

# UN INDIA DIGEST

News and updates from the  
26 entities of the UN Country Team



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Participants at a UNOPS-led session learn insights on water conservation and source sustainability as part of the Jal Saheli programme under the Jal Jeevan mission in Tamil Nadu's Ramand and Virudhunagar districts. Photo: UNOPS

## Reel to real: Nurturing inclusion through film

Lights, camera, inclusion! The UN in India rolled out the red carpet at its Delhi headquarters for the 20th 'We Care Film Festival', celebrating powerful stories by and about persons with disabilities. With at least 200 global entries, including award-winning films such as *Srikanth* and *Rabb Di Awaaz*, the festival spotlighted authentic representation and the power of cinema to shift narratives. More than 250 participants joined screenings, dialogues and panels organized in conjunction with the NGO Brotherhood, Apeejay Institute of Communication, UNIC New Delhi and UNESCO. Goa's Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and the UN in India also announced a strategic partnership for the International Purple Fest 2025, to be held this October in Goa, and which will also feature the next edition of the We Care Film Festival.



Photo: UNIC

## India's human development continues to rise



Photo: UNDP

India is climbing the charts: it now ranks 130 out of 193 countries in the latest edition of the annual Human Development Report released by UNDP, a rise of three places. Its Human Development Index (HDI) value has reached 0.685, placing it in the medium human development category. India's HDI value has increased more than 53% since 1990, faster than both the global and regional averages. The progress has been fueled by economic growth and targeted social protection and welfare programmes, with India reporting more kids in school, higher incomes and benefits from digital health care and other services. Inequality remains an area needing attention. More information can be found in the report, titled *A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI*.



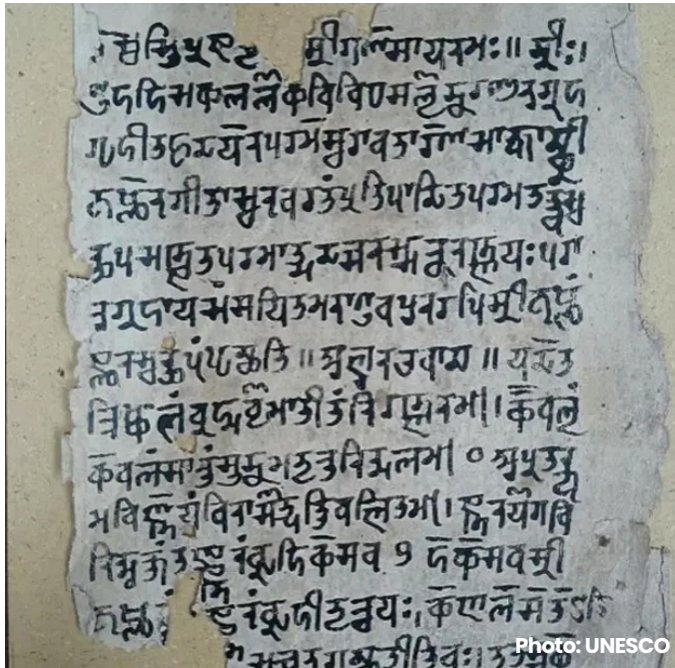


Photo: UNESCO

## Indian classics enter UNESCO's global hall of fame

Two ancient Indian texts — the *Bhagavadgītā* and *Nāṭyaśāstra* — have been added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. The *Bhagavadgītā*, a 700-verse dialogue on duty and philosophy that forms part of the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, a 36,000-verse blueprint for drama and performance, continue to shape ideas today. Their inclusion is part of 74 new entries to the Register, a list of documents, manuscripts, oral traditions, audio-visual materials, library materials and archival holdings from around the world that are recognized for their universal significance. India submitted both texts as part of its efforts to preserve and promote its heritage.

## Gender equality at heart of green transition

From reviving traditional water sources to boosting fire prevention efforts, women leaders are leading local climate solutions across India and driving change in their communities. Their efforts were lauded at a special roundtable hosted by SEWA Bharat for International Labour Day. UN India Resident Coordinator Shombi Sharp and speakers from the World Bank and Oxford Consulting Partners discussed steps to invest in grassroots innovation and strengthen support for women-led climate resilience. Improving access to data and infrastructure and the need to plug gaps such as unpaid care work, insecure housing and loss of livelihoods were highlighted.



Photo: SEWA Bharat



Photo: UNICEF

## What's on your plate?

Poor nutrition is linked to more than half of non-communicable diseases in India. To counter this, UNICEF India is serving up a digital dose of health with Meri Thali Sehatwali — a campaign urging families to rethink what they eat at all ages, from toddlers to grandparents. From smarter breakfasts for teen girls and pregnant women to saying no to junk food and yes to colourful, seasonal, affordable food, the campaign aims to diversify diets to combat the rise of nutrition-related diseases. The campaign focuses on promoting healthy eating habits in everyday food choices.



## Rwanda remembered. Hate rejected

"No more hate." That was the message ringing out from Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, where more than 600 schoolchildren gathered to honour the victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda — one of the most harrowing atrocities of the last century. Through powerful artworks, a traditional Rwandan song, and reflections on peace, the students paid tribute to over a million lives lost. Later, Rwanda's High Commissioner — a genocide survivor — joined UN Resident Coordinator Shombi Sharp and India's Secretary (Economic Relations) Dammu Ravi to remember, reflect, and confront the rising tide of hate speech around the world.



## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



**As part of World Immunisation Week (24–30 April), UNDP reiterates its commitment to bolster the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's programmes to enhance vaccine distribution and bridge the last-mile vaccine gaps by providing technical support to government initiatives including eVIN, UWIN, and COPD. Photo: UNDP India**



## Scaling access to ensure health equity

The World Health Summit regional meeting in New Delhi brought together participants from more than 50 countries under the theme 'Scaling Access to Ensure Health Equity and Resilient Health Systems.' As a policy partner in the World Health Summit, UNICEF hosted sessions on emerging priorities, including the impact of climate change on child health, disability inclusion and youth engagement. A roadmap on road safety for children and adolescents in India was released during a session hosted by UNICEF in collaboration with WHO, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. A session on ending TB, led by WHO, renewed calls for South-South collaboration on integrated programmes and scalable solutions to end tuberculosis.





Photo: IFAD

## Tourism with a twist

In Uttarakhand, women are rewriting the tourism playbook — with boots on mountain trails and hands in the soil. A one-of-a-kind Women's Trek Adventure Company has been launched in a holistic tourism initiative backed by IFAD through the Rural Enterprise Acceleration Project (REAP)–Gramothan, in partnership with the State Rural Livelihood Mission. Local women in Uttarkashi district, trained by the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering in yoga, trekking, cooking and guiding, offer tourists a combination of wellness experiences and a taste of rural life through farming and horticulture. It's tourism with purpose, aiming to boost visitor well-being while empowering and building steady incomes for mountain communities.

## Nurturing a new generation of peacemakers

Young people from around the world gathered in New Delhi in April for the 11th edition of the Youth Leadership Workshop, hosted by UNESCO Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding and UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP). The workshop, supported by the Global Citizenship Education Youth Network, saw participants exchange best practices and methods to foster inclusive and sustainable solutions. Since 2015, the workshop has engaged more than 400 young leaders worldwide, with the goal of deepening the participants' understanding of how Social Emotional Learning and Global Citizenship Education can help address global challenges and promote peace.



Photo: UNESCO MGIEP



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Photo: UNESCO

## Abuzz in the Nilgiris: women beekeepers lead the way

In the Nilgiris, women are being trained to protect nature – one beehive at a time. UNESCO's Women for Bees programme, launched with Keystone Foundation, is building local skills in sustainable beekeeping and biodiversity conservation. This local initiative is part of a global collaboration between UNESCO and Guerlain under the Man and the Biosphere Programme. It empowers women beekeepers through training, while also protecting native bee species and boosting local ecosystems.

## Strengthening partnerships to boost food security

With its high nutritional content, bao rice – red in color and rich in iron and protein – is a superfood. It's also a flood-resistant crop. In Assam, Norway and WFP are teaming up to help local farmers cultivate new varieties as part of the ENACT project. The collaborative initiative focuses on empowering local communities, particularly women farmers, through practices such as integrated farming systems and crop diversification to enhance nutrition and climate resilience. Norwegian Ambassador May-Elen Stener stressed the project's importance in strengthening women's roles in agriculture and building climate resilience while WFP's Country Director Elisabeth Faure underlined the partnership's alignment with government efforts to empower women farmers.



Photo: WFP

## United for development of tribal communities

UN agencies joined Ministry of Tribal Affairs Secretary Vibhu Nayar's calls for innovation to empower tribal communities at a High-Level International Convening on Accelerating Tribal Development under Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh in New Delhi. The conference brought together UN India, the World Bank, ADB, UNICEF India, FAO India, UNFPA India, UN Women India, UNESCO, UNEP, UNESCO, IFAD and WHO to forge collaborative partnerships and build scalable models of tribal upliftment across education, health and livelihoods.



Photo: Ministry of Tribal Affairs



## SPOTLIGHT: Celebrating 75 years of India's legacy in UN peacekeeping



Indian peacekeepers Brigadier General Amitabh Jha and Havildar Sanjay Singh were honoured posthumously with the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal for their service and sacrifice at a ceremony on 29 May, the International Day of UN Peacekeepers.

Starting with its participation in the UN operation in Korea in 1950, India has a long and distinguished history of service in UN peacekeeping, having contributed more personnel than any other country. India is currently the fourth largest troop-contributing nation, with more 5,000 personnel deployed in nine active missions to promote peace.

1958



Indian troops join Danish and Swedish peacekeepers on a training exercise on a beach in Gaza in 1958 as part of the UN Emergency Force. Photo: UN/KDS

2025



Indian women peacekeepers engage with local communities in South Sudan in May 2025. Photo: UNMISS

At a symposium hosted by the United Service Institution of India, UN India Resident Coordinator Shombi Sharp highlighted how the country is at the forefront of global efforts to adapt peacekeeping in the face of complex emerging challenges, including digital threats.



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**2025: United Nations turns 80**

**9-13 June:** UN Ocean Conference, France

**20 June:** World Refugee Day

**21 June:** International Day of Yoga

**27 June:** Micro-Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day

**30 June - 3 July:** Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, Spain

**At a glance**

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