

# THE DAILY GK DOSE

## VICE ADMIRAL AJAY KOCHHAR APPOINTED AS INDIAN NAVY'S 48<sup>TH</sup> VICE CHIEF

- **Distinguished Naval Career:** Commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1988, he is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy and a specialist in Gunnery and Missile Systems. Throughout his career spanning over 37 years, he has commanded several vessels, including the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, where he played a pivotal role in the operationalization of its air wing.
- **Strategic Leadership Roles:** Before his current appointment, he served as the Commander-in-Chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command. His prior assignments include Commandant of the National Defence Academy and Chief of Staff of the Western Naval Command, where he led operations during the challenging security environment of Operation Sindoor.
- **Recognition and Awards:** For his exceptional leadership and meritorious service, he has been highly decorated, receiving the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in 2022 and the Param Vishisht Seva Medal in 2026.

## INDIA SET TO TEST PLASTIC CURRENCY NOTES AS RBI REVIVES POLYMER NOTE PROJECT

- **Drivers for the Initiative:** The decision follows a significant rise in currency printing expenditure, which reached ₹6,372.8 crore in FY25, up from ₹5,101.4 crore the previous year. Additionally, the central bank had to dispose of 23.8 billion soiled banknotes in FY25, highlighting the need for a more durable alternative to traditional cotton-based paper notes.

- **Benefits of Polymer Notes:** Polymer banknotes are made from a thin, flexible plastic substrate that is more resistant to moisture, dirt, and tearing. These notes typically have a shelf life three to four times longer than paper currency and incorporate advanced anti-counterfeiting features.
- **Status of the Project:** While India previously attempted a pilot project for ₹10 polymer notes in 2012, it was shelved due to technical and operational challenges. The RBI has now revisited the proposal following recent board meetings in Patna and Mumbai.

## A KOWSIGAN APPOINTED AS THE CEO OF KERALA



- **Official Appointment:** Dr. A. Kowsigan, a 2009-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Kerala cadre, officially assumed the role of Chief Electoral Officer on May 29, 2026.
- **Succession:** He succeeds Dr. Rathan U. Kelkar, who stepped down as the CEO to take on the role of Secretary to the Chief Minister of Kerala, V.D. Satheesan.
- **Professional Background:** Prior to this appointment, Dr. Kowsigan held several significant administrative positions in the state, including Secretary of the Ports Department, Commissioner of Land Revenue, Commissioner of Disaster Management, and Director of Animal Husbandry.

## IMPORTANT FACTS

### FEATURES OF INDIAN STATES & UT'S

- *Andhra Pradesh* → *Rice Bowl of India*
- *Arunachal Pradesh* → *Land of the Rising Sun*
- *Assam* → *One-Horned Rhinoceros*
- *Bihar* → *Highest Population Density*
- *Chhattisgarh* → *Rice Bowl of India*
- *Goa* → *Smallest State*
- *Gujarat* → *Rann of Kutch*
- *Haryana* → *Largest Milk-Producing State*
- *Himachal Pradesh* → *First 100% LPG-Covered State*
- *Jharkhand* → *Mineral-Rich State*

## INDIA LAUNCHES FIRST SKYCAST SYSTEM AT DELHI AIRPORT

- **Enhanced Aviation Safety:** SkyCast is an integrated aviation weather intelligence and "nowcasting" facility designed to provide real-time alerts for critical aviation hazards such as dense fog, wind shear, turbulence, and icing.
- **Advanced Technological Integration:** The system combines state-of-the-art remote sensing and profiling technologies, including a Radar Wind Profiler, SODAR, Microwave Radiometer, Ground-based Fog Aerosol Spectrometer (GFAS), and a Lidar-based Ceilometer.

## RED BALLOON AEROSPACE LAUNCHED INDIA'S 1<sup>ST</sup> STRATOSPHERIC SPB

- **Technological Significance:** Unlike conventional weather balloons that expand and burst or drift, an SPB maintains a constant volume and internal pressure, allowing it to remain stable at a fixed altitude in the stratosphere (between 20 and 40 km) for extended periods.
- **Near-Space Mission ("Mission SANA"):** The VISTA platform ascended to an altitude of approximately 25 km, carrying six commercial payloads from national and international partners. These payloads included technology demonstrations for propulsion, biological experiments, and navigation validation.
- **Strategic and Commercial Potential:** Red Balloon Aerospace, founded by former Skyroot Aerospace executives, aims to use these balloons for telecommunications in remote regions, disaster management, and industrial monitoring.

## RBI & VIETNAM CENTRAL BANK SIGN MOU TO BOOST DIGITAL PAYMENTS

- **Focus on Cross-Border Connectivity:** A primary objective of the MoU is to facilitate the development of cross-border QR code-based merchant payment connectivity. This initiative aims to make international transactions between India and Vietnam faster, more transparent, and cost-

efficient for both businesses and tourists.

- **Regulatory and Technical Collaboration:** The agreement establishes a framework for the two central banks to share information on emerging market trends, innovative financial technologies, and regulatory best practices.
- **Institutional Linkages:** Beyond the central bank-level agreement, the partnership is supported by institutional linkages between the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) International and Vietnam's National Payment Corporation (NAPAS).

## INDIA RECEIVES TWO LABBAYTUM AWARDS FOR HAJ COORDINATION & COMMUNICATION



- **Recognition for Excellence:** The awards were presented to the Indian Haj Mission in acknowledgment of its outstanding performance in Haj coordination and communication during the 2026 pilgrimage. These awards serve as international recognition of the high standards maintained by the mission in managing the welfare and movement of pilgrims.

- **Seamless Collaborative Effort:** Union Minister of Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju attributed this success to the seamless synergy and coordination between the Ministry of Minority Affairs, the Haj Committee of India, and the Indian Haj Mission, which is led by India's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and the Consul General in Jeddah.
- **Significance of the Achievement:** The "Labbaytum" awards are part of the Saudi Ministry's effort to encourage and recognize countries that demonstrate excellence in pilgrimage management.

## BEL'S RAJNISH SHARMA HONOURED WITH TECH-DRIVEN PRODUCTION INNOVATION AWARD

- **Outstanding Leadership in Transformation Award:** In December 2025, he was conferred this title at the 5th PSU Transformation Conclave in New Delhi, where he was specifically lauded as a "Defence Electronics Transformation Architect."
- **Kalinga Business Excellence Award:** He has been conferred the Kalinga Business Excellence Award in recognition of his significant contributions to BEL's operational and business growth.
- **Expertise in Process and Technology Integration:** Throughout his 33-year career at BEL, he has been recognized for his ability to translate complex technologies into mature, robust manufacturing processes.

## WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

31.05.2026 / SUNDAY

- **Goa Statehood Day 2026: May 30<sup>th</sup>**
- **The 2026 celebrations in Panaji were led by Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan, featuring the release of a commemorative stamp honoring renowned cartoonist Mario Miranda and the launch of a new coffee table book.**