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RBI Keeps Repo Rate Unchanged at 5.25%

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has maintained the policy repo rate at 5.25% for the fourth consecutive policy meeting, adopting a wait-and-watch approach amid evolving inflation and growth conditions. The decision was taken by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

Key Highlights:

- The RBI has maintained the repo rate at 5.25%, signalling that it is assessing incoming economic data before making further changes to interest rates.
- The decision aims to balance economic growth, inflation management and financial stability. The RBI's monetary policy framework targets CPI inflation at 4% with a tolerance band of $\pm 2\%$, i.e., 2%–6%.

What is Repo Rate?

- The repo rate is the interest rate at which the RBI lends short-term funds to commercial banks against eligible securities. Changes in the repo rate influence bank lending rates, borrowing costs, consumption and investment.

Impact of Unchanged Repo Rate:

- Borrowers:** Existing floating-rate loan EMIs are less likely to face an immediate policy-driven change.
- Banks:** Lending and deposit rates may remain relatively stable.
- Inflation:** Holding rates helps RBI assess price pressures before further easing.
- Growth:** The existing rate continues to provide support to credit and economic activity.

Q. At what rate has the RBI kept the repo rate unchanged for the fourth consecutive time? **5.25%.**



New Advances in Cancer Treatment: India Develops Targeted Drug Candidate as Moderna–Merck's mRNA Vaccine Shows Promise

Why is it in News?

- Two significant developments in cancer research have highlighted the growing focus on more targeted and personalised cancer treatments:
- Moderna and Merck announced positive late-stage trial results for Intismeran, a personalised mRNA cancer vaccine designed to reduce the recurrence and spread of melanoma.
- In India, researchers from IASST and IIT Guwahati have developed experimental cancer-drug candidates aimed at selectively targeting cancer cells and reducing damage to healthy cells.

Moderna–Merck's mRNA Cancer Vaccine

- Intismeran is a personalised mRNA-based cancer vaccine developed by Moderna and Merck.
- It is being tested in patients with high-risk melanoma after surgical removal of tumours.
- The vaccine works by training the patient's immune system to recognise mutations in cancer cells.
- It was tested in combination with Keytruda, an immunotherapy drug.
- Interim late-stage trial results showed reduced risks of cancer recurrence and tumour spread.
- Detailed trial results have not yet been released.
- The treatment is still experimental and requires regulatory approval.

Q. Which companies have developed the personalised mRNA-based cancer vaccine Intismeran? **Moderna and Merck.**



Maharashtra Declares Snakebite a Notifiable Disease

- The Maharashtra Government has declared snakebite a notifiable disease, making it mandatory for government and private hospitals, medical colleges and healthcare professionals to report suspected, probable and confirmed snakebite cases, including deaths, to health authorities.
- The decision aims to strengthen surveillance, ensure timely treatment and improve availability of Anti-Snake Venom (ASV).

Key Features:

- Under the new system, healthcare institutions must report cases to the concerned District Health Officer or District Surgeon. Serious and fatal cases are required to be reported immediately. The system will help authorities maintain better records, identify high-risk areas and plan the distribution of anti-snake venom.
- The move follows growing concerns over snakebite-related deaths, particularly in rural and tribal areas. Maharashtra recorded around 1.29 lakh snakebite cases and 656 deaths between April 2023 and March 2026.

Why is it Important?

- Disease surveillance: Provides reliable data on the incidence and geographical distribution of snakebites.
- Timely treatment: Helps improve access to anti-snake venom and emergency care.
- Resource planning: Enables authorities to forecast ASV requirements and strengthen healthcare facilities.

Q. Which state has recently declared snakebite a notifiable disease? **Maharashtra.**



J&K Bank–HDFC Life Partnership: Expansion of Bancassurance Services

- Jammu & Kashmir Bank (J&K Bank) has entered into a Corporate Agency Agreement (CAA) with HDFC Life Insurance Company to expand insurance choices for its customers. The partnership will enable customers to access HDFC Life's insurance products through the bank's extensive distribution network.

Key Features:

- The partnership will provide customers access to insurance solutions covering different financial needs and life stages, including:
- Protection and life insurance
- Savings and investment
- Retirement planning
- Individual and group insurance solutions
- The initiative follows J&K Bank's multi-partner bancassurance approach, aimed at giving customers greater choice and enabling need-based selection of insurance products.

What is Bancassurance?

- Bancassurance is a partnership between a bank and an insurance company through which the bank distributes or sells insurance products to its customers.
- It helps insurance companies expand their distribution network while enabling banks to provide a wider range of financial products.

Q. J&K Bank has entered into a Corporate Agency Agreement with which insurer to expand insurance choices for customers?
HDFC Life Insurance Company.



Parichha Dam Recognised as World Heritage Irrigation Structure

- The 140-year-old Parichha Weir/Dam in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, has been selected for the World Heritage Irrigation Structure (WHIS) Award 2026 by the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID). It will formally receive the award on 14 October 2026 in Marseille, France, during the 26th ICID International Congress and 77th International Executive Council Meeting.

About Parichha Dam:

- Parichha Weir is built across the Betwa River in Jhansi and forms the headworks of the Betwa Canal System, which supports irrigation in the drought-prone Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- The project was conceived in the 19th century; construction began in 1881 and the structure became operational in 1886. It is approximately 1,174 metres long and has remained operational for nearly 140 years.

World Heritage Irrigation Structure (WHIS):

- The WHIS programme of ICID recognises historically significant irrigation structures that demonstrate engineering excellence, agricultural importance, cultural value and sustainable water management.
- Parichha is among four Indian irrigation structures selected for the WHIS Award 2026, along with Ashti Medium Project (Maharashtra), Chhapawara Dam (Rajasthan) and Pechiparai Dam (Tamil Nadu).

Q. Which historic irrigation structure in Uttar Pradesh has been selected for the WHIS Award 2026? **Parichha Dam/Weir in Jhansi.**



Bill Rasmussen: Founder of ESPN, Dies at 93

- Bill Rasmussen, the visionary founder and co-founder of ESPN, died on 18 August 2026 at the age of 93. He is remembered for creating the world's first 24-hour, all-sports television network, fundamentally transforming sports broadcasting.

About Bill Rasmussen:

- Rasmussen was a former sports broadcaster and public-relations executive. In 1978, he and his son Scott Rasmussen developed the idea of a dedicated 24-hour sports television network while caught in a traffic jam in Connecticut. ESPN was incorporated on 14 July 1978 and launched on 7 September 1979 from Bristol, Connecticut.
- The network initially focused on sports programming that was not widely covered by traditional television, including college sports. Its launch was made possible through satellite technology and agreements for sports broadcasting rights, including with the NCAA.

ESPN:

- ESPN stands for Entertainment and Sports Programming Network. It pioneered continuous sports coverage and became a major global sports-media organisation. Its signature programme SportsCenter began with ESPN's launch and became one of the network's most recognised programmes.

Q. Who founded ESPN, the world's first 24-hour all-sports television network? **Bill Rasmussen.**





India–Japan Deepen Defence Ties; Explore Joint Naval Shipbuilding and Maritime Security Cooperation

Why is it in News?

- India and Japan have agreed to deepen defence and maritime security cooperation during the meeting between Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi in New Delhi. The two countries signed a Memorandum of Arrangement (MoA) on Maritime Security Cooperation and agreed to explore greater cooperation in naval shipbuilding and design.

Key Highlights

- Maritime Security: India and Japan will strengthen cooperation in maritime security and naval coordination.
- Joint Shipbuilding: Both sides will explore joint development in naval shipbuilding and design.
- Maritime Domain Awareness: Cooperation will be enhanced in monitoring and understanding activities at sea.
- Joint Exercises: The countries will further strengthen naval exercises, personnel exchanges and operational coordination.
- Search and Rescue: Greater cooperation in search and rescue and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- Ship Repair: Both sides will work towards reciprocal access to ship-repair facilities.

Q. Which agreement was signed by India and Japan on maritime security cooperation? **Memorandum of Arrangement (MoA) on Maritime Security Cooperation.**



NMC Proposes “One Nation, One Licence” for Doctors to Practice Across India

Why is it in News?

- The National Medical Commission (NMC) has proposed draft regulations that could allow doctors with valid registration to practise medicine anywhere in India without obtaining separate state registrations. The proposal is part of the Draft Registration of Medical Practitioners and Licence to Practice Medicine (Amendment) Regulations, 2026.

What is “One Nation, One Licence”?

- Under the proposed system, a doctor would have a single national registration/licence instead of having to register separately with different State Medical Councils when moving to another state.
- The proposal aims to make the registration system more uniform, transparent and portable across India.

Key Features

- Single national registration: Doctors could practise across different states using one national licence.
- National Medical Register: The National Medical Register would be linked with State Medical Registers.
- Centralised records: Information regarding a doctor's licence status, suspension, removal and disciplinary action could be tracked nationally.
- Greater mobility: Doctors would not need to repeat registration procedures when shifting between states.

Q. Which body has proposed the “One Nation, One Licence” system for doctors? **National Medical Commission (NMC).**



India Launches Campaign for UN Security Council Non-Permanent Seat for 2028–29

Why is it in News?

- India has launched its campaign for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2028–29 term. The election is scheduled for June 2027, and India is competing against Tajikistan for the Asia-Pacific Group seat.
- India is seeking to return to the UNSC for the ninth time. Its previous term was 2021–22.

India's Campaign Theme

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar launched India's campaign at the UN Headquarters in New York.
- India's campaign is centred on “SHANTI”, standing for Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity.

The campaign highlights India's focus on:

- Respect for international law and rules
- Peace and security
- Trust and cooperation among nations
- Reformed and representative global institutions
- Greater voice for the Global South

How is the UNSC Structured?

The UNSC has 15 members:

- 5 Permanent Members: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- 10 Non-Permanent Members: Elected by the UN General Assembly for two-year terms.

Q. For which term has India launched its UNSC campaign? 2028–29.



Aparajita – Parang La 2026: All India Girls High Altitude Long Trek

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh flagged off the All India Girls High Altitude Long Trek “Aparajita – Parang La 2026” in New Delhi. It is a flagship adventure activity of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) aimed at promoting courage, leadership, discipline and resilience among young girls.

Key Highlights:

- The expedition will cover approximately 250 km across the challenging Parang La Pass, connecting Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh with the Changthang region of Ladakh.
- The trek will be completed over 30 days and involves 28 Girl Cadets, led by three women officers representing the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force.

Parang La Pass:

- Parang La is a high-altitude mountain pass in the Himalayas connecting Himachal Pradesh’s Spiti region with Ladakh. The route involves extreme altitude and challenging terrain, making it a demanding test of physical and mental endurance.

Objectives:

- Develop leadership and decision-making skills among NCC cadets.
- Promote mental resilience, discipline and self-confidence.
- Encourage greater participation of girls in adventure and challenging activities.
- Provide exposure to high-altitude environments.

Q. Which organisation conducted the ‘Aparajita – Parang La 2026’ high-altitude trek? **National Cadet Corps (NCC).**

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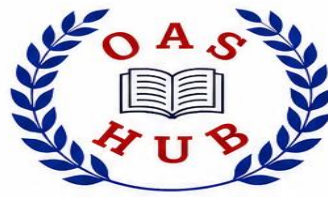
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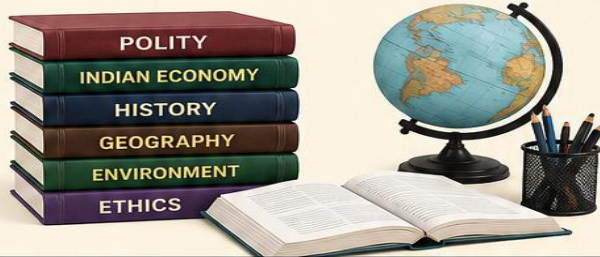
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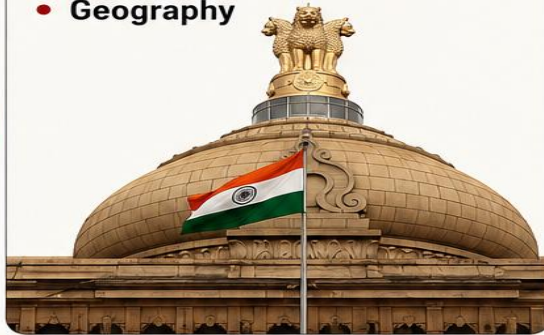
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