🏛 CEC Gyanesh Kumar Receives IIT Kanpur's Highest Alumni Award 🎓

- Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar honoured with Distinguished Alumnus Award by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur at the institute's 66th Foundation Day celebration
- Kumar graduated from IIT Kanpur with B.Tech in Civil Engineering (1985); award (established 1989) recognises outstanding achievements of institute's alumni, representing IIT Kanpur's highest honour for graduates

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💳 Scapia-Federal Bank Launch Empowering Add-On Credit Card with Independent Control 👦👩👧👦

- Scapia and Federal Bank introduced first-of-its-kind Add-On Credit Card enabling transparent, independent shared credit with multiple cardholders enjoying separate app interfaces, OTPs, spending dashboards—unlike traditional add-on cards functioning as secondary copies
- Features: Primary cardholder allocates credit to up to 3 add-on users (e.g., ₹2 lakh limit → ₹20,000 for child, ₹50,000 for parent); each user gets virtual card instantly (physical in 5–7 days), independent OTP, personal Scapia app access
- Rewards & benefits: all cardholders (primary & add-on) earn Scapia Coins on spends, enjoy unlimited domestic lounge access, zero forex markup on international use; families can pool rewards for bigger travel redemptions
- Digital-first setup: complete KYC verification via app, real-time spend tracking, customizable credit limits per add-on card; primary user maintains oversight without diluting independence; travel-first design with benefits across 7 travel categories (flights, stays, experiences, shopping)

💰 India's Net GST Kitty Reaches ₹1.69 Trillion in October, Grows 0.2% YoY ☑

- Gross GST collections in October 2025 totalled ₹1.96 trillion (+4.6% YoY vs. ₹1.87 trillion Oct 2024), supported by festival-season purchases despite 375-item rate cuts (effective 22 Sept, Navratri onset)
- Domestic GST revenue grew 2% to ₹1.45 trillion; import revenue surged 13% to ₹50,884 crore; however, YoY growth of 4.6% lower than 9% average (Aug-Sept subdued at ₹1.86T, ₹1.89T respectively)
- Net GST revenue (post-refunds): ₹1.69 trillion, marking marginal 0.2% YoY increase; GST refunds jumped 39.6% YoY to ₹26,934 crore, reflecting elevated export/input credit claims
- Festival dynamics: consumers had delayed purchases after PM Modi's Independence Day announcement of GST cuts;

Navratri rate reductions triggered pent-up demand, inflating Oct collections—sustainability questioned given subdued Aug-Sept trends

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📱 UPI Transactions Surge to Record ₹27.28 Lakh Crore in October (+16% YoY) 🚀

- Unified Payments Interface (UPI) hit all-time high of ₹27.28 lakh crore (value) and 20.7 lakh crore (volume) in October 2025, marking 16% YoY growth vs. ₹23.49 lakh crore (Oct 2024)
- Volume breakdown: 668.1 million average daily transactions in October; 9.5% MoM growth from September (₹24.90 lakh crore); previous peaks: ₹25.14 lakh crore (May) in value, 19.47 lakh crore (July) in volume
- Festival-driven surge: Diwali season + GST rate cuts (Sept 22) catalysed record transactions; Spice Money CEO Dilip Modi: "steady rise demonstrates India's digital infrastructure strength and seamless real-time transaction handling; behavioural change embedded from metros to rural Bharat"
- Global expansion: UPI accounts for 85% of India's digital transactions, powers ~50% of global real-time payments; 8 countries accept UPI (Qatar, UAE, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius, Singapore, Bhutan); NRIs from 12 countries now use Paytm UPI via international mobile numbers—positioning India as global low-cost, real-time payment benchmark

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⚙️ PLI Scheme for Specialty Steel Enters Third Round: ₹43,874 Crore Investment Commitment 🏭

- Union Minister of Steel & Heavy Industries H.D. Kumaraswamy launched third round of PLI scheme for Specialty Steel (PLI 1.2), targeting emerging and advanced steel products: super alloys, CRGO, stainless steel (long/flat), titanium alloys, coated steels
- Cumulative impact (all three rounds): ₹43,874 crore investment commitment, 30,760 direct employment, 14.3 million tonnes specialty steel production; as of September 2025: first two rounds invested ₹22,973 crore, generated 13,284 jobs
- Strategic goal: position India as global hub for specialty steel, preferred supplier in value chain; generates significant employment, expands high-end steel capacity under Atmanirbhar Bharat vision (Cabinet-approved July 2021)

❀ Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh Pakhwada: Nationwide Celebration of Tribal Heroes (1–15 Nov 2025) 🎉

- Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh Pakhwada (1–15 Nov 2025) marks fortnight-long nationwide celebration honouring Bhagwan Birsa Munda's 150th birth anniversary—India's revered tribal freedom fighter symbolising resistance against colonial rule; culminates in Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas (15 Nov)
- Prime Minister Modi institutionalised observance to recognise tribal communities' sacrifices, culture, heritage; Union Minister Jual Oram urged states/UTs to celebrate as "people's movement" showcasing cultural identity, knowledge systems, achievements
- State programs: Meghalaya (vibrant cultural programme, traditional performances), Rajasthan (31 Eklavya Model Schools competitions on tribal fighters), Andhra Pradesh (Tribal Research Institute cultural carnival), Sikkim (tribal language teacher workshops, youth sports), Manipur (floral tributes, cleanliness drive), Odisha (exhibitions, Birsa Munda Pavilion, photo exhibits), Gujarat (national seminar: 600+ professors, scholars, tribal leaders), Jammu & Kashmir (PM JANMAN, Dharti Aaba capacity-building, digital/financial literacy)

DK Indo-Danish Business Council Launched in Copenhagen: Policy & Innovation Think Tank 🚀

- Indo-Danish Business Council (IDBC) launched in Copenhagen and New Delhi as strategic think tank and collaboration platform (4 Nov 2025) to foster innovation, policy, investment ties between India and Nordic region under Green Strategic Partnership
- Focus sectors: life sciences, deep tech, healthcare, sustainability, venture ecosystems; 15 founders presented (11 in lifescience/healthtech/medtech, AI infrastructure, cleantech, fintech, consumer products); 7 expressed intent to collaborate/expand into India
- Key vision: Annual Indo-Nordic Innovation & Leadership Summit (Davos-style forum) convening policymakers, business leaders, investors, innovators; complements TechBBQ Nordic–India Startup Summit (NISS) 2026 with dedicated deep tech/lifescience/sustainable innovation tracks
- Leadership: Manish Prabhat (Indian Ambassador to Denmark) emphasised "innovation without borders" and complementary strengths (scale/agility from India, precision/trust from Denmark); Sudhir Mishra, Dr Rajat Pandey, Subhrangshu Neogi (IDBC Co-Chairs) positioning Council as India–Nordic policy, market intelligence, founder-level partnerships hub

ॐ Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Honoured with 2025 World Leader for Peace & Security Award 🏆

- Boston Global Forum (BGF) and AI World Society (AIWS) conferred 2025 World Leader for Peace and Security Award on Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, marking 10th award anniversary (2015–2025) celebrating moral courage, visionary governance, compassion in global peace advancement
- Previous laureates: PM Shinzō Abe (Japan), Chancellor Angela Merkel (Germany) (2015); Ban Ki-moon (2016); Sauli Niinistö (Finland) (2018); Volodymyr Zelenskyy & Ukraine people (2022); Emmanuel Macron (France) (2024)
- Humanitarian impact: The Art of Living Foundation (founded 1981) operates in 180 countries; 800,000+ prisoners rehabilitated via meditation/breathing; 70+ rivers revived, thousands of water bodies restored; 100,000+ underprivileged children educated/nourished in 1,300 free schools across India
- Mediation legacy: Colombia (52-year FARC conflict resolution), Iraq, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Venezuela, Kashmir (militants renouncing violence); SKY Breath Meditation (Sudarshan Kriya) taught worldwide for stress reduction, trauma healing, emotional resilience; Governor Michael Dukakis (BGF Co-founder): "You've taught peace as daily practice rooted in compassion, forgiveness"
- North America recognition: Vancouver, Seattle, Portland (Oct 2025) proclaimed "Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Day"; Portland hosted 1,300+ peace meditation (largest recent gathering); Institute of Absolute Intelligence launched in Los Angeles exploring consciousness meets AI frontier

🌿 S Sankarasubramanian Assumes FAI Chairmanship: Focus on Sustainability & Atmanirbharta 🚜

- S Sankarasubramanian, Managing Director & CEO of Coromandel International Limited, elected Chairman of Fertiliser Association of India (FAI) (established 1955, 70 years), succeeding Sailesh C Mehta; Dr Siba Prasad Mohanty (Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Ltd) elevated to sole Co-Chairman
- Sankarasubramanian brings 30+ years fertiliser sector expertise (particularly Phosphatic & Potassic/P&K segments); currently Co-Chairman FAI Board, Chairman FAI Southern Region; commitment: "innovation, sustainability, resource efficiency, balanced nutrition" while achieving Atmanirbhar Bharat in fertiliser sector
- FAI mission: align industry goals with national agricultural priorities fostering growth, resilience, long-term food security; represents fertiliser manufacturers, distributors, importers, equipment makers, research institutes, input suppliers across India

Google Unveils Project Suncatcher: AI Computing from Space via Solar-Powered Satellites

- Google CEO Sundar Pichai announced Project Suncatcher—long-term "moonshot" research initiative to power AI computing directly from space using solar energy and specialized AI satellite constellations in low-Earth orbit
- Technology stack: custom-built Tensor Processing Unit (TPU) chips mounted on compact satellites featuring high-efficiency solar panels, connected via free-space optical communication beams relaying data between satellites and Earth
- Design advantages: access to abundant solar energy without interruption, eliminates terrestrial data centre cooling, land, water requirements; reduces environmental footprint of AI infrastructure
- Timeline: two prototype satellites launched by early 2027 (partnership with Planet Labs) testing energy generation, TPU performance in extreme conditions, data transmission efficiency, long-term reliability; details via preprint research paper "Towards a future space-based, highly scalable AI infrastructure system design"
- Context: aligns with Jeff Bezos' prediction (gigawatt-scale data centres in space within 10–20 years), positions Google as pioneer in space-based AI infrastructure, addressing growing compute demands for frontier AI models

OpenAI Develops IndQA: Multilingual AI Benchmark for Indian Languages & Culture

- OpenAI introduced IndQA, a culturally-grounded benchmark evaluating AI reasoning across 12 Indian languages (Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Gujarati, Kannada, Odia, Punjabi, Malayalam, English, Hinglish), addressing global AI inclusion gap
- Rationale: 80% of world's population lacks English as primary language; existing MMMLU benchmarks saturated (top models achieving similar high scores); India strategic choice: ChatGPT's 2nd-largest market, ~1 billion non-English speakers, 22 official languages (7+ with 50+ million speakers each)
- IndQA scope: 2,278 questions across 12 languages, 10 cultural domains (architecture/design, arts/culture, food/cuisine, history, law/ethics, literature/linguistics, media/entertainment, religion/spirituality, sports/recreation) created with 261 domain experts; reflects code-switching prevalent in daily conversations
- Evaluation methodology: rubric-based grading with expert-defined criteria (weighted by importance), model-based assessor producing cumulative score; each data point includes culturally-grounded prompt, English translation, rubric criteria, ideal expert response

- Future trajectory: OpenAI plans similar benchmarks for other languages/regions, advancing contextually-aware, inclusive AI systems

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🛩️ Madhya Pradesh Launches PM Shri Tourism Helicopter Service: First Intra-State Air Connectivity 🏳️

- Madhya Pradesh became India's first state to launch intra-state helicopter tourism service (PM Shri Tourism Helicopter Service), flagged off by CM Dr Mohan Yadav at Raja Bhoj International Airport, Bhopal during state's 70th Foundation Day (1 Nov 2025)
- Service model: Public-Private Partnership (PPP) operated by Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board; regular operations commence 20 Nov 2025 across 3 tourism sectors, 5 days/week per sector; Trans Bharat Aviation (Sector 1), Jet Serve Aviation (Sectors 2–3) for 3-year period; minimum 6 seats/helicopter in initial phase
- Operational success: precursor PM Shri Tourism Air Service (launched 1 year prior) has already served 10,000+ passengers; new helicopter service aims major tourist/pilgrimage circuit/national park connectivity with focus on accessibility, sustainable tourism, regional identity
- Symbolic inauguration: four helicopters departed for Ujjain after flag-off, marking historic milestone in regional air transport innovation

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🐯 Telangana Establishes Global AI Hub: Targets Top 20 by 2035 🚀

- Telangana Artificial Intelligence Innovation Hub (TAIH) launched by IT & Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu, positioning state as frontrunner in AI-driven innovation; goal: top 20 global AI hubs by 2035
- Hub mandate: central platform for AI-based research, innovation, collaboration across sectors; Special Chief Secretary (IT), MeeSeva Commissioner, Emerging Technologies Joint Director ensure institutional coordination, strategic guidance
- Integrated governance: leveraging AI in governance (transparency, efficiency), healthcare (diagnostics), transportation, education; international partnerships with Cuba (sports/athletics expertise, AI diagnostics/pharma/public health data), Deutsche Börse (Global Capability Centre inaugurated, 1,000 IT jobs planned), Amazon Web Services (data centre, expansion discussions)
- Ecosystem scope: connecting T-Hub, T-Works, WE-Hub innovation platforms; attracting AI startups, supporting bilateral tech cooperation with global firms positioning Hyderabad as AI ecosystem anchor in India

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