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Revival of Heritage Sports in Punjab

- The Punjab government, led by CM Bhagwant Mann, has lifted the ban on heritage sports such as bullock cart races, dog races, horse races, and pigeon racing, which had been in place since 1997.
- The decision aims to revive Punjab's rural cultural traditions and fulfill the government's promise to bring back much-loved heritage sports.
- Events will be regulated under new legislation that mandates strict animal welfare practices, with authorities monitoring for cruelty and harmful practices.
- Specific rules include guiding bulls through clapping only—harsh treatment or force is prohibited during these games.
- The move has been welcomed joyfully by villagers, cultural enthusiasts, and animal lovers across the state.
- A favorite in rural areas, pigeon racing's return is expected to promote community bonding and traditional village celebrations.
- The revival offers youth a way to reconnect with their roots and heritage, reducing dependency on digital distractions like mobile phones.
- Heritage sports often involve children and families, fostering intergenerational participation and celebration in villages.
- The government emphasizes showcasing Punjab's cultural vibrancy while ensuring animal dignity, compassion, and safety remain at the forefront.



Starlink got license to launch satellite internet in India

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Dr. A Rajarajan Appointed as New Director of VSSC



- Dr. A Rajarajan, a seasoned ISRO scientist and composites expert, has taken over as Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram, succeeding Dr. S Unnikrishnan Nair.
- With nearly 40 years in India's space programme, Dr. Rajarajan brings deep expertise in composite materials critical for satellites and launch vehicles.
- Before this role, he served as Director of Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC SHAR), Sriharikota, overseeing major launch operations and infrastructure upgrades.
- He supervised successful missions such as Chandrayaan-3, Aditya-L1, Gaganyaan TV-D1 test, and LVM3 M2/OneWeb India-1 — India's first commercial mission with OneWeb.
- Dr. Rajarajan was instrumental in enabling the launch of Vikram-S, India's first privately built rocket by Skyroot Aerospace, and supported Agnikul Cosmos' maiden launch.

- At SHAR, he led groundwork for ISRO's Human Space Programme (Gaganyaan) and planned a dedicated complex for Small Satellite Launch Vehicles (SSLV).
- He previously held leadership roles at VSSC, strengthening indigenous capabilities in solid motor production and strategic space technologies.
- His resource planning aligned with India's reformed space policy, aiming to expand public-private collaboration and global commercial presence.
- His leadership at VSSC is expected to drive growth in launch vehicle development, private participation, and international competitiveness in India's space sector.

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Lieutenant General Pushpendra Singh appointed new Vice Chief of the Indian Army

- Lieutenant General Pushpendra Singh has been appointed as the Vice-Chief of Army Staff and officially assumed charge on 1 August.
- He succeeded Lt Gen NS Rajasubramani, who assumed office on July 1, 2024.
- With over 35 years of distinguished service in the Indian Army, Mr. Singh brings immense operational experience, having participated in operations like Pawan, Meghdoot, Rakshak, and Orchid.
- His international service includes peacekeeping missions under the United Nations in Lebanon and Sri Lanka.
- Mr Singh has held various leadership roles throughout his career, including serving as the General Officer Commanding of the Rising Star Corps from April 2022.
- Lt. Gen. Singh is a recipient of the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal and has been twice awarded the Sena Medal for his exemplary service.
- Meanwhile, Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan took over as the next Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command on 31 July.
- Swaminathan assumed charge as Vice Chief of the Naval Staff (VCNS) on May 1, 2024.
- However, Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan succeeded Swaminathan as the Vice-Chief of Naval Staff on August 1.



Gomti Nagar: Uttar Pradesh's First Private Railway Station



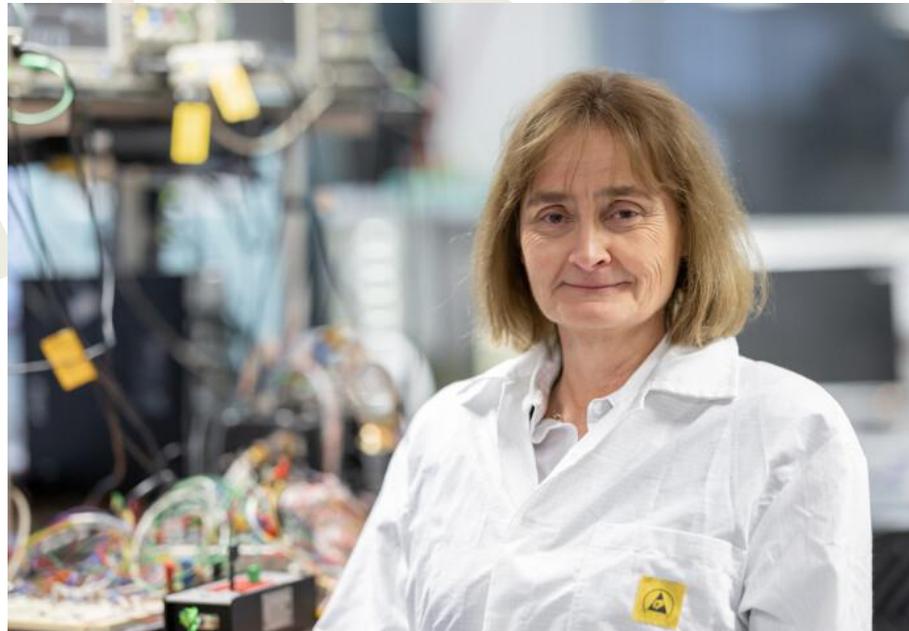
- Gomti Nagar Railway Station in Lucknow has become the first railway station in Uttar Pradesh to be managed by a private company under a new modernization initiative.
- Gomti Nagar is one of the busiest stations in the state, featuring 6 platforms and handling 76 trains daily, serving thousands of passengers.
- The station's privatization is focused on offering world-class facilities, cleaner premises, better amenities, and modern infrastructure for travelers.
- While Indian Railways will continue to handle ticketing, train operations, and passenger safety, the private operator will manage cleanliness, parking, station security, and general upkeep.
- The selected private company will get a three-year period for upgradation work, followed by a nine-year license to manage the station.

- According to the license terms, 85% of the revenue will go to Indian Railways, and 15% will go to the Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA).
- The Rail Land Development Authority is overseeing the bidding process and the entire privatization rollout to ensure transparency and efficiency.
- This move aligns with Indian Railways' nationwide plan to modernize stations and improve commuter facilities through private sector participation.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the redeveloped Gomti Nagar Railway Station, marking a historic moment in UP's transport infrastructure transformation.

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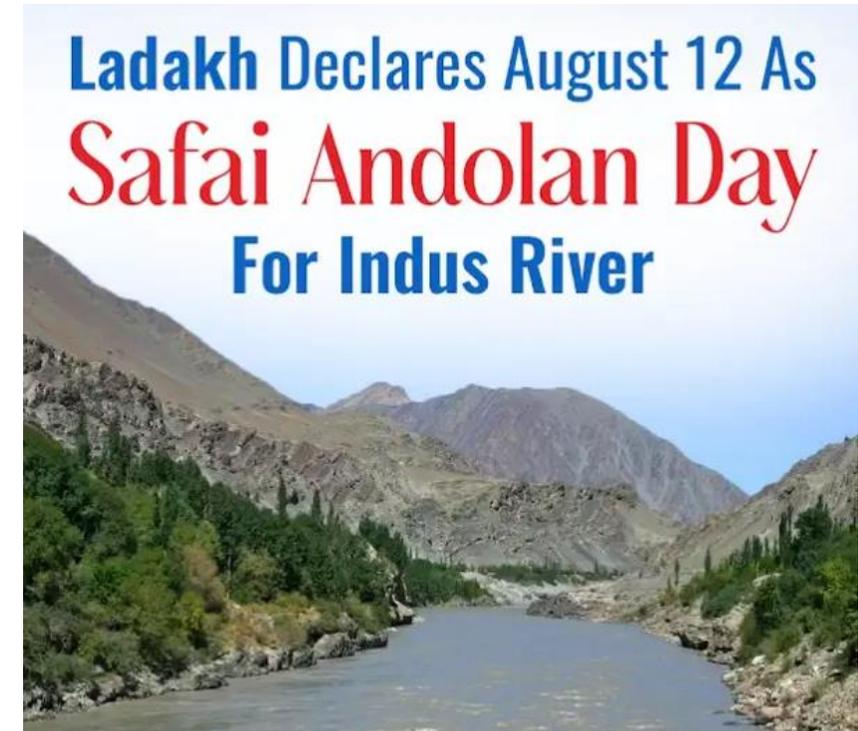
Professor Michele Karen Dougherty Appointed as the 16th Astronomer Royal of the UK

- The position was created in 1675. It is an honorary role that involves advising the British monarchy on astronomy. It also promotes public interest in science.
- Dougherty is well known for her work on NASA's Cassini mission to Saturn.
- During the mission, she helped discover jets of water vapor coming from Saturn's moon Enceladus.
- This discovery suggests that Enceladus may have the right conditions to support life.
- The title of Astronomer Royal was established in 1675, alongside the founding of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich.
- The first to hold the position was John Flamsteed.
- Michele Karen Dougherty is the sixteenth Astronomer Royal.
- Martin John Rees, Baron Rees of Ludlow, was the fifteenth Astronomer Royal from 1995 to 2025.



Ladakh has officially announced August 12 as Safai Andolan Day for Indus River Conservation

- The day is dedicated to protecting and cleaning the Indus River.
- A massive cleanup will take place along the river and its tributaries.
- Government agencies, armed forces, civil society groups, and students will all take part.
- This is the first government-supported campaign focused entirely on conserving the Indus River.
- The initiative is a combined effort by the Union Territory administration, Leh Hill Council, defense forces, and local communities.
- It is part of the larger Mission Indus Clean-up Movement, which began in June.
- The movement was launched in response to serious pollution concerns.
- Water testing had revealed high levels of arsenic in the Indus River.
- Mission Indus aims to reduce pollution and protect the river's biodiversity. It includes both urgent actions and long-term planning.
- Plans are in place to upgrade existing sewage treatment systems. Illegal dumping of waste is being strictly controlled.
- Awareness campaigns are being run with help from social and religious leaders.
- The Leh Hill Council is also working closely with village leaders and faith-based communities.
- This is to ensure local support and participation in the clean-up efforts.



Trump's New US Tariffs 2025

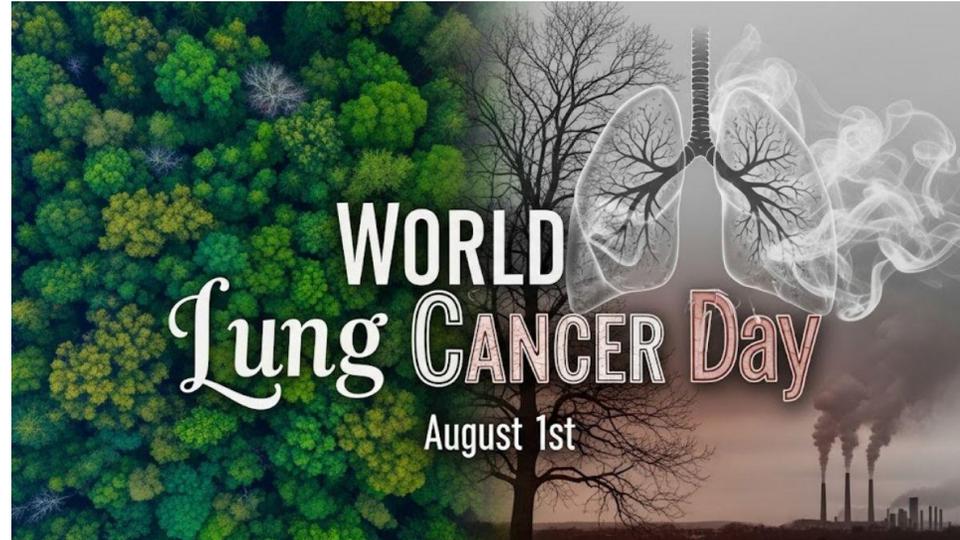


- US President Donald Trump has imposed new tariffs on imports from 68 countries, along with the 27-member European Union, under a new executive order effective August 7, 2025.
- The tariffs vary by country, with rates ranging from 10% to 41%. Countries not specifically listed will face a default 10% tariff.
- India, a key US trade partner, will face a 25% tariff, likely impacting exports in textiles, pharmaceuticals, auto components, and electronics.
- Syria (41%), Switzerland (39%), Myanmar and Laos (40%), and Iraq and Serbia (35%) are among the nations facing the highest tariffs.
- Goods from the European Union with a US “Column 1” duty rate above 15% are exempt, while those below it will be topped up to 15%.
- The tariffs are part of Trump’s “reciprocal tariffs” policy to match the duties imposed by other countries on US exports and promote fair trade.

- The new tariff rules take effect on August 7, 2025, with a short delay to allow customs authorities time to adapt.
- The tariffs are expected to increase prices of imports in the US, reduce competitiveness of foreign exporters, and disrupt global supply chains.
- While trade talks with Mexico have been extended by 90 days, no exemptions for other countries have been announced as of now.
- Judges have questioned the legal authority behind the tariffs, hinting at potential court battles, but the Trump administration plans to proceed regardless.

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World Lung Cancer Day 2025: United for Awareness, Prevention, and Early Detection



- World Lung Cancer Day is commemorated globally on August 1 to promote awareness, early detection, and prevention of one of the deadliest cancers worldwide.
- Lung cancer accounts for nearly 1 in 5 cancer-related deaths globally, often due to late detection and a lack of awareness about its risk factors.
- The day was first observed in 2012 through the joint efforts of the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) and patient advocacy groups to spotlight the urgency of combating lung cancer.

Types of Lung Cancer

- **Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC):** The most common and slower-growing type.
- **Small Cell Lung Cancer (SCLC):** Less common but more aggressive and fast-spreading.
- Apart from smoking and second-hand smoke, causes include air pollution, occupational hazards (like asbestos and silica), radon gas exposure, and genetic predisposition.

- Early symptoms like persistent cough, shortness of breath, unexplained weight loss, chest pain, and recurring infections are often ignored or misattributed.
- Tests like chest X-rays, CT/PET scans, bronchoscopy, sputum cytology, and biopsies help detect lung cancer and determine its stage for treatment.
- Approaches include surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, targeted therapy, immunotherapy, and palliative care depending on cancer type and stage.
- Innovations like precision radiotherapy, molecular testing for personalized treatment, next-gen immunotherapy, and minimally invasive surgeries are improving outcomes.
- Misconceptions such as “only smokers or old men get lung cancer” hinder detection. Education is key even non-smokers, women, and youth are at risk, and quitting smoking post-diagnosis helps recovery.
- **Indian government schemes and initiatives related to lung cancer, respiratory health, and cancer care**
- **Union Budget 2025–26:** ₹99,858.56 crore allocated to the Health Ministry to strengthen cancer care and related health services.
- **Health Minister’s Cancer Patient Fund (HMCPF):** Launched in 2009 under Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi, it provides up to ₹15 lakh financial aid for BPL cancer patients..
- **National Cancer Grid (NCG):** Established in 2012, NCG is the world’s largest cancer network with 287 members, working with PM-JAY and NDHM to deliver standardized, affordable cancer care across India.

- **NexCAR19 – India’s First Indigenous CAR-T Therapy:** Launched in April 2024 by IIT Bombay, Tata Memorial Centre, and ImmunoACT, NexCAR19 is a next-generation, affordable CAR-T cell therapy for blood cancer, marking a major leap in India’s biotech and oncology capabilities.
- **Quad Cancer Moonshot Initiative (2024):** A joint effort by India, the US, Japan, and Australia to eliminate cervical cancer, focusing on mass screening, HPV vaccination, advanced research, and improving survival rates across the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Expansion of ACTREC (Jan 2025):** ACTREC, under Tata Memorial Centre, began a major expansion to strengthen cancer research, clinical care, and innovation, aiming to advance India’s leadership in oncology.

IACTREC

World Wide Web Day 2025 (August 1): Theme, Significance & Celebrations



- Observed globally on August 1 every year, World Wide Web Day celebrates the internet's transformative impact and stresses the need for safe, inclusive, and equitable digital access for all.
- The theme for 2025 is "Empowering the Future: Building an Inclusive, Safe, and Open Web," highlighting the importance of bridging the digital divide and promoting ethical tech use.
- Invented by Sir Tim Berners-Lee in 1989, the World Wide Web has evolved from static pages to dynamic, AI-powered platforms that revolutionized communication, education, and commerce.
- Celebratory activities include coding bootcamps, cybersecurity training, hackathons, digital literacy sessions, outreach to underserved communities, and DIY website clinics.
- The future of the web is envisioned as Web 3.0, emphasizing decentralization, blockchain security, AI integration, and universal access without exclusion.

- India, through initiatives like Digital India, focuses on closing rural-urban digital gaps, enhancing infrastructure, and improving access for marginalized communities.
- The day also recognizes digital pioneers, including developers, educators, and advocates for online freedom and equity.
- Events like digital storytelling sessions and web exhibitions are held to honor contributions to digital rights and internet empowerment.
- World Wide Web Day serves as a global reminder of the need to shape a digital future that is inclusive, safe, and accessible for all.

Related Indian Government Schemes:

- **Digital India Mission**

- Launched in 2015, this flagship initiative aims to transform India into a digitally empowered society by providing digital infrastructure, e-governance services, and digital literacy.
- **BharatNet Project**-Aims to connect all 2.5 lakh gram panchayats with high-speed broadband, reducing the digital divide and enabling rural access to internet services.
- **PMGDISHA (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan)**-Focuses on making 6 crore rural citizens digitally literate, ensuring they can safely and effectively use the internet and online services.

The Cabinet has approved ₹6520 crore for the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)

Cabinet Approves

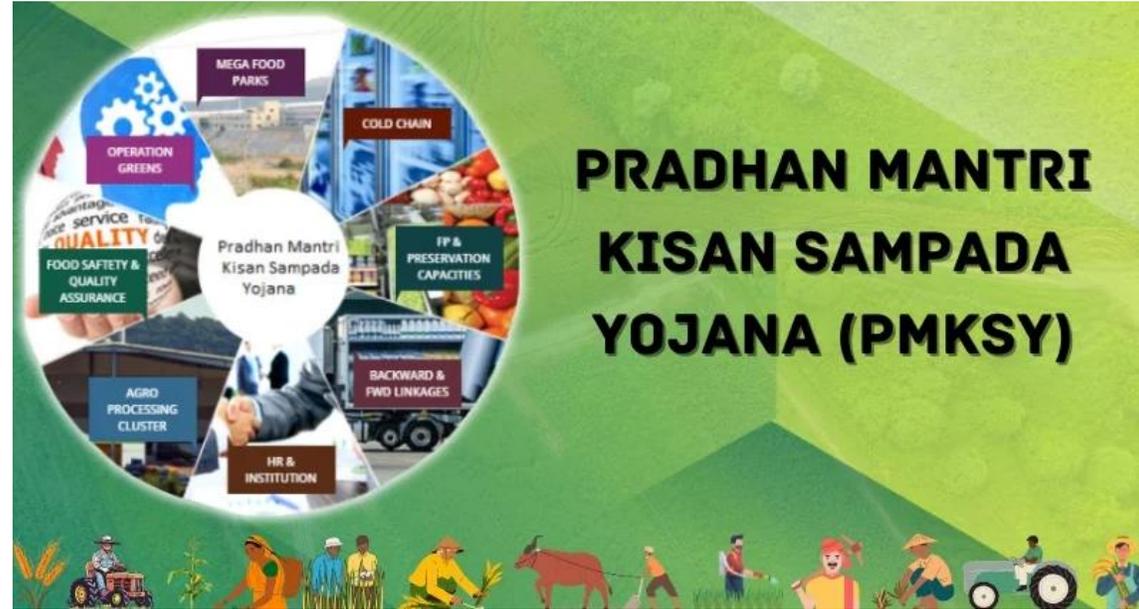
**₹6,520 crore for
Pradhan Mantri Kisan
Sampada Yojana**

- This funding is allocated for the 15th Finance Commission period.
- An additional ₹1920 crore is included to continue existing projects under PMKSY.
- ₹1000 crore will be spent to build 50 Multi-Product Food Irradiation Units.
- These units fall under the Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure (ICCVAI) component of the scheme.
- 100 food testing labs will also be established. These labs will have NABL certification and come under the Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure (FSQAI) component.
- ₹920 crore has been set aside for funding various other projects within PMKSY during this period.
- The Cabinet also approved a new Central Sector Scheme titled “Grant-in-Aid to National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).”
- This scheme has an outlay of ₹2000 crore. It will run from 2025–26 to 2028–29.
- With this aid, NCDC will raise ₹20,000 crore from the open market over four years.

- The funds will be used to offer loans to cooperatives. These loans will support new projects, plant expansion, and working capital needs.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has also approved four railway multitracking projects.
- These projects will span 13 districts in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, and Jharkhand.
- They will expand the railway network by approximately 574 kilometers.
- The total cost of these projects is estimated at ₹11,169 crore.
- The projects are expected to be completed by 2028–29.

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Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)



- The scheme was introduced in 2017.
- It is an umbrella scheme that is implemented by the Ministry of Food Processing and Industries.
- PMKSY is a comprehensive package of component schemes, which aimed at creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet.