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Weekly Current Affairs

(1st MAY - 7th MAY)



W W W . T E S T C O A C H . I N

Cabinet clears caste enumeration in Census

What is a Caste Census?

A **Caste Census** refers to the collection of data about the **caste identities** of individuals in the population. While India collects data on **Scheduled Castes (SC)** and **Scheduled Tribes (ST)** through the regular Census, it has **not collected data on Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** since **1931**.

Constitutional and Legal Aspects:

Article 340: Provides for appointment of a commission to investigate conditions of backward classes.

Article 15(4) of the Indian Constitution allows the state to make special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens, including Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Extra information:

- The **last full caste-based census** was conducted in **1931** during British rule
- Since 1951, the Census has recorded only SC and ST data, omitting OBCs to maintain a caste-neutral policy approach.

Ex-RAW chief is new NSAB head

What is R&AW?

The **Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW)** is India's **external intelligence agency**, responsible for gathering **foreign intelligence**, counter-terrorism, and counter-proliferation. It works under the **Prime Minister's Office (PMO)**.

Historical Background

Year	Event
1968	R&AW was formed after intelligence failures in the 1962 China War and 1965 Indo-Pak War .
Founder	R.N. Kao , India's first spymaster.
Predecessor	Intelligence Bureau (IB), which handled both internal and external intelligence earlier.

Extra Information:

- **National Security Advisory Board: Established in 1998**, it operates under the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) and works alongside two other key bodies; the Strategic Policy Group (SPG) and the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC).

- The government has reconstituted the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) with a new set of appointments, including former Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) **chief Alok Joshi as chairman**, along with 7 other members. This comes amidst growing discussions on India's response to the Pahalgam terror attack.

Digital Access is Part of the Right to Life and Liberty

- **Article 21** of the Indian Constitution states: *"No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."*

Components of Article 21 (Judicially Interpreted):

- Right to live with **human dignity**
- Right to **health and medical care**
- Right to **education** (linked with Article 21A)
- Right to a **pollution-free environment**
- Right to **shelter, livelihood, privacy**
- Right to **legal aid** and **speedy trial**

NCW forms panel to probe rape-blackmail cases in Bhopal

- The National Commission for Women (NCW) is a **statutory body** of the Government of India, generally concerned with advising the government on all policy matters affecting women. It was established on **31 January 1992** under the provisions of **National Commission for Women Act, 1990**.
- The first head of the commission was Jayanti Patnaik. As of 19 October 2024, Vijaya Kishore Rahatkar is the chairperson.

Submit report on Hubbali rape-murder, suspect's death: NHRC

Establishment and Legal Basis

- **Established: 1993**
- **Legal Basis:** The **Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**
- **Type:** Statutory Body
- **Under:** **Ministry of Home Affairs**, Government of India
- **Purpose:** To promote and protect human rights in India by ensuring compliance with the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** and other international human rights treaties.

Composition of NHRC

The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** is a **multi-member body** comprising:

1. **Chairperson:** A retired Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court judge.
2. **Members:**
 - A sitting or retired judge of the Supreme Court.
 - A sitting or retired Chief Justice of a High Court.
 - Three individuals with expertise in human rights, including at least one woman.

Additionally, **seven ex-officio members** are included:

- Chairpersons of various national commissions such as the **National Commission for Minorities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Women, Backward Classes, Child Rights**, and the **Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities**.

Defence Minister to attend Russia's Victory Day parade

What is Victory Day?

- **Date:** May 9 (annually)
- **Occasion:** Commemorates the **Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in World War II (1945)**.
- Known in Russia as the **Great Patriotic War**.
- Celebrates the **sacrifice of 27+ million Soviet citizens**.
- Held at **Red Square, Moscow**.

Extra Information:

- World War II, started in **Europe in 1939** and assumed the character of a world war. It was fought between **Allied and Axis powers**.
- The **Allied powers** were represented by Great Britain, USA, France etc. While the **Axis powers were led by Germany, Italy and Japan**.
- The war came to an end in **September 1945**.

Fair remunerative price for sugar cane increased

What is FRP?

- FRP is the **minimum price** at which **sugar mills** are legally required to purchase **sugarcane** from farmers.
- Announced annually by the **Central Government**, based on the recommendations of the **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)**.
- Governed by the **Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966** under the **Essential Commodities Act, 1955**.
- **Binding nature:** Mills must pay at least the FRP, regardless of market price.
- **No linkage with sugar prices:** Farmers must be paid even if mills face losses.

Breathing life into Vembanad lake

All about Vembanad Lake

- **Location:** **Longest lake in India, largest in Kerala** (96.5 km); spans Alappuzha, Kottayam, and Ernakulam districts.
- **Rivers:** Fed by Meenachil, Pamba, Achankovil, Manimala, etc.; drains into Arabian Sea.
- **Ecological Significance:** Part of Vembanad-Kol Wetland (Ramsar site, 2002); home to Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary.
- **Cultural Highlight:** Nehru Trophy Snake Boat Race held annually in August (Punnamada Lake segment).
- **Environmental Issues:** 27% shrinkage (1917–1990), pollution, water hyacinth, plastic waste.
- **Conservation:** Included under National Wetlands Conservation Programme; cleanup and regulation efforts ongoing.

Is natural hydrogen the fuel of the future?

What is Hydrogen Fuel?

A **clean fuel** that produces only water as a by-product when used in a **fuel cell**. It can be produced via:

- **Electrolysis** of water (Green Hydrogen)
- **Steam methane reforming** (Grey/Blue Hydrogen)
- **Natural geological sources** (White Hydrogen)

Types of Hydrogen

Type	Source	Emissions
Grey	Fossil fuels (natural gas)	High CO ₂
Blue	Fossil fuels + carbon capture	Low CO ₂
Green	Renewable energy-based electrolysis	Zero CO ₂
White	Naturally occurring underground hydrogen	Zero CO ₂

Vizhinjam port to boost South Asia's maritime trade

- **Vizhinjam International Seaport:** It is India's first deep-water transshipment port, designed for container and multi-purpose cargo.
- With a natural draft of 20–24 meters, the port can accommodate Ultra Large Container Vessels (ULCVs) without extensive dredging.

- Vizhinjam is India's first semi-automated port, equipped with an AI-driven control room and the country's first Indigenous Vessel Traffic Management System (VTMS), enhancing operational efficiency

GST collection hits record high of 2.37 lakh crore in April

What is GST?

- **GST** is a **comprehensive, destination-based indirect tax** on manufacture, sale, and consumption of goods and services.
- Introduced in **India on July 1, 2017** through the **101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016**.
- **One Nation, One Tax:** Unified indirect tax system across the country.
- **Destination-Based Tax:** Tax is collected at the point of consumption, not origin.

GST Council

- Created under **Article 279A**.
- Chaired by **Union Finance Minister**.
- Members: Finance ministers of all states
- Decides GST rates, exemptions, thresholds, etc.

Grand celebrations mark Maharashtra Foundation Day

- **Maharashtra Foundation Day**, also known as **Maharashtra Day** or **Maharashtra Din**, is celebrated annually on **May 1** to commemorate the formation of the state of Maharashtra in 1960. This day marks the culmination of the **Samyukta Maharashtra Movement**, which advocated for a separate state for Marathi-speaking people
- Prior to 1960, Bombay State was linguistically diverse, including Marathi, Gujarati, Konkani, and Kutchi. The **States Reorganisation Act of 1956** aimed to reorganize states by language, but Bombay remained diverse. This led to the formation of the **Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti** in 1956, advocating for a separate Marathi-speaking state.
- In response to protests, the **Bombay Reorganisation Act, 1960** bifurcated Bombay into **Maharashtra** and **Gujarat**, both created on **May 1, 1960**.

Veerashaiva-Lingayats to seek separate religion code for community in Census

Veerashaiva-Lingayats:

- **Origin:** Originated in 12th-century Karnataka, founded by **Basavanna**.
- **Core Beliefs:** Devotion to **Lord Shiva**, rejection of idol worship, caste abolition, emphasis on **Kayaka** (honest work) and **Dasoha** (service).
- **Key Symbol:** **Ishtalinga** – a personal symbol of Shiva worn by followers.

- **Social Reform:** Advocated for social equality and challenged caste discrimination.

Veerashaiva vs. Lingayat:

- **Veerashaiva:** Part of Shaivism, follows traditional rituals.
- **Lingayat:** Seeks recognition as a separate religion, rejects traditional rituals.

Satavahana-era inscriptions found in Telangana's Peddapalli

Satavahana Dynasty

- **Period:** Circa 1st century BCE to 3rd century CE
- **Region:** Deccan Plateau (modern-day Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka)
- **Capital Cities:** Pratishthana (Paithan) and Amaravati
- **Alternate Names:** Andhras, Andhra-bhrityas
- **Language:** Prakrit (official), Sanskrit
- **Religion:** Hinduism and Buddhism
- **Government:** Monarchy

Key Rulers:

1. **Simuka** (c. 230–207 BCE) – Founder of the dynasty
2. **Kanha (Krishna)** – Expanded territory into western regions
3. **Satakarni I** – Defeated the Sunga dynasty; conducted Ashvamedha sacrifice
4. **Gautamiputra Satakarni** (c. 86–110 CE) – Revived the dynasty; defeated Sakas, Yavanas, and Pahlavas
5. **Vasishthiputra Pulumavi** – Issued coins with royal portraits; expanded trade
6. **Yajna Sri Satakarni** (c. 152–181 CE) – Last significant ruler before decline

Red Admiral butterfly seen for first time in Himachal

The **Red Admiral butterfly** (*Vanessa atalanta*) is a striking species found in temperate regions of Europe, Asia, North Africa, and North America.

- **Identification:** Black wings with red-orange bands and white spots; brown ventral side with cream spots.
- **Habitat:** Prefers woodlands, gardens, and urban areas. Migrates to warmer regions in winter.
- **Life Cycle:** Eggs laid on nettles; larvae are spiny, and adults feed on nectar and fermenting fruit.
- **Migration:** Southward in autumn, some overwinter in milder climates.
- **Ecological Role:** Acts as a pollinator and contributes to biodiversity.

There has been significant rise in action taken under PMLA since 2014: ED chief

What is PMLA, 2002?

The **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002** is an Indian legislation aimed at preventing money laundering and confiscating property derived from criminal activities.

Key Features:

1. **Objective:** To combat money laundering and ensure that illicit gains from criminal activities are identified, confiscated, and returned to the state.
2. **Money Laundering:** Defined as any process or activity connected with proceeds of crime that projects it as untainted property.
3. **Attachment of Property:** Allows the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to provisionally attach properties believed to be proceeds of crime for up to 180 days.
4. **Punishment:** Imposes rigorous imprisonment ranging from 3 to 7 years for money laundering offenses.
5. **Scheduled Offenses:** Applies to a range of criminal offenses such as corruption, narcotic drugs trafficking, financial frauds, and more.
6. **Authorities:** Includes the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), which monitor and enforce the law.
7. **Compliance:** Requires financial institutions to maintain records of transactions and report suspicious activities.

Extra Information:

The **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** is a key agency in India responsible for enforcing economic laws and regulations. It operates under the **Ministry of Finance** and primarily handles matters related to **money laundering** and **foreign exchange violations**.

Notable viruses, along with the diseases they cause

Virus	Disease	Symptoms
H1N1 Influenza Virus	Swine Flu (H1N1 Influenza)	Fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, fatigue, diarrhea, and vomiting.
HIV	AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)	Weak immune system, frequent infections, weight loss, fever, swollen lymph nodes.
SARS-CoV	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome	Fever, dry cough, difficulty breathing, pneumonia.
MERS-CoV	Middle East Respiratory Syndrome	Fever, cough, shortness of breath, pneumonia.

Virus	Disease	Symptoms
SARS-CoV-2	COVID-19	Fever, cough, loss of taste/smell, difficulty breathing, fatigue, pneumonia.
Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)	Hepatitis B	Jaundice, abdominal pain, fatigue, liver damage.
Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)	Hepatitis C	Fatigue, jaundice, abdominal pain, liver damage, cirrhosis, liver cancer.
Ebola Virus	Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)	Fever, headache, vomiting, diarrhea, internal bleeding.
Zika Virus	Zika Virus Infection	Rash, fever, joint pain, red eyes, birth defects (microcephaly).
Dengue Virus	Dengue Fever	High fever, severe headache, pain behind eyes, rash, joint/muscle pain, bleeding.
Measles Virus	Measles	Rash, fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes.
Polio Virus	Poliomyelitis (Polio)	Paralysis, fever, fatigue, muscle weakness, respiratory failure.
Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV)	Herpes Simplex Infection	Painful blisters or sores on skin or mucous membranes (mouth or genital).
Human Papillomavirus (HPV)	Genital Warts, Cervical Cancer	Warts on genital areas; some strains cause cancer (e.g., cervical cancer).
Rabies Virus	Rabies	Fever, confusion, agitation, hallucinations, hydrophobia, paralysis, death.
Varicella-Zoster Virus (VZV)	Chickenpox	Itchy rash with red spots, fever, tiredness.
Smallpox Virus	Smallpox	Fever, fatigue, characteristic rash progressing to fluid-filled bumps.
Influenza Virus	Seasonal Influenza (Flu)	Fever, chills, sore throat, body aches, fatigue, congestion.
Avian Influenza (H5N1)	Bird Flu	Fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, pneumonia, organ failure.
Marburg Virus	Marburg Virus Disease	Fever, headache, muscle aches, vomiting, severe bleeding.

Personality in News:

Anthony Albanese

In the 2025 federal election, Albanese achieved a historic victory, becoming **the first Australian prime minister in over two decades to win a second consecutive term**. The Labor Party secured at least 89 of the 150 seats in the House of Representatives, marking a significant increase from the 2022 election. This victory also saw the **defeat of then-Opposition Leader Peter Dutton**, who lost his seat in the House.

ICAR to launch two genome-edited rich, tolerant rice varieties

All about Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)

- The **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** is India's apex body for coordinating, guiding, and managing agricultural research and education.
- Established on **July 16, 1929**, it operates under the **Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE)**, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.
- Headquartered in **New Delhi**, ICAR comprises **113 institutes** and **74 agricultural universities** across the country, making it one of the largest national agricultural research systems globally.
- Played a pivotal role in India's **Green Revolution**, leading to significant increases in the production of foodgrains, horticultural crops, milk, fish, and eggs from 1950-51 to 2017-18.
- Launched initiatives like the **National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA)** to address challenges posed by climate change.

Rafale-M Deal

- The **Rafale-M** deal between India and France, signed on April 28, 2025, involves the acquisition of **26 Dassault Rafale Marine fighter jets** for the Indian Navy, valued at approximately ₹63,000 crore (\$7.5 billion).
- **Details:** Includes 22 single-seat and 4 twin-seat trainer variants.
- **Delivery:** Expected between 2029 and 2031.
- **Features:** Modified for carrier operations with strengthened landing gear, tailhook system, and reinforced airframe.

Differences Between Rafale-M and Rafale C/B

While the Rafale-M shares many characteristics with the Air Force's Rafale C and B variants, it has been specifically tailored for carrier operations. Key modifications include:

- **Strengthened Landing Gear:** Enhanced to withstand the stresses of carrier landing.

- **Tailhook System:** Equipped with a tailhook for arrested landings on aircraft carriers.
- **Reinforced Airframe:** Designed to endure the rigors of carrier-based operations.
- **Carrier-Specific Software:** Customized software to optimize performance during carrier launches and recoveries.

List of terrorist organizations and their associated countries in a tabular format:

Terrorist Organization	Country/Region
Houthi Movement (Ansar Allah)	Yemen
Al-Qaeda	Global (Originally Afghanistan, with cells in Yemen, Iraq, Somalia, etc.)
ISIS (Islamic State)	Syria, Iraq (formerly Libya, and other parts of the world)
Taliban	Afghanistan
Boko Haram	Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger
Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)	Pakistan, Kashmir
Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)	Pakistan, India (Kashmir region)
Al-Shabaab	Somalia, Kenya, Uganda
Hezbollah	Lebanon, Syria, Israel (active in the Middle East)
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	Pakistan
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	Philippines
Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)	Palestine (Gaza Strip)
Red Army Faction (RAF)	Germany (disbanded but active during the 1970s and 1980s)
Tamil Tigers (LTTE)	Sri Lanka (disbanded after 2009)
ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna)	Spain (Basque region)
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)	Colombia (though peace deal signed in 2016)
PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party)	Turkey, Iraq, Syria
Al-Nusra Front	Syria (affiliated with Al-Qaeda)
Hamas	Palestine (Gaza Strip, West Bank)
Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)	Central Asia (Afghanistan, Uzbekistan)