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ONGC Signs MoU with Shell Energy India for Oil, Gas and LNG Collaboration

- State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has signed an MoU with Shell Energy India Pvt Ltd to explore collaboration opportunities in India's energy sector, focusing on upstream oil and gas and LNG.

Key Considerations:

- Parties: ONGC and Shell Energy India Pvt Ltd.
- Upstream Oil & Gas: Joint participation in Deepwater and Ultra-Deepwater offshore blocks under OALP Rounds X and XI and future bid rounds.
- Farm-in/Farm-out: Exploration of opportunities in ONGC's existing OALP blocks.
- LNG: Both companies will explore LNG sourcing opportunities.
- MoU: Provides a non-binding framework for collaboration.
- Objective: Support deeper exploration, greater energy availability and India's long-term energy security.

Background:

- Samudra Manthan, officially known as the National Offshore Exploration Scheme, was approved by the Union Cabinet on 31 July 2026.
- The scheme has an outlay of ₹84,084 crore and aims to accelerate domestic offshore oil and gas exploration.
- It is designed to encourage greater participation and investment in India's deepwater and offshore oil and gas resources.

Q. Recently, ONGC signed an MoU with which company to explore collaboration in upstream oil, gas and LNG? **Shell Energy India Pvt Ltd.**



US Launches \$201 Million Trans-Caspian Enterprise Fund to Boost Middle Corridor

- The United States has launched a roughly \$201 million Trans-Caspian Enterprise Fund to promote private-sector investment across the Trans-Caspian region, supporting transport, energy, digital connectivity and related infrastructure.
- The initiative is associated with the TRIPP (Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity) and the broader Trans-Caspian Trade Route (Middle Corridor) connecting Central Asia with the South Caucasus and Europe.

What is the Trans-Caspian Enterprise Fund?

- The Trans-Caspian Enterprise Fund is a US-backed investment initiative intended to mobilise private capital for infrastructure and economic development across the Trans-Caspian region.
- Funding: Approximately \$201 million in US government funding.
- Purpose: Facilitate private-sector investment.
- Focus: Trans-Caspian region, including the South Caucasus and Central Asia.
- Key Areas: Infrastructure efficiency, digital connectivity, transport, energy and related economic activities.
- Broader Link: Supports the development of the wider Middle Corridor.

Q. Recently, the United States launched a \$201 million fund to promote private investment across which broader trade region? **The Trans-Caspian Trade Route (Middle Corridor).**



Astrobase Unveils 'Everest' 800 kN Rocket Engine for Reusable Launch Systems

- Bengaluru-based space start-up Astrobase Space Technologies has unveiled 'Everest', an 800 kN liquid oxygen–methane rocket engine using the Full-Flow Staged Combustion (FFSC) cycle. The company describes it as India's first privately built FFSC liquid rocket engine.
- The engine is intended for reusable medium-lift launch vehicles and forms part of Astrobase's plan to develop indigenous propulsion and launch infrastructure.

What is Everest Rocket Engine?

- Everest is an 800 kN-class LOX–methane rocket engine being developed by Astrobase Space Technologies.
- Thrust: 800 kN.
- Propellants: Liquid Oxygen (LOX) and Methane.
- Engine Cycle: Full-Flow Staged Combustion (FFSC).
- Specific Impulse: Around 340 seconds.
- Throttle Range: 50%–110%.
- Purpose: Reusable medium-lift launch vehicles.
- Status: Full-engine hot-fire testing is the next major development milestone.

What is Full-Flow Staged Combustion (FFSC)?

- FFSC is an advanced closed-cycle rocket-engine architecture in which the fuel-rich and oxidiser-rich streams are fully gasified before entering the combustion chamber.
- It is one of the most complex liquid rocket-engine architectures.

Q. Recently, which Indian space start-up unveiled the 'Everest' 800 kN Full-Flow Staged Combustion rocket engine? **Astrobase Space Technologies.**



Deepak Dhar Wins 2026 ICTP Dirac Medal for Contributions to Statistical Mechanics

- Renowned Indian theoretical physicist Deepak Dhar has been awarded the 2026 Dirac Medal by the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) for pioneering contributions to statistical mechanics.
- Dhar is one of four physicists selected for the 2026 Dirac Medal for advancing statistical mechanics and extending its concepts to areas including complex systems, theoretical neuroscience, optimisation and artificial intelligence.

About Deepak Dhar:

- Born: 30 October 1951, Pratapgarh, Uttar Pradesh.
- Field: Theoretical Physics and Statistical Physics.
- Education: University of Allahabad; IIT Kanpur; California Institute of Technology (Caltech).
- PhD: Caltech, 1978.
- TIFR: Worked in the Department of Theoretical Physics from 1978 to 2016.
- Current Position: INSA Distinguished Professor at the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS) of TIFR since 2024.
- Research Areas: Statistical physics and stochastic processes.

Q. Recently, who was awarded the 2026 Dirac Medal by the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP)? **Deepak Dhar.**



Deepti Gaur Mukerjee Appointed Higher Education Secretary

- Senior IAS officer Deepti Gaur Mukerjee has been appointed as the new Secretary of the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education.

Key Considerations:

- Appointee: Deepti Gaur Mukerjee.
- New Post: Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education.
- IAS Batch: 1993 batch
- Cadre: Madhya Pradesh cadre
- Previous Post: Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- Appointing Authority: Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
- Naresh Pal Gangwar: His earlier appointment as Higher Education Secretary had subsequently been kept in abeyance.

About Deepti Gaur Mukerjee:

- MCA Secretary: Appointed Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs in August 2024, succeeding Manoj Govil.
- NHA: Served as CEO of the National Health Authority (NHA) before becoming Corporate Affairs Secretary.
- Health Ministry: Served as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare before her NHA appointment.

Q. Recently, who has been appointed as the new Secretary of the Department of Higher Education? **Deepti Gaur Mukerjee.**



India Wins 1 Gold, 3 Bronze Medals At Linguistics Olympiad 2026

- India achieved one gold medal, three bronze medals and one honourable mention at the International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) 2026 in Bucharest, Romania.

India's Performance:

- Gold Medal: Shrilakshmi Venkatraman.
- Bronze Medals: Aarav Anil Rao, Nishanth Shankar Lakshmanan and Advay Misra.
- Honourable Mention: Soham Amit Pednekar.
- Host City: Bucharest, Romania.
- Edition: 23rd International Linguistics Olympiad.
- Dates: 26 July–2 August 2026.
- Participation: Students from more than 40 countries and territories.

What is the International Linguistics Olympiad?

- The International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) is an annual international competition for secondary-school students that tests linguistic problem-solving and logical reasoning.
- Established: 2003
- Students solve problems based on unfamiliar languages.
- No prior knowledge of linguistics or the languages used in problems is required.
- Problems test logic, pattern recognition, language analysis and problem-solving.
- The competition includes individual and team contests.

Q. Recently, who won the gold medal for India at the International Linguistics Olympiad 2026? **Shrilakshmi Venkatraman.**



Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026: Tax Exemptions for Foreign Investors and Businesses

- The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 was introduced in the Lok Sabha and passed by the Lok Sabha. It seeks to replace the Income-tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026 and introduce targeted tax exemptions for specified foreign investors, businesses and investment funds.

What is the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026?

- Introduced in : 4 August 2026, Lok Sabha
- Passed by Lok Sabha: 6 August 2026
- Purpose: Amend tax provisions and provide targeted exemptions to specified entities.
- Replaces: Income-tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026
- Ordinance Date: 5 June 2026
- Key Areas: Foreign investment, electronics manufacturing, investment funds and digital payments.

Tax Exemption for FIIs and BIS:

- Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) receive tax exemption on specified income from investments in Government Securities.
- The exemption covers interest income and capital gains arising from the specified government securities.
- The exemption applies to income arising on or after 1 April 2026.

Q. Recently, which Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha to replace the Income-tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026? **Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026**



MoSPI Signs Two MoUs with IDEAS, ISI Kolkata for Research Studies

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the Institute of Data Engineering, Analytics and Science Foundation (IDEAS), Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata for undertaking research studies and strengthening data-driven decision-making.
- Purpose: Undertake research studies and strengthen the use and harmonisation of statistical data.
- MoSPI's Role: Provide financial assistance and data support.
- IDEAS' Role: Develop a GDP nowcasting software tool and a harmonised indicator framework.

Key Areas of Collaboration:

- GDP Nowcasting: IDEAS will develop a desktop-based software tool for GDP nowcasting.
- Harmonised Indicator Framework: The framework will link administrative data related to government health, nutrition and well-being schemes with household-level NSS data.
- Data Harmonisation: The initiative will help harmonise MoSPI statistics with other data sources.
- Data-Driven Decision-Making: The collaboration aims to strengthen evidence-based policymaking and the use of data in governance.

Q. Recently, which organisation will develop the desktop-based software tool for GDP Nowcasting under MoSPI's MoU?
Institute of Data Engineering, Analytics and Science Foundation (IDEAS).



MSME Ministry and DPIIT Sign MoU to Promote GI Products

- The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) signed an MoU to promote the commercialisation, quality standardisation and market access of India's Geographical Indication (GI) products.

About the MoU:

- Parties: Ministry of MSME and DPIIT.
- Date: 5 August 2026.
- Venue: Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi.
- MSME Signatory: Md. Salik Parwaiz, Director, Ministry of MSME.
- DPIIT Signatory: Karan Thapar, Director, IPR Division, DPIIT.
- Purpose: Promote GI products through quality standardisation, digital enablement and wider market access.
- Beneficiaries: GI collectives, authorised users, artisans, weavers and producers.

Key Areas of Collaboration:

- ODOP Integration: The One District One Product (ODOP) initiative will be integrated into relevant GI-product programmes and interventions.
- Digital Platforms: GI collectives and authorised users will be facilitated to onboard ONDC and Government e-Marketplace (GeM).
- Bharat GI: GI products will be promoted under the "Bharat GI" brand on digital and other promotional platforms.

Q. Recently, which two organisations signed an MoU to promote India's GI products? **Ministry of MSME and DPIIT.**



Dr. Srinivasa Kumar Tummala Appointed Secretary of Ministry of Earth Sciences

- Renowned oceanographer Dr. Srinivasa Kumar Tummala has been appointed as the Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). He will serve for two years from the date of assuming charge or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

About Dr. Srinivasa Kumar Tummala:

- New Post: Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- Previous Role: Head, Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS) Secretariat, UNESCO-IOC, Perth, Australia.
- INCOIS: Served as Director from August 2020.
- Expertise: Remote sensing, satellite oceanography, coastal hazard mitigation, disaster risk reduction and marine science.
- Experience: More than three decades in ocean science and techno-managerial roles.

Key Contributions:

- Played a major role in establishing India's Tsunami Early Warning System at INCOIS following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.
- Led work related to Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) advisories and ocean information services.
- Contributed to coastal hazard mitigation, disaster risk reduction and ocean observations.

Q. Recently, who has been appointed as the Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences? **Dr. Srinivasa Kumar Tummala.**

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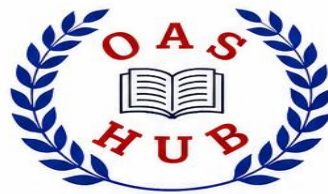
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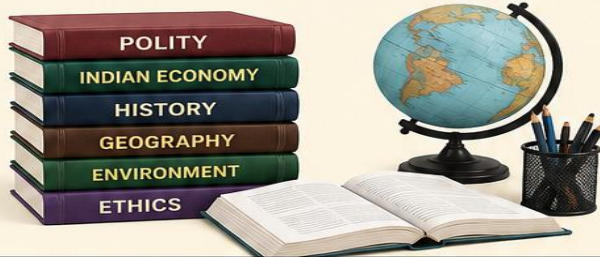
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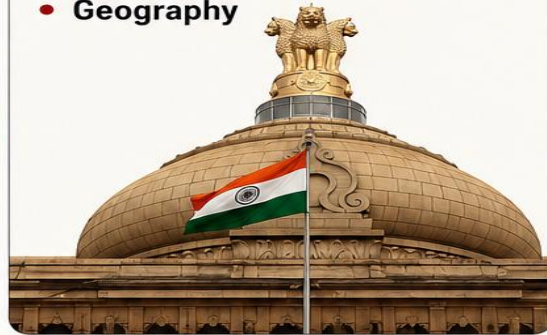
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