



## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 21, 2026**

### **INTERNATIONAL**

#### **India-Italy trade crosses half of 2029's target**

- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni have elevated bilateral ties to a Special Strategic Partnership, marking a major diplomatic upgrade between India and Italy.
- Both nations set a target of €20 billion bilateral trade by 2029, focusing on sectors like semiconductors, AI, clean energy, defence, infrastructure, and critical minerals.
- The partnership also strengthens cooperation in IMEC connectivity, maritime transport, defence manufacturing, counterterrorism, space research, and innovation ecosystems through initiatives like INNOVIT India.
- India and Italy additionally announced plans for a Year of Culture and Tourism in 2027, expanding collaboration in heritage, education, film, and cultural diplomacy.

#### **Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA)**

- India has officially assumed the chairmanship of the Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA) for 2026 under the International Atomic Energy Agency, strengthening its role in peaceful nuclear cooperation.

- The announcement was made during the 48th Meeting of National Representatives held in Navi Mumbai, attended by delegates from Asia-Pacific and African nations.
- The RCA promotes collaboration in areas such as healthcare, cancer treatment, agriculture, water management, radiation technology, and environmental sustainability through nuclear science applications.
- India, a founding contributor to RCA since discussions at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre in 1964, continues to play a major role in regional scientific and technological cooperation.

## **New Delhi Hosts 68th APO Governing Body Meeting with Asia-Pacific Delegates**

- India is hosting the 68th Session of the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) Governing Body from 20-22 May 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, bringing together policymakers and experts from across the Asia-Pacific region.
- The summit will focus on APO Vision 2030, productivity-led economic transformation, budget planning, governance reforms, and leadership elections for the organization.
- More than 60 delegates from 20 member economies, along with observers from countries like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Bhutan, are participating in the high-level discussions.
- The event will also feature the APO National Awards, recognizing contributions in productivity innovation, technical expertise, and sustainable socioeconomic development.

## **NATIONAL**

## **Gandhi to breathe through 3D avatar in AI**

- Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya has launched its third AI-powered HoloBox featuring Mahatma Gandhi, allowing visitors to interact with a life-like 3D virtual version through AI-driven conversations and holographic technology.
- The interactive exhibit combines artificial intelligence, immersive storytelling, and digital holographic displays to create engaging educational experiences and make museum visits more dynamic for younger audiences.

- Earlier AI HoloBox installations at the museum featured Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and APJ Abdul Kalam, while a new AI avatar of Atal Bihari Vajpayee is expected soon.
- The initiative highlights India's growing use of AI and digital technology in heritage spaces, helping preserve political history while improving visitor engagement, accessibility, and interactive learning experiences.

## STATE

### **Kerala Launches India's First Dedicated Cabinet-Level AI Portfolio Under New UDF Government**

- Kerala has become the first Indian state to create a dedicated Artificial Intelligence (AI) portfolio at the cabinet level, formally recognizing AI as a separate administrative domain in governance.
- The new portfolio has been assigned to senior P. K. Kunhalikutty and placed under the Industries and Commerce Department along with IT, startups, and industrial development sectors.
- The move highlights Kerala's focus on using AI for governance, economic growth, healthcare, education, manufacturing, and startup innovation, positioning the state as a leader in digital policy reforms.
- By giving AI an independent cabinet identity, the government aims to accelerate technology-driven public services, industrial modernization, and innovation-led economic development.

## DEFENCE

### **Military Exercise PRAGATI 2026 Kicks Off in Meghalaya with Forces from 12 Nations**

- India has launched the multinational military exercise PRAGATI 2026 at Umroi Military Station, bringing together armed forces from 12 friendly nations for a major regional defence engagement.
- The two-week exercise focuses on counter-terrorism operations, jungle warfare, interoperability, and tactical coordination in challenging terrains to improve joint operational readiness among participating armies.

- Countries including Bhutan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam are participating in the exercise hosted by the Indian Army.
- PRAGATI, which stands for Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region, highlights India's growing role in strengthening regional security cooperation and Indo-Pacific strategic partnerships.

