



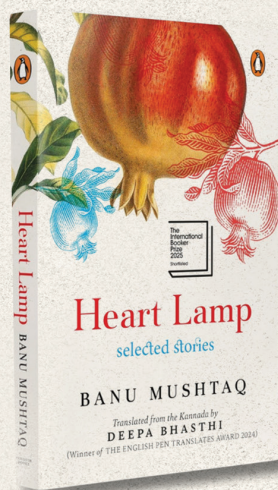
WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Coverage of

21 May - 27 May, 2025

★★ Useful for ★★

**UPSC ESE, PSUs,
RRB, SSC, Banking &
State Services Exams**



The
International
Booker
Prize
2025

Winner of
The Booker Prize 2025
Heart Lamp



BANU MUSHTAQ

Translated from the Kannada by
DEEPA BHASTHI
(Winner of THE ENGLISH PEN TRANSLATES AWARD 2024)

21st MAY 2025

Government e Marketplace (GeM)

- **Context:** Government e-Marketplace (GeM), India's national public procurement portal, marked its 8th Incorporation Day.

About Government e-Marketplace

- GeM is a one stop portal to facilitate online procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Government Departments / Organizations / PSUs.
- It was launched in 2016, and is operated by the GeM SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle), a 100% government-owned company under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It aims to enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement.
- The purchases through GeM by Government users have been authorized and made mandatory by the Ministry of Finance in 2017.

Key Facts

- GeM's user base has seen a threefold increase in recent years, with over 1.64 lakh primary buyers and 4.2 lakh active sellers now onboard.
- The platform offers more than 10,000 product categories and over 330 services.
- Over 10 lakh Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), 1.3 lakh artisans and weavers, 1.84 lakh women entrepreneurs, and 31,000 startups are now part of the GeM ecosystem.
- GeM's role in advancing national priorities was underscored by key transactions, including ₹5,000 crore worth of equipment for the Akash Missile System and ₹5,085 crore in vaccine procurement.
- GeM has now been adopted across all 36 States and Union Territories, with Uttar Pradesh leading the way.
- **Eight states**—including Maharashtra, Manipur, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Assam, Uttarakhand, and Chhattisgarh—have mandated GeM usage.

Trachoma

- **Context:** India has been awarded the Certificate of Elimination of Trachoma as a Public Health Problem by the World Health Organisation (WHO) at the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva.

Key Facts

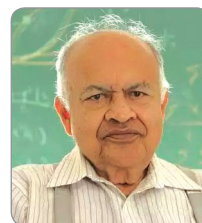
- Last year, the WHO declared that the Government of India had eliminated Trachoma as a public health problem.
- India also became the third country in the Southeast Asia region to reach this public health milestone.
- The government has taken various steps under the National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCBVI) to eliminate Trachoma.

About Trachoma

- Trachoma is a disease of the eye caused by infection with the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*.
- It is a public health problem in 38 countries and is responsible for the blindness or visual impairment of about 1.9 million people.
- Blindness from trachoma is irreversible.
- Infection spreads through personal contact (via hands, clothes, bedding or hard surfaces) and by flies that have been in contact with discharge from the eyes or nose of an infected person.
- There isn't a commercially available trachoma vaccine, research is ongoing to develop one.

Jayant Narlikar

- **Context:** Dr. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar, renowned Indian astrophysicist who proposed an alternative to Big Bang theory passed away.



Key Facts

- Jayant Narlikar worked at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (1972–1989).
- He founded the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) in 1988 and served as its director until 2003.

- **Scientific Contributions:** Remembered for his collaborative work with British astrophysicist Fred Hoyle on the Hoyle-Narlikar theory, which supported the steady-state model of the universe—an alternative to the Big Bang theory.
- Steady-State Theory proposed that the universe is eternal and unchanging in density, despite its expansion, due to the continuous creation of new matter. It contrasts with the Big Bang theory, which posits a singular creation event 13.8 billion years ago.
- He contributed to adapting Einstein's general relativity to accommodate continuous matter creation.
- **Awards:** Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan & Kalinga Award by UNESCO.

22nd MAY 2025

Mizoram: India's First Fully Literate State

- **Context:** Mizoram has been declared India's first fully literate state, marking a historic milestone in the state's educational journey.

Key Highlights

- India's total literacy rate for individuals aged 7 and above, across both rural and urban areas, stands at 80.9% for the period 2023–24.
- India's literacy rate has grown from 14% at independence to approximately 80.9% in 2023–24.
- Mizoram has achieved "full literacy" status, reaching 98.2%, surpassing the 95% threshold set by the Ministry of Education as per the 2023–24 PLFS survey.
- Earlier, Ladakh became the first administrative unit to declare full functional literacy under ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society).
- Andhra Pradesh (72.6%) and Bihar (74.3%) have the lowest literacy rates, per the PLFS 2023–24 MoSPI survey.

About Literacy

- As per the Office of the Registrar General of India, a literate person is someone aged 7 or above who can read and write with understanding in any language.
- The Department of School Education and Literacy has introduced a refined definition of literacy aligned with NEP 2020 and SDG 4.6 goals.
- Literacy is now defined as the ability to read, write, and compute with comprehension, along with critical life skills such as digital and financial literacy. This expanded definition aims to ensure full societal participation and economic progress.
- A state/UT achieving 95% literacy is considered fully literate.

About ULLAS – Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram

- ULLAS is a centrally sponsored scheme (2022–2027) aligned with NEP 2020, aimed at educating adults aged 15+ who missed formal schooling.
- It has five components- Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Critical Life Skills, Basic Education, Vocational Skills and Continuing Education.
- It aims to make Bharat – Jan Jan Saakshar and is based on the spirit of Kartavya Bodh and is being implemented on volunteerism.

International Day for Biodiversity 2025

- **Context:** The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated every year on 22 May.

Key Facts

- The IDB commemorates the adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on 22 May 1992 during the Rio Earth Summit.
- The day creates awareness among the citizens and stakeholders on the importance and need for the conservation of biological diversity.
- The 2025 theme is "Harmony with Nature and Sustainable Development."

About Convention on Biological Diversity

- The Convention was opened for signature in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio Earth Summit).
- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) entered into force on 29 December 1993.
- The first session of the COP was scheduled in 1994 in the Bahamas.
- The CBD has been ratified by 196 nations, making it one of the most widely adopted international treaties.
- The United States is the only UN member state that has not ratified the convention.
- **It has 3 main objectives:**
 - The conservation of biological diversity
 - The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity
 - The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
- The governing body is the Conference of the Parties (COP), which meets every two years.
- **Secretariat:** Montreal, Canada.

Mission LiFE

- **Context:** The government is considering adding Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) to the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).

About Mission LiFE

- At the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP26), India announced Mission LiFE, to bring individual behaviors at the forefront of the global climate action narrative.
- The mission envisions replacing the prevalent 'use-and-dispose' economy with a circular economy, which would be defined by mindful and deliberate utilization.
- In India, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GoI (MoEF&CC) is the nodal Ministry for national level coordination and implementation of Mission Life.

Objectives:

- Make life a mass movement (Jan Andolan) by focusing on behaviors and attitudes of individuals and communities.
- Crowdsourcing empirical and scalable ideas from the best minds of the world, through top universities, think tanks and international organizations.
- Leverage climate-friendly social norms, beliefs and daily household practices of different cultures worldwide to drive the campaign.

About National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)

- The NAPCC is India's comprehensive policy framework for addressing climate change, launched in 2008. It currently comprises eight core missions:
 - National Solar Mission
 - National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency
 - National Mission on Sustainable Habitat
 - National Water Mission
 - National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem
 - National Mission for a Green India
 - National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture
 - National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change

23rd MAY 2025

USA's Golden Dome Project

- **Context:** US President Donald Trump announced a shortlisted design for the Golden Dome.

About Golden Dome Project

- It is a multi-domain missile defense shield designed to operate across land, sea, air, and space.
- It is a missile defense shield which is inspired by Israel's Iron Dome.
- **Features:**
 - It incorporates thousands of small satellites with interceptors capable of targeting missiles shortly after launch.

- It is designed to defend the entire U.S. against threats like intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) from rivals such as China and Russia.
- It will combine space-based interceptors with ground- and sea-based tracking and targeting systems.

Other Major Missile Defense Systems

- **Iron Dome (Israel):** It is a short-range missile and rocket defense.
- **THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) [USA]:** Intercepts short, medium and intermediate-range ballistic missiles in their terminal phase.
- **S-400 Triumf (Russia):** Long-range air and missile defense system.
- **HQ-19 (China):** Mid-course ballistic missile defense (similar to THAAD).

iGOT Karmayogi

- **Context:** Over one crore civil servants have now registered on the iGOT Karmayogi platform.

About iGOT Karmayogi

- iGOT Karmayogi (Integrated Government Online Training) is the digital platform launched under Mission Karmayogi, India's National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB).
- It serves as the central learning hub for government officials at every level—offering online, anytime, and modular learning.
- The platform aims to shift India's bureaucratic training culture from one-time, classroom-based methods to continuous, role-based digital learning.
- The platform's design is modular and scalable, functioning as a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). It is developed as an integral part of the Digital India stack.

International Booker Prize 2025

- **Context:** 'Heart Lamp' by Banu Mushtaq, translated from Kannada by Deepa Bhasthi, has won the 2025 International Booker Prize.

Key Facts

- The book comprises 12 short stories, originally published in Kannada between 1990 and 2023, that vividly capture the everyday lives of women and girls in Muslim communities in southern India.
- It is the first book translated from Kannada—a language spoken by an estimated 65 million people—and the first short story collection to win the International Booker Prize.

About International Booker Prize

- This prize is awarded annually to the best works of long-form fiction or collections of short stories, translated into English and published in the United Kingdom (UK) or Ireland.
- It recognises the vital role of translators, with the £50,000 prize shared equally between the author and the translator.
- **Past Winners:** Kairos (2024) by Jenny Erpenbeck, translated by Michael Hofmann, Time Shelter (2023) by Georgi Gospodinov, translated by Angela Rodel, and Tomb of Sand (2022) — the first Hindi novel to win — by Geetanjali Shree, translated by Daisy Rockwell.

■ DO YOU KNOW:

- The Booker Prize is a separate award given annually for the best novel written in English, published in the UK or Ireland.
- **2024 Winner:** Orbital by Samantha Harvey
- **Past Indian Booker Prize winners:** Arundhati Roy (God of Small Things), Kiran Desai (Inheritance of Loss), and Aravind Adiga (White Tiger).

24th MAY 2025

Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

- **Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated 103 redeveloped railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, across 86 districts in 18 states and union territories, at a cost of over Rs 1,100 crore.

About Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

- The scheme can be traced back to 2021, when Gandhinagar became the first Railway station to undergo modernization.
- A total of 1,300 stations have been identified for redevelopment under the scheme.
- Out of these, 157 are in Uttar Pradesh, followed by 132 in Maharashtra and 101 in West Bengal.
- The goal of the scheme is to make stations cleaner, more comfortable, and easier to use.
- Local products will be sold at kiosks under the 'One Station One Product' scheme, and efforts will be made to make stations look greener and more attractive.

About One Station One Product

- 'One Station One Product' concept aims to encourage indigenous and specialised products and crafts of India through providing display and sale outlets on railway stations across the country.
- The products would be specific to the location, including artefacts made by indigenous tribes, handlooms by local weavers and products indigenously grown in the area.

Chagos Islands

- **Context:** The United Kingdom signed an agreement handing sovereignty over the contested and strategically located Chagos Islands to Mauritius.

About Chagos Islands

- The Chagos Archipelago is a group of seven atolls comprising more than 60 islands, and is located in the Indian Ocean.
- The Chagos Islands, officially known as the British Indian Ocean Territory was separated from Mauritius in 1965, when Mauritius was still a British colony. However, Mauritius has argued that it was illegally forced to give them away as part of a deal to gain independence from Britain.
- In the late 1960s, Britain invited the US to build a military base on Diego Garcia, the largest of the Chagos Islands.

- Under the agreement, the United Kingdom will pay Mauritius 136 million dollars per year to lease back the US-UK military base for at least 99 years.

New Development Bank (NDB)

- **Context:** The New Development Bank (NDB) has admitted Algeria as a new member, further expanding its global membership base.

About New Development Bank (NDB)

- **Genesis:** Founded by BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). Established during the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil (2014) and operational since 2015.
- **Objectives:** To mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies.
- **Membership:** Initially limited to BRICS, now includes Bangladesh, Egypt, UAE, Uruguay, and Algeria.
- **Capital Structure:** Its initial authorized capital is USD 100 billion, with an initial subscribed capital of USD 50 billion equally distributed among the founding members.
 - It has equal shareholding among BRICS countries ensures no single country has veto power.
- **Headquarters:** Shanghai, China.

25th MAY 2025

Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)

- **Context:** Recently, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has launched the Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI) as part of the Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP) to safeguard financial systems and telecom infrastructure.

About Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)

- FRI is a risk-based metric that classifies mobile numbers into three categories—Medium, High, or Very High risk—based on their likelihood of being involved in fraudulent activities.

- This classification is derived from multiple data sources, including the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre's National Cybercrime Reporting Portal, the DoT's Chakshu platform, and information shared by banks and financial institutions.
- When a mobile number is flagged, it undergoes a multi-dimensional analysis to assess its risk level. The FRI assessment is then shared with stakeholders in real-time.
- Major UPI platforms like PhonePe, Paytm, and Google Pay are now integrating FRI alerts.

Students & Exchange Visitor Programme (SEVP)

- **Context:** The Trump administration revoked the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), which allowed Harvard University to enroll international students.

Key Highlights

- This comes amid Harvard and the Trump administration's tussle about key programs.
- The president has been putting pressure on the college to fall in line with his agenda.
- SEVP is a US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) program, administered by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- It oversees international students and exchange visitors at institutions like Harvard University on F-1 (academic students), M-1 (vocational students), and J-1 (exchange visitors) visas.
- EVP certification allows Harvard to enroll international students, who make up over 27% of its student body.
- The program requires Harvard to use the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to report data such as enrollment status, academic progress, and disciplinary records to ensure visa compliance.

About Harvard University

- It is a part of the Ivy League, a group of eight prestigious northeastern U.S. universities.
- It was established in 1636 and is the oldest institution of higher education in the United States.
- Regularly ranked among the top universities in the world.
- Harvard library is the largest academic library in the world.

26th MAY 2025

India: World's 4th Largest Economy

- **Context:** Recently, NITI Aayog CEO B.V.R. Subrahmanyam informed that India has surpassed Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy (nominal GDP), and poised to displace Germany in the next 2.5 to 3 years.

Key Highlights

- India's nominal GDP has now reached \$4.19 trillion, overtaking Japan's estimated \$4.18 trillion.
- The IMF's World Economic Outlook report predicts that India aims to continue to be the fastest-growing major economy, with a projected growth rate of 6.2% in 2025 and 6.3% in 2026.
- Over the past decade, India has doubled its GDP from \$2.1 trillion in 2015 to its current level.
- The IMF projects that India will become the third-largest economy by 2028, with an expected GDP of \$5.5 trillion by overtaking Germany.
- Germany's projected GDP growth: 0% (2025), and 0.9% (2026) (due to ongoing global trade tensions).

Bharat Forecasting System

- **Context:** The Ministry of Earth Sciences has launched the Bharat Forecasting System (BFS).

About Bharat Forecasting System

- Developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, to deliver highly localized weather forecasts with a 6 km resolution—the most advanced globally.

- It allows for more precise prediction of small-scale weather events.
- It is powered by the supercomputer Arka (11.77 petaflops, 33 petabytes).
- The previous supercomputer 'Pratyush' used to take up to 10 hours to run the forecasting model.
- It covers the tropical region (30°S to 30°N), including all of India, and surpasses global models from the U.S., UK, and Europe, which operate at 9–14 km resolution.
- **Importance:**
 - It significantly improves processing speed over the previous system, reducing model run time from 10 hours to 4.
 - It uses data from 40 Doppler Weather Radars, with plans to expand to 100, enabling both detailed local forecasts and nowcasts (2-hour forecasts).
 - It marks a major advancement in India's meteorological self-reliance, with benefits for disaster management, agriculture, water resources, and public safety down to the panchayat level.
 - Supports India's commitment to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

27th MAY 2025

Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI)

- **Context:** The Ministry of Panchayati Raj rolled out Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) Version 2.0.

Key Highlights

- PAI is a multidimensional assessment framework developed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to enable performance tracking of over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats across nine themes aligned with the Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs).
- The nine LSDG-aligned themes include: Poverty-free and Enhanced Livelihoods, Healthy, Child-

Friendly Panchayat, Water-Sufficient Panchayat, Clean and Green Panchayat, Panchayat with Self-Sufficient Infrastructure, Socially Just and Socially Secured, Panchayat with Good Governance, and Women-Friendly.

- The transition from PAI 1.0 to 2.0 reflects a focused refinement of the framework, with a sharper and more practical set of indicators and data points.
- **Significance:** It provides public representatives, policy makers, government agencies, and local authorities with valuable insights into the areas that require attention.

India's first 9000 HP Electric Locomotive

- **Context:** Siemens India has announced the delivery of India's first 9000 HP electric locomotive, with critical components built at its Nashik, Aurangabad, and Mumbai facilities.

Key Highlights

- The D9 – 9000 HP electric locomotive is among the most powerful freight locomotives globally.
- An electric locomotive is a type of railway engine that runs on electricity, instead of using diesel or steam power.
- It is built at the Dahod factory in Gujarat under Indian Railways, with significant involvement from Siemens India.
- It is a part of the Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Horsepower:** 9000 HP.
 - **Top Speed:** 120 km/h.
 - **Technology:** ~90% made in India.
 - **Safety:** Equipped with Kavach (train collision avoidance system).
- **Maintenance:** Handled by Siemens for 35 years using Railigent X for predictive maintenance.