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Current Affairs Today -- May 14, 2026

14 May 2026

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NEET-UG 2026 CANCELLED – CBI PROBE INTO PAPER LEAK

The **National Testing Agency (NTA)** on **May 12, 2026** cancelled the **NEET-UG 2026** examination held on **May 3, 2026**, after a confirmed paper leak. The **Ministry of Education** handed the investigation to the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**, while **Rajasthan's Special Operations Group (SOG)** arrested two suspects – **Manish Yadav** and **Rakesh Mandavriya** – in **Sikar, Rajasthan**.

Key Points

- Leak chain traced from a **Nashik printing-press** to a coaching nexus operating out of **Sikar (Rajasthan)**
- A “guess paper” containing about **410 questions** had **120 Chemistry questions** identical to the actual paper
- NTA Director General **Abhishek Singh** announced a **re-examination within 6-8 days**; fees to be refunded
- Approximately **23 lakh candidates** were affected; Education Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** briefed media and Parliament
- Second major NTA controversy since the **2024 NEET-UG row** that already led to the High-Level Committee on Exam Reforms

National Testing Agency; established in 2017 as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, under the Ministry of Education. Conducts JEE (Main), NEET-UG, UGC-NET, CUET-UG/PG, CSIR-UGC NET, NCHM-JEE, NID-DAT, NIFT entrance, and other examinations. NEET-UG: National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate); statutory single national entrance for MBBS/BDS and allied courses under the National Medical Commission Act, 2019 (replacing the IMC Act 1956). CBI: Central Bureau of Investigation; constituted in 1963 by an executive order; derives powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946; works under the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT). Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024: Punishes paper leaks with up to 10 years' imprisonment and Rs 1 crore fine – the principal statute now being invoked.

WPI APRIL 2026 – 8.30 PER CENT, A 42-MONTH HIGH

The **Office of the Economic Adviser**, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, on **May 14, 2026** released the **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** data for **April 2026**. **Headline WPI inflation rose to 8.30 per cent**, up from **3.88 per cent in March 2026** – a **42-month high** – driven by a sharp jump in **Fuel & Power**.

Key Points

- **Headline YoY:** 8.30 per cent (Apr 2026) vs 3.88 per cent (Mar 2026); month-on-month change **3.86 per cent**
- **Fuel & Power:** **+24.71 per cent YoY** – highest fuel-component reading since **September 2022**; petrol +32.40 per cent; HSD +25.19 per cent
- **Primary Articles:** +9.17 per cent; **Manufactured Products:** +4.62 per cent
- **WPI Food Index:** +2.31 per cent (up from 1.85 per cent)
- **Base Year:** **2011-12** (revision to a 2017-18 base under deliberation)

Wholesale Price Index; compiled by the **Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT (NOT MoSPI)**; base year **2011-12**; three major groups – **Primary Articles (22.62 per cent)**, **Fuel & Power (13.15 per cent)**, **Manufactured Products (64.23 per cent)**. **CPI vs WPI:** **CPI-Combined** (the **monetary-policy anchor** under RBI's flexible inflation-targeting since 2016) is compiled by **NSO/MoSPI** with base **2012**; **CPI weights services, WPI does not**. **MPC framework:** Section 45ZA-ZN of the RBI Act, 1934 (inserted in 2016); inflation target **4 per cent +/- 2 per cent** on **CPI-Combined**. **Strait of Hormuz risk premium:** West Asia tensions through May 2026 are the principal driver of the April fuel-component spike.

CABINET APPROVES RS 37,500 CRORE COAL AND LIGNITE GASIFICATION SCHEME

The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, on **May 13, 2026** approved a **Rs 37,500 crore** scheme to promote **coal and lignite gasification** – targeting **75 million tonnes (MT)** of coal/lignite to be gasified under new surface gasification units, with capital subsidy of up to **20 per cent** of plant and machinery cost.

Key Points

- **Outlay:** **Rs 37,500 crore**; target capital mobilisation **Rs 2.5-3 lakh crore**
- **Expected employment:** **~50,000 direct/indirect**; annual revenue addition **~Rs 6,300 crore**
- **Reduces import dependence for LNG, urea, ammonia, methanol, coking coal**

- Implementing Ministry: **Ministry of Coal**; aligned with the **National Coal Gasification Mission** and the national target of **100 MT gasified by 2030**
- India has the **5th largest coal reserves globally** (~300+ billion tonnes proven)

Conversion of coal/lignite into **syngas (CO + H₂)** at high temperature in a gasifier – syngas is the feedstock for fertiliser (urea/ammonia), methanol, SNG (synthetic natural gas), DRI and hydrogen. **Surface gasification:** Above-ground; mature technology. **UCG (Underground Coal Gasification):** In-situ conversion; experimental in India. **Ministry of Coal:** Allied with **Coal India Limited (CIL)**, **NLC India Ltd (Neyveli Lignite)**, **Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL)**. **National Coal Gasification Mission:** Conceptualised in 2020; current scheme is the **fiscal-incentive vertical**. **Lignite (brown coal):** Lower carbon content; principally mined in **Neyveli (Tamil Nadu)**, **Barsingsar (Rajasthan)**, **Mata-no-Madh (Gujarat)**.

BHARAT MARITIME INSURANCE POOL (BMIP) LAUNCHED

Department of Financial Services (DFS) Secretary M. Nagaraju on **May 12, 2026** formally launched the **Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMIP)** – a national reinsurance pool with **USD 1.5 billion underwriting capacity** and a sovereign guarantee of **Rs 12,980 crore (~USD 1.4 billion)**. The pool was approved by the **Cabinet in April 2026**.

Key Points

- **Pool Administrator:** **GIC Re** (General Insurance Corporation of India); members are domestic insurers
- Four risk categories: **Hull & Machinery, Cargo, Protection & Indemnity (P&I), War Risk**
- First **Marine Hull & Machinery War Policy:** issued to **Hoger Offshore and Marine Pvt Ltd**
- Other early beneficiaries: **Vedanta Sterlite Copper, Balrampur Chini Mills**
- Covers **Indian-flagged or Indian-controlled vessels** and any vessel originating from or destined for an Indian port

Sole Indian reinsurer; formed in **1972**; reorganised in 2000 after privatisation of public-sector general insurers; HQ Mumbai. **IRDAI**: Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India; statutory body under the **IRDA Act, 1999**; HQ Hyderabad. **Insurance FDI**: Raised to **100 per cent** (automatic route) in **2026** – earlier 74 per cent (2021), 49 per cent (2015). **P&I cover**: Protection & Indemnity – third-party liability cover for shipowners (pollution, crew, cargo damage). **Maritime Hub vision: Maritime India Vision 2030 and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047** target a top-10 global shipbuilding nation. **Driver**: Strait of Hormuz war-risk premium spikes (April-May 2026) made foreign reinsurance prohibitive.

KIMBERLEY PROCESS INTERSESSIONAL MEETING MUMBAI

The **Kimberley Process (KP) Intersessional Meeting 2026** is being hosted by India at the **Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai**, from **May 11 to May 14, 2026**. India has held the **KP Chairship since 2026 (specifically since January 1, 2026)** under the “**3Cs**” theme – **Credibility, Compliance, Consumer Confidence**.

Key Points

- **Vice-Chair: United Arab Emirates** (will take over as Chair in 2027)
- KP has **60 Participants representing 86 countries** (EU counted as one bloc)
- **KP Certification Scheme (KPCS)**: Established in 2003 to prevent the trade in **conflict (or “blood”) diamonds**
- Implementing partner in India: **Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC)** under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**
- India is the world’s largest diamond **cutting and polishing hub** (~90 per cent by volume; **Surat** the principal centre)

A joint Government-industry-civil society initiative; named after **Kimberley, South Africa**, where the founding meeting was held in 2000. **KPCS launched in force since 2003**. **Three pillars of KP**: Participants (Governments), Observers (industry – WDC and civil society – KP Civil Society Coalition). **Conflict diamond**: Defined in **UN GA Resolution 55/56 (2000)** as a rough diamond used by rebel movements to finance war against legitimate Governments. **GJEPC**: Sponsored by Ministry of Commerce; set up in **1966**. **India’s status**: Founding member; previously chaired in **2008** and **2019**; world’s leading diamond-cutting hub. **Recent agenda**: Tightening monitoring of alluvial production and aligning trade statistics with KP data.

PM MODI FIVE-NATION TOUR AND 3RD INDIA-NORDIC SUMMIT

The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** on **May 13, 2026** held a curtain-raiser for **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's five-nation tour from May 15-20, 2026: UAE (May 15) -> Netherlands (May 15-17) -> Sweden -> Norway (May 18-19) -> Italy. The high-point is the 3rd India-Nordic Summit at Oslo on May 19, 2026.**

Key Points

- **First Indian PM visit to Norway in 43 years**
- **3rd India-Nordic Summit** attendees: **PMs of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Norway** – previous summits held at **Stockholm (2018)** and **Copenhagen (2022)**
- In the Netherlands: hosted by **PM Rob Jetten**; in Italy: meetings with **President Sergio Mattarella** and **PM Giorgia Meloni**
- Focus areas: **green transition, energy, defence, space, Arctic cooperation, supply-chain resilience**
- Backdrop: **India-EFTA TEPA (Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement) operational since October 2025**

*First held **Stockholm 2018**; second **Copenhagen 2022**; third **Oslo 2026**. Nordic 5: **Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden**. EFTA: **European Free Trade Association (1960)** – **Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland**. **India-EFTA TEPA** in force since 2024 (specifically signed **March 10, 2024**); operational since **October 2025**; commits EFTA to **USD 100 billion** of investment in India over 15 years. **India-Italy: Strategic Partnership** upgraded in 2023; **Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29** signed at **G20 New Delhi**. **India-UAE: Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2017)**; **CEPA in force since May 1, 2022**. **Arctic Council: India has been Observer status since 2013**. **India-Nordic bilateral trade: ~USD 19 billion (2024)**.*

SOUTH COAST RAILWAY NOTIFIED – 18TH RAILWAY ZONE

The **Ministry of Railways** through a Gazette notification on **May 4, 2026** formally constituted the **South Coast Railway (SCoR)** as the **18th Zone** of Indian Railways, with headquarters at **Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**. Operations begin from **June 1, 2026**.

Key Points

- Notified under **Section 3(4) of the Railways Act, 1989**

- Four divisions: **Vijayawada, Guntur, Guntakal** (carved from **South Central Railway**) and new **Visakhapatnam Division** (carved from the **Waltair Division of East Coast Railway**)
- Fulfils a statutory commitment under the **Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014**
- Originally announced in principle by then-Railway Minister **Piyush Goyal in February 2019**
- Indian Railways earlier had **17 zones**; broad-gauge track length **~63,000 km**

Departmentally run under the **Ministry of Railways**, governed by the **Railways Act, 1989** (replaced the 1890 Act). **Railway Board**: Created in 1905; statutory body since the **Railway Board Act, 1905**; chaired by **CEO & Chairman, Railway Board** (post merged in 2019 under the rationalisation reform). **Earlier zones: 17 zones** (Central, Eastern, Northern, North-Eastern, Northeast Frontier, Southern, South-Central, South-Eastern, Western, East-Central, East-Coast, North-Central, North-Western, South-East-Central, South-Western, West-Central, Metro Railway Kolkata). **AP Reorganisation Act, 2014**: Section 8, Schedule XIII – residuary obligations included a new railway zone for Andhra Pradesh. **Indian Railways: ~13,200 trains/day; ~23 million passengers/day; world's 4th largest network.**

BIOENERGY AND GREEN HYDROGEN PIVOT – SHAKTIKANTA DAS AT CII SUMMIT

At the **CII Annual Business Summit 2026** in New Delhi on **May 12, 2026**, **Shaktikanta Das, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister** (and former **RBI Governor 2018-2024**), flagged **bioenergy and green hydrogen** as the Government's two principal energy-transition priorities. The pivot is taking place against the backdrop of West Asia tensions and elevated crude.

Key Points

- **National Green Hydrogen Mission**: Outlay **Rs 19,744 crore**, approved by the Cabinet in **January 2023**
- Flagship sub-scheme: **SIGHT** – Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (two sub-components: electrolyser manufacturing and green hydrogen production)
- **Installed green-hydrogen production capacity** reached approximately **8,000 tonnes per year** by 2026
- **5th iEGoM (Informal Empowered Group of Ministers)** on energy supply-chain disruption – chaired by Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh**
- **National Bioenergy Programme**: Covers **Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG)** under SATAT, biomass, biodiesel

Hydrogen produced by **electrolysis of water using renewable electricity** – zero direct CO₂ footprint.

Grey hydrogen (steam methane reforming, current dominant), **blue hydrogen** (SMR + CCS), **green hydrogen** (electrolysis on renewables). **NGHM 2023: Target 5 MMT green-hydrogen production by 2030; 125 GW of associated renewables; 6 lakh+ jobs; investment Rs 8 lakh crore. SATAT: Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation; launched October 1, 2018; promotes Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) outlets through long-term offtake by oil PSUs. Mission GreenH2 Pilot Projects: Steel sector, shipping (NGHM x MoPSW), heavy mobility. India energy mix: Coal ~55 per cent of primary energy; oil ~28 per cent; gas ~6 per cent; renewables + nuclear ~10 per cent.**

| TOPIC | KEY FACT |
|--------------------------------|--|
| NEET-UG 2026 | NTA cancelled May 12, 2026; CBI probe; ~23 lakh candidates; re-exam in 6-8 days |
| WPI April 2026 | Headline 8.30 per cent (42-month high); Fuel & Power +24.71 per cent YoY |
| Coal Gasification Scheme | Rs 37,500 cr outlay; target 75 MT; capital subsidy up to 20 per cent of P&M |
| BMIP | USD 1.5 bn capacity; Rs 12,980 cr sovereign guarantee; GIC Re administrator |
| Kimberley Process | India KP Chair 2026; theme “3Cs”; Mumbai meeting May 11-14, 2026 |
| PM 5-Nation Tour | May 15-20, 2026; 3rd India-Nordic Summit Oslo May 19; first PM visit to Norway in 43 years |
| South Coast Railway | 18th Zone; HQ Visakhapatnam; ops June 1, 2026; 4 divisions (3 ex-SCR + new Vizag) |
| Bioenergy/Green H ₂ | NGHM Rs 19,744 cr (2023); 5 MMT by 2030; SATAT for CBG; 5th iEGoM under Rajnath Singh |

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NEET-UG 2026 Cancelled: NTA Annuls Paper-Leak Exam, CBI...

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