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TODAY'S TOP STORIES

1. India-Norway Green Strategic Partnership — 12 Agreements Signed | International Relations

India and Norway elevated bilateral ties to a Green Strategic Partnership during PM Modi's Oslo visit (May 18–19) — the first Indian PM visit to Norway in 43 years. Twelve agreements were signed across maritime decarbonisation, offshore wind, aquaculture, Arctic research, digital public infrastructure, and circular economy. Norwegian PM Jonas Gahr Støre called it “a natural alliance of ocean nations.” India's bilateral trade with Norway stands at ~USD 2.73 billion (2024). The India-EFTA TEPA (in force October 2025; USD 100B/15 years/1M jobs) provides the economic framework.

2. Sqn Ldr Saanya — IAF's First Woman Cat-A Flying Instructor | Security & Defence Squadron

Leader Saanya of the Indian Air Force became the first woman to qualify as a Category-A (Cat-A) flying instructor — the highest instructor grade in IAF's flying training framework. She completed the Flying Instructors' Course (FIC) at Air Force Academy (AFA), Dundigal, Hyderabad. Cat-A instructors can train other instructors — the apex of the IAF instructor pyramid. This adds to IAF's milestones for women in aviation, following Avani Chaturvedi (first solo MiG-21 fighter jet flight, 2018) and the opening of Permanent Commission to women in flying branch (2023).

3. BCCI Exempted from RTI Act — CIC Upholds Ruling | Polity

The Central Information Commission (CIC) upheld its ruling that BCCI is not a “public authority” under Section 2(h) of the RTI Act, 2005, and therefore cannot be compelled to disclose information under RTI. The CIC found BCCI is not “substantially financed” by government — its primary revenue comes from broadcast rights, IPL, and sponsorships. BCCI is a society registered under Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act, 1975. SC's Thalappalam case (2013) held “substantially financed” requires a major/dominant portion of funding from government.

4. India Rejects IWT Court of Arbitration “Pondage” Award | International Relations

India rejected the Court of Arbitration's May 15, 2026 award on “maximum pondage” under the Indus Waters Treaty, calling it from an “illegally constituted” tribunal. India has held the IWT in abeyance since April 23, 2025 (post-Pahalgam terror attack). India boycotts the Court of Arbitration (since 2016) but participates in the parallel Neutral Expert process. The dispute concerns water storage limits in India's Ratle Hydroelectric Project (850 MW, Chenab river, J&K) which is under construction by NHPC.

5. Bail Under UAPA — SC's Divergent Bench Rulings Raise Constitutional Questions | Polity

Different Supreme Court benches have issued contradictory rulings on bail under UAPA Section 43D(5), which bars bail if the court finds prima facie truth in the chargesheet. Some benches citing K.A. Najeeb (2021) have

granted bail when prolonged pre-trial detention violates Article 21; others following NIA v. Watali (2019) have denied bail by accepting prosecution case at face value. The divergence raises questions about consistency and the constitutional limits of security legislation.

6. IMD Yellow Alert: Delhi-NCR at 43–45°C; SW Monsoon Onset May 26 | Environment IMD issued a yellow heatwave alert for Delhi-NCR on May 19 with temperatures at 43–45°C — 3–5°C above normal. Rajasthan’s Barmer touched ~48°C (extreme heatwave); Maharashtra’s Wardha and Yavatmal received orange alerts. Northwest India plains forecast under heatwave conditions until May 24. Separately, IMD confirmed SW Monsoon onset over Kerala on May 26 — five days ahead of the normal June 1 date. Total seasonal rainfall forecast: 92% of LPA (Below Normal); El Niño probability for June–August is high (NOAA ~62%; PAGASA ~79%).

7. 3rd India-Nordic Summit Concludes in Oslo; Modi Departs for Italy | International Relations PM Modi attended the 3rd India-Nordic Summit in Oslo on May 19, engaging leaders of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland on Arctic governance, clean energy, digital public goods, and maritime cooperation. He then departed for Rome — India’s fifth leg of the May 15–20 European tour. In Italy, Modi held talks with PM Giorgia Meloni on the Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025–2029, bilateral trade (target: ~€20 billion/~USD 20 billion by 2029 from ~USD 16.77 billion), and India-EU FTA (concluded January 27, 2026) implementation.

EDITORIAL PICKS FOR TODAY

- **The Hindu:** India’s Arctic ambitions — from Himadri to the Northern Sea Route, how Norway is India’s most consequential Nordic partner
- **Indian Express:** UAPA and the bail crisis — when Parliament and the Supreme Court pull in opposite directions
- **Business Standard:** India-Norway TEPA and the GPFG opportunity — why Norway’s sovereign wealth fund is India’s most underexploited investor
- **Hindustan Times:** The heatwave and the monsoon — India’s climate extremes are no longer anomalies

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