



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 09, 2026

NATIONAL

Skyroot Aerospace Becomes India's First Space-Tech Unicorn

- On May 7, 2026, Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace emerged in the news as India's first space-tech unicorn after raising \$60 million to accelerate its private orbital rocket launch programs.
- **Funding & Valuation:**
 - Raised **\$60 million** (₹570 crore) in a round co-led by **Ram Shriram's Sherpalo Ventures** and Singapore's sovereign wealth fund **GIC**.
 - Reached a valuation of **\$1.1 billion** (up from \$519 million in 2023), elevating total funding to over **\$160 million**.
 - Backed by global investors including **BlackRock, Greenko Group, and Arkam Ventures**.
 - **Board Appointment:** Tech investor **Ram Shriram** (an Alphabet Inc board member and the first backer of Google) officially joined the company's Board.
- **Capital Allocation:**
 - Establish a high flight cadence for the **Vikram-1** orbital rocket.
 - Scale up domestic aerospace manufacturing infrastructure.
 - Develop **Vikram-2**, a 1-tonne class launch vehicle powered by an advanced cryogenic stage.
 - **Vikram-1 Project:** Entering the final preparation stages for the launch of **Vikram-1**, designated as **India's first private orbital rocket**.

IndiaAI and ICMR Sign MoU to Promote AI-Based Healthcare Innovation

- IndiaAI and ICMR signed an MoU to strengthen AI-driven healthcare research and innovation across India
- ICMR will provide anonymised biomedical datasets and AI models through the AIKosh platform for researchers and startups
- IndiaAI will provide subsidised access to GPU-based high-performance computing infrastructure for medical AI research
- The collaboration will support ethical AI solutions for disease prediction, medical imaging, and healthcare analytics
- The partnership aims to build a trusted and responsible AI healthcare ecosystem in India.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NASA Successfully Tests 120-kW Plasma Engine for Future Mars Missions

- NASA successfully tested a 120-kilowatt magnetoplasmadynamic plasma engine that could support future human missions to Mars.
- The test was conducted by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California on 24 February 2026.
- The advanced electric propulsion system uses electromagnetic forces and lithium vapour to generate plasma-based thrust.
- NASA believes such propulsion systems could reduce Mars travel time from nine months to nearly 30-60 days.
- The test marks a major step toward developing efficient deep-space transportation systems.

DEFENSE NEWS

DRDO and IAF Conduct Maiden Flight Trial of TARA Weapon System

- DRDO and the Indian Air Force successfully conducted the maiden flight trial of the TARA weapon system off the Odisha coast

- TARA is India's first indigenous glide weapon system designed to convert conventional bombs into precision-guided weapons
- The trial was carried out using a Jaguar combat aircraft on 7 May 2026
- The test validated the system's navigation, aerodynamic performance, and guidance capabilities
- The indigenous weapon system will strengthen India's precision strike and stand-off attack capability.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Ovarian Cancer Day

- World Ovarian Cancer Day 2026 is being observed on 8 May to spread awareness about ovarian cancer and early diagnosis
- The 2026 theme is "No Woman Left Behind" focusing on equal healthcare access and cancer support
- Awareness campaigns are being organised globally by healthcare organisations and cancer support groups
- Ovarian cancer is often called a silent disease because symptoms are difficult to identify in early stages
- The campaign encourages early detection, treatment access, and public awareness about women's health.

World Thalassaemia Day

- World Thalassaemia Day 2026 is being observed on 8 May to spread awareness about the inherited blood disorder thalassaemia.
- The official theme for 2026 is "Hidden No More: Finding the Undiagnosed. Supporting the Unseen."
- The campaign focuses on early diagnosis, genetic screening, and equal healthcare access
- Thalassaemia patients often require lifelong blood transfusions and medical support
- Awareness programmes worldwide are promoting prevention and public education about the disease.

World Red Cross Day

- World Red Cross Day 2026 is being observed globally on 8 May to honour humanitarian workers and volunteers
- The official theme for 2026 is “Keeping Humanity Alive”
- The day marks the birth anniversary of Henry Dunant, founder of the International Red Cross Movement
- Red Cross organisations provide disaster relief, medical aid, blood donation services, and refugee support worldwide
- Awareness drives, blood donation camps, and volunteer programmes are being organised across many countries.

SPORTS NEWS

IOC Lifts Restrictions on Belarus Ahead of LA 2028 Olympics

- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) lifted restrictions on Belarusian athletes ahead of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics
- Belarusian athletes and teams can now participate under their national flag and anthem in international competitions
- Russian athletes will continue competing only as neutral athletes under strict IOC conditions
- The Russian Olympic Committee remains suspended over Ukraine-related and anti-doping concerns
- The decision has triggered fresh debate over sports participation linked to international conflicts.

Apaar Saxena Earns International Master Chess Title

- Indian chess prodigy Apaar Saxena earned the International Master title after achieving all three IM norms in European tournaments
- The 14-year-old player completed the milestone within just five weeks through consistent performances

- The International Master title is awarded by FIDE and is one of the top chess titles after Grandmaster
- India continues to produce strong young chess talents at the international level
- Apaar Saxena's achievement strengthens Karnataka's growing contribution to Indian chess.

