWADI

India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered Anganwadi was launched in Waddhamna village, Nagpur district, Maharashtra, under the Mission Bal Bharari initiative by the Zilla Parishad.

India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered Anganwadi

1. AI and Tech Integration

Tools introduced include VR headsets, AI-enabled smart boards, Tablets, interactive digital content. Classroom retrofitted with Wi-Fi-enabled CCTV for transparency. Tech partner, Qolaba, working under the Centre's IndiaAI programme.

2. Training and Teaching

Daily 1-hour smart learning with VR and smart board. Anganwadi operates 6 days a week (9:30 am – 2:30 pm). AI tools track response time, accuracy, and adjust difficulty based on learners' pace using models like Gemini and Perplexity. Earlier Initiatives, Build on Fun in the Anganwadi (FITA) used songs/games; tech learning builds on it.

3. Health & Nutrition Monitoring through AI

Integration with Poshan Tracker to monitor Nutrition, physical and cognitive development, Real-time feedback on meals through uploaded images. Future scope, Tracking pregnancies, converting govt orders to audio.

Significance

Contributes to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 4 (Quality Education) through nutrition monitoring and tech-integrated learning.

Anganwadis

Anganwadis, launched under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme in 1975, are community-based centres delivering nutrition, healthcare, and pre-school education to children under 6, pregnant women, and lactating mothers, playing a vital role in grassroots maternal and child welfare. Implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD).

Centrally Sponsored Scheme, executed by States/UTs. Renamed as Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 to strengthen nutrition delivery and service quality. Services delivered through a vast network of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) at the village level.

3. Apna Ghar

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has launched an ambitious initiative called 'Apna Ghar', a move to enhance the safety and well-being of truck drivers during long-haul journeys..

Objective

To improve quality of life for drivers by offering safe and convenient facilities during long journeys. To provide comfortable and hygienic resting spaces for truck drivers across major highways in the country. It comes under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Built and managed by Public sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) at retail fuel stations.

Key Features

1. Coverage: 368 units with 4,611 beds operational across major highways.
2. Facilities offered: Dormitory accommodations, Restaurants or dhabas, Clean toilets and dedicated bathing areas, Self-cooking spaces & Access to purified drinking water
3. Tech Integration: A dedicated 'Apna Ghar' mobile application supports Bookings, User registrations and Driver Interactions.
4. User-Focused Design: Tailored to the requirements of truckers, guided by their feedback and insights from mobile app data analysis.
5. Target: By March 2027, the government plans for 1000 Units at Large format fuel stations on national highways

4.New UPI Rules

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has introduced major rule changes to the UPI system from August 1, 2025, to improve transaction efficiency, reduce server load, and enhance user safety.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) Rule Changes

1. Balance Checks: Users can check their account balance only 50 times per day per UPI app.
2. Auto-Pay Transactions: Scheduled transactions allowed only in non-peak hours- before 10 AM, between 1 PM – 5 PM & after 9:30 PM
3. Bank Account Detail View Limit: Linked bank accounts can be viewed 25 times per day per app.
4. Transaction Status Check Limit: Status of pending transactions can be checked only 3 times, with a mandatory 90-second gap between attempts.
5. Beneficiary Name Display: Recipient's bank name will be shown before confirming the payment to reduce fraud

Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

A system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application of any participating bank. Launched by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in 2016 in conjunction with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Indian Banks Association

(IBA). Currently, several countries, including Bhutan, Nepal, UAE, France, Mauritius, etc., support UPI payments.

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)

It is an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India. Promoters are Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Indian Banks' Association (IBA). Legal Framework Under Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. Nature is not-for-Profit company under Section 8 of Companies Act, 2013.

Major Products by NPCI:

1. RuPay Card
2. UPI (Unified Payments Interface)
3. BHIM App, BHIM Aadhaar
4. Bharat BillPay

5. India's First Green Hydrogen Plant

India has commissioned its first indigenous megawatt-scale green hydrogen production plant at Deendayal Port, Kandla, Gujarat, marking a major milestone in green port infrastructure.

India's first Green Hydrogen Plant

India inaugurated its first Make-in-India megawatt-scale green hydrogen plant at Kandla Port, Gujarat—developed in just four months—marking a major step toward Aatma-Nirbhar Bharat, sustainable port infrastructure, and India's Net Zero target by 2070. The Plant has an annual production capacity of 140 metric tonnes of green hydrogen and is part of a larger 10 MW project.

Green Hydrogen Production

A facility that produces hydrogen gas using renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind power, through a process called electrolysis. In this process, water (H_2O) is split into hydrogen (H_2) and oxygen (O_2) using electricity generated from clean, non-fossil fuel sources. This method produces zero carbon emissions, making green hydrogen a clean and sustainable fuel for industries, transportation, and energy storage.

National Hydrogen Mission

It was launched by the Government of India in 2021 to promote green hydrogen as a clean energy source. The mission aims to

1. Reduce dependency on fossil fuels
2. Lower carbon emissions
3. Position India as a global hub for green hydrogen production and exports

6. Bimstec Traditional Music Festival

India hosted the first-ever BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on August 4, 2025, celebrating regional cultural unity through music.

Bimstec Traditional Music Festival

The event featured traditional music performances by artists from all seven BIMSTEC countries. Organised by Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). The festival is titled 'SaptaSur: Seven Nations, One Melody', symbolising unity in diversity through shared musical heritage.

Cultural Significance

This marks a major milestone in BIMSTEC cultural cooperation, following Prime Minister Modi's announcement at the 6th BIMSTEC Summit in Thailand in April 2025, affirming India's commitment to regional cultural ties. The summit also adopted the Bangkok Vision 2030, which emphasizes enhanced cultural collaboration, youth exchange, and regional integration.

BIMSTEC

BIMSTEC stands for the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, a regional organization promoting cooperation across South and Southeast Asia. Established in 1997 (Bangkok Declaration). BIMSTEC comprises seven countries

1. South Asia: India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka
2. Southeast Asia: Myanmar and Thailand

Objective

BIMSTEC aims to enhance regional connectivity, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange among member nations, leveraging the shared resources and heritage of the Bay of Bengal region.

7. Urban forest: 'Matri van'

India's first 750-acre theme-based urban forest, 'Matri Van', was launched in Gurugram to boost Delhi NCR's green cover and ecological sustainability.

Matri Van

'Matri Van' is a theme-based urban forest project developed along the Gurugram-Faridabad Road in the Aravalli Hill area, under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign. The campaign was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2024 to promote tree planting in tribute to mothers. 'Matri Van aims to become the "heart and lung" of Delhi NCR, enhancing biodiversity and reducing urban heat

Key Features and Components

1. Native Plantation

Invasive species like Kabuli Kikar will be removed and replaced with native trees such as Bargad, Peepal, Neem, Amaltash, Bael Patra, and Aravalli-specific species like Dhauk, Salar, and Kullu.

2. Special Groves and Themed Zones

1. Bodhi Vatika, Bamboosetum, Pushp Vatika, and Sugandh Vatika
2. Medicinal Plant Garden, Nakshatra Vatika, Butterfly Garden, and Cactus Garden

3. Multi-Stakeholder Involvement

The initiative will involve CSR partners, RWAs, NGOs, MNCs, schools, and government bodies to ensure inclusive development.

4. Eco-Friendly Infrastructure

Includes nature trails, yoga spaces, cycle tracks, gazebos, waterbodies, and a treated water irrigation system to aid afforestation and prevent flooding.

8. District Flood Severity Index (DFSI)

Recently, Researchers from IIT Delhi and IIT Gandhinagar have developed a District Flood Severity Index (DFSI). The Purpose is to create a comprehensive flood severity index that accounts for both magnitude and human impact of floods.

DFSI

India lacks a data-based flood severity index despite recurring floods causing displacement, injuries, and deaths. Existing indices focus only on flood magnitude/inundation, not on human impact. Districts are the basic administrative units for flood management in India.

Parameters Used in DFSI

1. Mean duration of flooding events (in days).
2. Percentage of district area historically flooded.
3. Total deaths due to floods.
4. Number of people injured.
5. Population of the district (to assess relative impact).

Key Findings from the Index

1. Thiruvananthapuram: Highest number of flooding events (231), but not in the top flood severity districts.
2. Patna: Ranked highest in the severity index, indicating that flood impact goes beyond frequency.