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English

## National

### 1. Karnataka Becomes the First Indian State to Introduce Paid Menstrual Leave

The state cabinet of Karnataka has approved a policy giving women employees one paid day off each month for menstrual-related reasons, totalling 12 days annually. The leave will apply to both government offices and private sector firms including IT, factories and garment units. By formally recognising menstrual health as a workplace concern, the move aims to foster more inclusive, empathetic work environments. Other states have limited or sector-specific versions of this benefit, but this is the first to span all employment sectors in the state.

### 2. Delhi Revises Working Hours to Tackle Seasonal Smog Crisis

The capital's government offices have announced a temporary revision of working hours from November 15 to February 15 to ease traffic congestion and reduce winter air pollution. Under the new schedule, state government offices will operate from 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., while municipal offices will run from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., widening the gap between start times and aiming to disperse vehicle movement during peak rush hours. The initiative is part of broader efforts to improve air quality in the smog-prone season.

### 3. Prime Minister Launches Four New Vande Bharat Express Trains on Key Routes

The Prime Minister flagged off four new "Vande Bharat Express" train services connecting key routes: Banaras-Khajuraho, Lucknow-Saharanpur, Firozpur-Delhi and Bengaluru-Ernakulam. These launches expand the modern train fleet, cut travel time significantly and aim to boost regional connectivity.

tourism and economic linkages across North and South India. With the new additions, the total number of such trains in service has surpassed 160. The rollout emphasises modern infrastructure as a growth driver.

### 4. India Prepares for 2026 Tiger Census — The World's Largest Wildlife Survey

India is gearing up for the All India Tiger Estimation (AITE) 2026, a massive wildlife survey covering over 827,000 km<sup>2</sup> and designed to assess tiger numbers, prey populations, habitat quality and human-wildlife interaction. Training for forest staff and volunteers is underway, with technologies such as camera-trapping, satellite imagery and mobile apps in use. The survey aims to provide a holistic snapshot of ecosystem health rather than just predator counts. It follows the last count in 2022, which placed India as home to roughly three-quarters of the world's wild tigers.

### 5. Uttarakhand Foundation Day 2025 Marks 25 Years of the Devbhoomi's Formation

On 9 November 2025, Uttarakhand celebrated 25 years since its formation as India's 27th state. The state government is marking the occasion with a week-long festival (1-11 Nov) that features cultural events, exhibitions, and a "Uttarakhand@25" development roadmap covering infrastructure, employment, sustainability and youth participation. Projects worth over Rs 8,000 crore are being inaugurated in areas like drinking water, energy, sports and technical education. The occasion also honours the movement that led to the creation of the Himalayan state and reflects on its progress in education, budget growth and transport.

### 6. India Observes National Legal Services Day to Promote Equal Access to Justice

Every year on 9 November, India observes

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National Legal Services Day to commemorate the enforcement of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 and to raise awareness of legal rights and free legal aid. On this day, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and its state and district level counterparts run legal literacy camps, awareness drives and sessions for alternative dispute resolution. The key objective is empowering marginalised groups with knowledge and access so that justice is not out of reach due to social or economic constraints.

### 7. India's First National Dolphin Research Centre Opens in Patna, Bihar

The centre, inaugurated in March 2024 at the Patna University campus by the state government, is designed to study the endangered Ganges river dolphin's behaviour, habitat and conservation needs. It occupies a 4,400 m<sup>2</sup> plot near the Ganga and includes laboratories and an interpretation centre for public awareness. However, as of early 2025 the facility remains largely non-operational due to delays in staffing and equipment procurement.

### 8. Commemorative Fifty-Rupee Coin Released to Celebrate NHPC Limited's Golden Jubilee

The government released a commemorative ₹50 coin on 6 November 2025 to mark NHPC's fifty-year journey, recognising its role in hydropower and diversification into renewables. The coin release event also unveiled a comic book to promote awareness of hydropower among children. NHPC has an installed capacity of over 8,333 MW across 30 stations, with another 9,704 MW under construction.



### 9. Finance Minister Sitharaman and RBI Governor Malhotra Outline Major Reforms for Indian Banking System

India's Finance Minister and the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India revealed an ambitious reform agenda to reshape the banking sector. Key measures include the creation of large, globally-competitive banks via mergers, easing regulatory restrictions for banks to participate in acquisitions and capital market activity, and emphasising more localised service through region-language staff and streamlined documentation. They stressed that regulation should support innovation and inclusion while ensuring financial stability remains paramount.



### 10. Centre Issues New Regulations for Deep-Sea Fishing Within India's Exclusive Economic Zone

The government has notified new rules governing deep-sea fishing within India's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), prioritising fishermen cooperatives and fish-farmer producer organisations (FFPOs). Foreign vessels are banned entirely from operating in Indian waters. The framework mandates digital tracking of large mechanised vessels, prescribes minimum legal sizes for catch, and prohibits harmful practices such as LED-light fishing and bull trawling. Efforts are also made to classify fish caught beyond the contiguous zone as of Indian

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origin, thus enhancing export and resource safeguards.

### 11. India Unveils DRAP and UiWIN Initiatives to Eliminate Dumpsites by 2026

The government has launched two major urban initiatives—DRAP and UiWIN—to fast-track the cleaning and redevelopment of legacy waste dumpsites and to channel private investment into city infrastructure. Under DRAP, around 214 high-load dumpsites across 202 municipal bodies containing about 8.8 crore tonnes of waste will be prioritised for remediation by September 2026. Meanwhile, UiWIN is aimed at unlocking private and multilateral funds for urban projects, helping cities become cleaner, greener and investment-ready in line with broader development goals.

### 12. RBI Adopts Fresh Approach for Bringing Back India's Gold Reserves

The RBI has changed its strategy regarding India's official gold reserves, accelerating the repatriation of large volumes of previously overseas-held gold to domestic vaults. Between March and September 2025 around 64 tonnes were returned, marking part of a broader shift to store more gold within the country for reasons of sovereignty and security. This move reflects growing concerns globally about overseas asset exposure and enhances the flexibility of reserve management.

### 13. India Joins Global Forest Fund to Strengthen Climate and Conservation Efforts

India has formally joined the Brazil-led Tropical Forests Forever Facility as an observer, signalling its intention to engage more actively in global forest conservation finance frameworks. The fund is designed to provide results-based payments to tropical forest nations, offering long-term financing to protect and restore

forests rather than relying solely on traditional donor grants. By participating, India reinforces its low-carbon development commitments, highlights the importance of forest-based mitigation, and emphasises equity and implementation-focus in climate action.

### 14. Launch of India's First Genome Project Focused on Tribal Communities

The state of Gujarat has launched India's first large-scale genome sequencing initiative focused on tribal communities. The programme, led by the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre, aims to sequence around 2,000 individuals from 31 tribal groups across 11 districts and build a genetic reference database. The goal is to diagnose and prevent inherited disorders (such as sickle cell anaemia and thalassemia) that disproportionately affect tribal populations due to endogamous marriage and limited genetic diversity.

### 15. RBI Introduces a New Plan for Bringing Back India's Overseas Gold Holdings

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has accelerated its strategy to repatriate gold reserves previously held overseas, bringing back about 64 tonnes between March and September 2025. This shift marks a move to enhance domestic control of sovereign assets, mitigate geopolitical risks from foreign custodians and diversify the reserve portfolio. With 575.8 tonnes now held in India and the rest overseas, gold's share in total reserves has risen to nearly 13.9 %.

### 16. India's First Presidential Visit Strengthens Angola Relations

President Droupadi Murmu's historic four-day state visit to Angola from November 8-11, 2025, marks the first-ever visit by an Indian President to the country. The visit commemorates 40 years of diplomatic ties and Angola's 50 years of

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independence. Discussions focused on expanding cooperation in energy security, defence, trade, technology, agriculture, and critical minerals. India and Angola aim to deepen bilateral relations through new agreements and increased collaboration in sectors including oil, defence, fertilisers, and diamond processing.



## 17. ASI Bars Tourists from Konark's Nata Mandap

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has prohibited tourists from entering the 'Nata Mandap' or dance pavilion of the 13th-century Konark Sun Temple in Odisha's Puri district. This decision follows multiple accidents where tourists fell while taking selfies due to the lack of protective fencing, causing injuries. Moreover, some visitors were damaging the sculpted stone artworks. To preserve the monument and ensure visitor safety, ASI has deployed security to enforce this restriction.

## 18. Kochi Hosts First BIMSTEC Marine Research Conference

The first biennial BIMSTEC-India Marine Research Network (BIMReN) Conference was held in Kochi from November 4 to 6, 2025. Launched in 2024 by India's Ministry of External Affairs, BIMReN connects over 50 researchers

and 25 institutions across BIMSTEC member countries. The conference focused on advancing regional cooperation for sustainable blue economy development in the Bay of Bengal, discussing marine challenges, ecosystem health, research innovations, and fostering collaborations like twinning research grants and split-site PhD fellowships.

## 19. Tata Power to Establish India's Largest Solar Wafer and Ingot Facility

Tata Power has announced plans to build a manufacturing facility in India to produce wafers and ingots with a capacity of 10 gigawatts. The new plant will complement its existing 4.9 GW of cells and modules production, thereby creating a fully integrated solar-value chain. The move aligns with India's drive to reduce dependence on imports—especially from China—for upstream solar components, and the company is exploring government support and incentives to finalise investment decisions within the next two months.

## 20. Servier India Introduces Free Biomarker Testing Initiative for Cancer Patients

Servier India has launched a patient-centric biomarker testing programme in collaboration with MedGenome and Strand Life Sciences, targeting two cancers: Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML) and Cholangiocarcinoma (CCA). The initiative offers IDH1 and IDH2 mutation testing free of cost in the government sector and heavily subsidised in private hospitals. This aims to broaden access to precision diagnostics, particularly in regions and facilities where advanced molecular testing remains limited, thereby enabling earlier and more informed treatment decisions.

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## 21. India Showcases Nation's First Megawatt-Scale Vanadium Flow Battery at NTPC NETRA

At the R&D hub of NTPC (NETRA) in Greater Noida, the Union Minister of Power inaugurated India's first 3 MWh vanadium redox flow battery (VRFB) installation on November 11, 2025. The system enhances long-duration energy storage capabilities and supports higher integration of renewable energy into the grid. Accompanying the unveiling were multiple demonstration technologies — including green hydrogen plants and micro-grids — highlighting a broader push towards energy transition, innovation and grid resilience in the country.



## 22. Amit Shah Unveils New Digital Applications to Strengthen Urban Cooperative Banks

Amit Shah launched two mobile platforms — 'Sahakar DigiPay' and 'Sahakar DigiLoan' — at an international conference on the urban cooperative credit sector to modernise India's urban cooperative banks (UCBs). The apps are expected to serve nearly 9 crore depositors and borrowers in UCBs, enabling paper-less, faster transactions and digital credit access. Shah also set the goal of establishing at least one UCB in every town with a population over two lakh within the next five years.



## 23. Tata Trusts Names Neville Tata and Bhaskar Bhat as New Trustees

The Tata Trusts have appointed Neville Tata (32-year-old, son of chairman Noel Tata) and Bhaskar Bhat (senior Tata group veteran) as trustees of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust for a tenure of three years. Simultaneously, the lifetime tenure of existing trustee Venu Srinivasan was reduced to three years in compliance with a Maharashtra government rule limiting lifetime trustees. The move signals generational transition and governance reform within one of India's most influential philanthropic-corporate governance institutions.



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## 24. India Launches First Indigenous Quantum Diamond Microscope

India unveiled its first indigenous Quantum Diamond Microscope (QDM) developed by the P-Quest Group at IIT Bombay under the National Quantum Mission at ESTIC 2025. Based on nitrogen-vacancy (NV) centers in diamond, the QDM uses optically detected magnetic resonance to enable real-time 3D nanoscale magnetic field imaging. This breakthrough aids neuroscience, semiconductor diagnostics, and materials science, marking India's first patent in this domain and positioning the country as a growing leader in quantum technology and advanced imaging.

## 25. Cabinet Approves ₹20,000 Crore Collateral-Free Export Credit

The Union Cabinet approved the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Exporters (CGSE), offering up to ₹20,000 crore in collateral-free credit to eligible exporters, including MSMEs, backed by a 100% guarantee from the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC). Implemented by the Department of Financial Services, the scheme aims to improve export liquidity, promote market diversification, and strengthen India's global competitiveness. A management committee under the DFS Secretary will monitor progress, supporting India's \$1 trillion export target and Aatmanirbhar Bharat vision.

## 26. PM Modi Attends Bhutan's Kalachakra Ceremony

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the Kalachakra Empowerment Ceremony in Bhutan, blending diplomacy with profound Buddhist tradition. The Kalachakra, meaning "Wheel of Time", is a sacred Tibetan Buddhist ritual emphasizing cosmic, bodily, and spiritual cycles through symbolic mandalas, prayers, and empowerment rites. The event, presided over by

Bhutan's Je Khenpo, showcased India-Bhutan cultural ties and spiritual diplomacy. It coincided with India-Bhutan efforts in energy cooperation, security, and joint prayers honoring shared heritage and spiritual progress.



## 27. Indian Railways Introduces DRISHTI AI Monitoring System

Indian Railways, in collaboration with IIT Guwahati, developed DRISHTI, an AI-based Freight Wagon Locking Monitoring System. Designed to enhance freight security, DRISHTI uses AI-powered cameras and sensors to detect real-time anomalies like unlocked or tampered doors on moving wagons without disrupting operations. Employing computer vision and machine learning, it automates monitoring, reduces manual inspection, and aims to improve cargo safety across Northeast Frontier Railway, with plans for wider deployment pending successful trials.

## 28. Banas Dairy, BBSSL Partner to Strengthen Potato Value Chain

Recently, Banas Dairy and Bharatiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL) signed an MoU in New Delhi to develop a comprehensive seed-to-market potato value chain. This collaborative effort, under the "Sahakar se Samriddhi" vision,

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focuses on producing certified disease-free seed potatoes using advanced tissue culture and aeroponic technologies. The partnership aims to boost productivity, reduce crop loss, and increase farmers' incomes through scientific farming practices, contract farming, and improved market linkages.



## 29. Bhopal to Host 22nd All India TDS Conference in 2025

The 22nd All India Annual TDS Conference, organized by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), will be held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, bringing together senior tax administrators nationwide. The conference focuses on reviewing recent amendments in the Income Tax Act, 2025, including revised TDS provisions, increased reporting thresholds, and updated compounding guidelines. It also emphasizes voluntary compliance and transparency, supported by digital tools like automated tracking systems and analytics to enhance tax administration efficiency.

## 30. India Develops Four Hydrogen Valley Innovation Clusters Nationwide

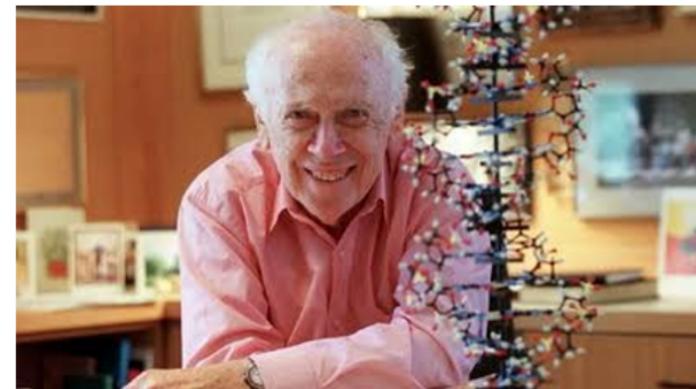
India is developing four Hydrogen Valley Innovation Clusters (HVICs) in Pune, Jodhpur, Bhubaneshwar, and Kerala to demonstrate the full green hydrogen value chain covering production, storage, transport, and utilization.

With a total investment of ₹485 crore, the HVIC initiative aims to build a local hydrogen ecosystem connecting supply and demand across sectors such as transport, industry, and energy. Conceptualized by the Department of Science and Technology, these clusters are integrated under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.

### International

#### 1. James D. Watson, Renowned Scientist and Co-Discoverer of DNA's Structure, Passes Away at 97

James D. Watson, who with Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins revealed the double-helix structure of DNA in 1953, has died at age 97. His discovery laid the foundation for modern genetics, biotechnology and molecular medicine. Watson later helped steer early work on the human genome and developed influential texts in biology. His legacy is complex: alongside scientific accomplishments he faced heavy criticism for controversial remarks about race and intelligence, which marred his reputation in later years.



#### 2. US Tests Minuteman III Missile to Assess Strategic Readiness

The LGM30G Minuteman III intercontinental

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ballistic missile was test-launched unarmed from a launch site in California, traveling approximately 4,200 miles. The test is part of the routine verification of land-based strategic deterrent capabilities and is meant to collect data on the system's performance, accuracy and reliability. It also signals continued readiness of the ground-leg of the nuclear triad as the system nears the end of its service life and awaits replacement by a next-generation missile.

### 3. China Commissions Its Third Aircraft Carrier 'Fujian' Featuring Advanced Naval Technology

China has officially commissioned its third aircraft carrier, the Fujian, in a ceremony attended by President Xi Jinping in Hainan province. The vessel is the first Chinese carrier to feature a flat flight deck and electromagnetic aircraft-launch system (EMALS), enabling heavier and more advanced aircraft such as the J-35 stealth fighter, J-15 variants and the KJ-600 early-warning plane. While increasing China's naval power projection, the ship is conventionally powered (not nuclear) and analysts believe it will require time to achieve full operational capability in global waters.

### 4. Egypt Announces Major Natural Gas Discovery in Its Western Desert Region

Egypt's Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources announced a natural-gas discovery in the Western Desert region, in the Badr-15 area, via the joint venture BAPETCO. The newly connected well is producing about 16 million cubic feet of gas per day along with 750 barrels of condensate. The find is estimated to add roughly 15 billion cubic feet of gas to the country's reserves, aligning with efforts to boost domestic output and reduce reliance on imports.

### 5. Shailesh Chandra Appointed as First Indian President of Global Automobile Body OICA

Shailesh Chandra, currently CEO of Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles and head of Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), has been elected President of Organisation Internationale des Constructeurs d'Automobiles (OICA) effective 1 November 2025. He succeeds the previous president from the USA and becomes the first Indian to assume the role. The appointment reflects India's growing global influence in the automotive sector and signals a shift towards sustainable mobility and harmonised global regulations.



### 6. Sergio Gor Takes Charge as the New United States Ambassador to India

Sergio Gor, a longtime U.S. political operative and former White House personnel director, has been confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to India following Senate approval. His appointment comes at a time of evolving strategic ties between the U.S. and India, with bilateral discussions covering trade, defence, technology and critical-minerals collaboration. The new envoy's role will be central in navigating complex global-regional dynamics and enhancing the India-U.S. strategic partnership.

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## 7. Korean Samhyun to Build EV Motor Component Plant in Sriperumbudur

Korean tech company Samhyun has acquired 11 acres of industrial land from Tata Chemicals in Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, to establish a cutting-edge electric vehicle (EV) motor component manufacturing plant. Founded in 1988, Samhyun specializes in smart motion systems including smart actuators and power units, and its compact, high-performance modules cater to EVs, autonomous platforms, electric ships, and urban air mobility. This investment strengthens Tamil Nadu's status as India's premier EV manufacturing hub, aligning with Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiatives.

## Sports

### 1. Sheetal Devi Makes History as the First Para Archer Selected for India's Mainstream Team

Sheetal Devi, who rose to prominence by winning gold medals in para-archery events, has now been selected for India's mainstream archery team—becoming the first para archer to achieve this crossover. Her selection signals a significant step toward greater inclusivity in Indian sports, acknowledging that athletes with disabilities can

compete alongside able-bodied peers at top levels. The decision underscores a shift in mindset and opens up opportunities for more integration in national elite sport disciplines.



### 2. Raahul VS Becomes India's 91st Chess Grandmaster After Victory at ASEAN Championship

Raahul VS, aged 21, has become India's 91st chess Grandmaster after clinching the 6th ASEAN Individual Championship with a round to spare. He had earned his International Master title in 2021, including crossing the 2400-live rating threshold, and now completed the final Grandmaster norm through this event. His achievement comes just days after India recorded its 90th Grandmaster, underscoring the country's rising depth in competitive chess.



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### 3. Belgium, Netherlands to Co-Host 2026 FIH Hockey World Cup

The 2026 FIH Hockey World Cup will be co-hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands from August 15 to 30, featuring 16 men's and 16 women's teams in a new dual-group progression format. Matches will be played at Belfius Hockey Arena in Wavre, Belgium, and Wagener Stadium in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Belgium will host the men's final and the Netherlands the women's. For the first time, the tournament will include the ParaHockey World Cup, emphasizing inclusivity and diversity in hockey.

Ranks/Reports/Indices

### 1. State Bank of India Crosses the 100 Billion Dollar Valuation Mark

India's largest public sector lender, State Bank of India (SBI), has entered the \$100 billion market-capitalisation club. The valuation surge follows strong second-quarter performance and a total business (advances plus deposits) crossing the ₹100 trillion threshold. The bank's transformation has been supported by regulatory reforms and consolidation in the banking sector. This development reflects both investor confidence and the scaling power of large public sector banks in India's evolving financial landscape.

### 2. World Economic Forum Issues Report on Deep-Tech Innovations in Global Agriculture

The report titled "Shaping the Deep-Tech Revolution in Agriculture" explores how frontier technologies—such as generative AI, robotics, edge IoT, nanotechnology, computer vision, CRISPR-based genome editing, and satellite-enabled remote sensing—can transform global agriculture. It emphasises that conventional methods alone will no longer suffice given pressures from climate change, resource

degradation and shifting demographics. The report also outlines practical pathways and case studies, including in India, for building ecosystems that support adoption of these innovations at scale.

### 3. Mumbai Ranked as Asia's Happiest City for 2025

According to a survey of over 18,000 residents across Asia, Mumbai emerged as the happiest city in Asia for 2025, with 94 % of locals saying the city makes them happy. The report evaluated factors such as culture, nightlife, food, and quality of life. Key contributors to the city's high ranking include its dynamic social scene, abundant career opportunities, and thriving street food culture. The result highlights how a bustling metropolis can still deliver strong resident satisfaction.

### 4. India's Foreign Exchange Reserves Decline by 5.6 Billion Dollars in October

Data from the Reserve Bank of India show that India's foreign exchange reserves fell by about US \$5.6 billion in the week ending October 31, 2025, to around US \$689.7 billion. The drop was driven primarily by reductions in foreign currency assets and gold holdings. Although the reserves remain at historically high levels and support more than 11 months of imports, the decline highlights external sector pressures amid global currency and commodity shifts.

### 5. India's Financial System Strengthened: World Bank Report

The 2025 Financial Sector Assessment (FSA) report by the World Bank highlights India's progress towards becoming a \$30 trillion economy by 2047. The report praises India's resilient, diversified, and inclusive financial system, crediting reforms that aided recovery from 2010s crises and the pandemic. India's

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world-class digital public infrastructure has enhanced financial access. The report acknowledges improved regulation of banks and NBFCs, welcomes scale-based regulation for NBFCs, and notes that capital markets have grown from 144% to 175% of GDP since 2017.

### 6. India Advances to a Better Position in the Global Climate Risk Index 2025

India has improved its ranking in the latest Germanwatch Climate Risk Index, placing 9th in the long-term period (1995–2024) and 15th for the year 2024. While the improvement reflects some resilience gains to extreme weather events, the country remains among the world's most vulnerable to heatwaves, floods and storms. The report underscores the urgent need for stronger adaptation and mitigation strategies even as the exposure to climate risk remains high.

**Summits/MoUs/Conferences/Agreement**

### 1.COP30 Focuses on Strengthening Climate Adaptation and Building Global Resilience

The 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is being held in Belém, Brazil, with an emphasis on moving beyond emissions reduction to strengthening climate adaptation and resilience. Key agenda items include setting indicators for the global goal on adaptation, scaling up finance for developing nations, and transitioning from pledges to actionable implementation of earlier commitments. The summit aims to deliver practical outcomes, bolster institutional frameworks, and channel resources to protect vulnerable communities and ecosystems from the rising tide of climate impacts.

### 2. Hindustan Aeronautics and General Electric Finalize One-Billion-Dollar Agreement for LCA Tejas Mk 1A Engines

HAL and GE have concluded a \$1 billion agreement for the supply of 113 F404-GE-IN20 engines to power 97 Light Combat Aircraft Tejas Mk 1A jets. The contract also includes maintenance, logistics, and technical support. Deliveries are scheduled between 2027 and 2032. The partnership reinforces India's defence manufacturing capability under the 'Make in India' programme, enabling faster indigenous production and ensuring long-term operational reliability for the Indian Air Force's expanding fighter fleet.



### 3. Bharat–Sri Lanka Sanskrit Festival Kicks Off at University of Colombo

The week-long Bharat–Sri Lanka Sanskrit Mahotsav has been inaugurated at the University of Colombo, celebrated jointly by India and Sri Lanka. The event, organised by the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (India), Sri Lanka's Ministry of Education and the Central Sanskrit University, brings together scholars, monastics and students from both countries. Workshops, lectures and cultural performances will emphasise Sanskrit's role as a shared civilisational heritage and a bridge between the two nations' educational and cultural linkages.

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Lectures and cultural performances will emphasise



#### 4. Sixth India–Vietnam Army Exercise VINBAX Commences in Hanoi

The 6th edition of the bilateral military exercise VINBAX between India and Vietnam began in Hanoi, Vietnam, bringing together army contingents from both nations. The exercise emphasises interoperability, sharing of UN peacekeeping techniques, and deepening defence cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. Opening ceremonies were attended by India's Defence Secretary and Vietnam's Deputy Chief of General Staff, signalling strategic trust and evolving military partnership.



#### Science and Technology/Defense/Space

##### 1. PM Modi Launches NexCAR19 — India's First Home-Developed CAR T-Cell Cancer Treatment

The Prime Minister unveiled NexCAR19, India's first indigenous CAR-T cell therapy developed by the startup ImmunoACT (an IIT Bombay spin-off), supported by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) and Department of Biotechnology (DBT). The innovation targets blood cancers such as B-cell leukaemia and lymphoma and is designed to make advanced gene-cell therapies more affordable and accessible in India. The launch positions the country as a growing hub in high-end biotech and cancer care.



##### 2. Google Introduces Ironwood AI Processor, Redefining Chip Technology Standards

Google has introduced its seventh-generation tensor processing unit, called Ironwood, designed specifically for AI inference at massive scale. Each scaled-up pod of Ironwood can integrate up to 9,216 chips and achieves about 42.5 exaflops of compute, marking a major jump in performance and efficiency over earlier generations. It offers significantly higher memory capacity and bandwidth, delivering superior compute-per-watt efficiency. This launch positions the company to enhance its AI infrastructure and compete in high-performance AI hardware.

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### 3. India, Sri Lanka Launch Mitra Shakti 2025

India and Sri Lanka commenced the eleventh Mitra Shakti joint military exercise in Belagavi, Karnataka, from 10 to 23 November 2025. The drill features 170 Indian and 135 Sri Lankan army personnel, supported by air forces from both sides. Exercises focus on counter-terrorism, sub-conventional warfare, drone operations, and UN peacekeeping missions, with simulation of real-world combat scenarios. Mitra Shakti strengthens operational coordination, regional security, and strategic partnership, developing interoperability and reinforcing India-Sri Lanka defense ties for evolving security challenges.

### 4. COP30 Climate Summit Convened in Belém, Brazil

The 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) to the UNFCCC was held in Belém, Brazil from November 10 to 21, 2025. It gathers nearly 60,000 delegates globally to advance international efforts against climate change under the framework of the UNFCCC, which guides agreements like the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement. COP30 emphasizes multilateral climate action, adaptation, and financing, highlighting initiatives such as the Tropical Forest Forever Facility to protect tropical forests and promote sustainability.

### 5. IIA, NASA Use VELC to Study CME

Scientists at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), collaborating with NASA, used the Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC) onboard India's Aditya-L1 mission to estimate key parameters of a coronal mass ejection (CME) for the first time in visible light spectroscopy. VELC, built by IIA in Karnataka, is the primary payload of Aditya-L1 located 1.5 million km from Earth, designed for imaging, spectroscopy, and spectro-polarimetry of the solar corona

near the solar limb to study phenomena like CMEs.

### 6. Gujarat ATS Busts Ricin-Based Terror Plot

The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad arrested Dr. Ahmed Mohiyuddin Saiyed and two others for preparing the lethal poison ricin, linked to the Islamic State Khorasan Province. Saiyed, a medical graduate from China, was caught with weapons, castor oil (ricin precursor), and chemical equipment in Gujarat. The suspects had conducted reconnaissance of key locations in Lucknow, Delhi, and Ahmedabad as part of a planned attack. The plot involved using ricin as a bioweapon, raising concerns over chemical terrorism.

### 7. INS Sahyadri Joins Malabar Exercise 2025 Guam

INS Sahyadri, a Shivalik-class guided missile stealth frigate, is participating in Exercise Malabar-2025 held at Guam in the Northern Pacific. This multilateral naval exercise involves India, the US, Japan, and Australia under the Quad framework and aims to enhance maritime coordination, interoperability, and security in the Indo-Pacific. Malabar 2025 consists of harbour and sea phases focusing on joint operations, anti-submarine warfare, and advanced flying drills, reflecting India's commitment to regional security and indigenous naval capabilities.

### 8. New Exoplanet Data Challenges Rare Earth Hypothesis

Recent exoplanet studies from missions like Kepler and JWST have brought new perspectives to the Rare Earth Hypothesis, which argues that complex life is exceptionally rare due to unique Earth-like conditions. While Earth-sized planets in habitable zones are common, evidence shows many lack stable atmospheres or protective features essential for complex life. This data

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partially challenges the hypothesis, suggesting simple life may be widespread, yet stable, life-supporting environments for complex organisms remain uncommon, keeping Earth's uniqueness plausible.

#### **9. Oman Joins UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Council**

Oman has been elected to the International Coordinating Council of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme for the 2025–2029 term. This recognition reflects Oman's leadership in biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability, aligning with its national Vision 2040 and UN Sustainable Development Goals. Oman's role includes expanding protected areas, fostering scientific cooperation, and promoting sustainable development. Oman already hosts two UNESCO-designated biosphere reserves: Al Sareen Nature Reserve and Al Jabal Al Akhdar.

#### **10. Godrej Delivers Human-Rated Vikas Engine for Gaganyaan**

Godrej Aerospace has delivered the first human-rated L110 stage Vikas engine to ISRO for the Gaganyaan mission, India's inaugural human spaceflight project. This engine will power the core stage of the LVM-3 rocket, critical for crew safety and propulsion reliability. The delivery marks a technological milestone and showcases India's growing self-reliance in space tech. Scheduled milestones include an uncrewed test in early 2026 and a crewed mission in 2027, with astronaut training well underway.

#### **11. IAF Chief Inaugurates Strategic Nyoma Airbase in Ladakh**

On November 12, 2025, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh inaugurated the Mudh-Nyoma Air Force Station near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh by landing a C-130J aircraft on its new 2.7 km runway at 13,700 feet altitude. The

base, located just 23 km from the LAC with China, strengthens India's air combat readiness and frontier infrastructure. Developed by the Border Roads Organisation, Nyoma supports fighter jets, transport planes, and helicopters, enhancing rapid mobilization, surveillance, and logistics in this sensitive high-altitude region.

#### **12. Blue Origin Successfully Launches NASA's ESCAPADE Mission to Mars**

On November 13, 2025, Blue Origin's New Glenn rocket launched NASA's ESCAPADE mission, sending twin orbiters named Blue and Gold on a journey to Mars. Part of NASA's SIMPLEx program, the spacecraft will initially loiter at the Earth-Sun Lagrange 2 Point before heading to Mars in late 2026. Scheduled to reach Mars in 2027, ESCAPADE aims to study Mars' magnetosphere and solar wind interactions, revealing how solar wind strips Mars' atmosphere—crucial for planetary science and human exploration.

#### **13. Andhra Teen Kunchala Selected for 2029 US Space Mission**

Kunchala Kaivalya Reddy, a 17-year-old from Nidadavole, East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh, has been selected for an elite four-year astronaut training program by Titans Space Industries in Florida, USA, starting in 2026. Among 150 candidates chosen globally from 36 countries, she will undergo rigorous training including spaceflight simulations, survival skills, and zero-gravity adaptation. Upon completion, she is set to participate in a 2029 space mission orbiting Earth twice at 300 km altitude, marking a milestone for India's growing role in space science.

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### Miscellaneous

#### 1. Mounjaro Becomes India's Highest-Selling Pharmaceutical Drug in October

In October 2025, Mounjaro — an injectable therapy for diabetes and weight-loss — became the highest-value selling drug in India, generating about ₹100 crore in that month alone. Launched in March 2025, it has seen rapid uptake, crossing about ₹333 crore in total revenue by October. Despite selling far fewer units compared to older, cheaper drugs, its higher price point and demand for weight-management therapies have driven its value-ranking ahead of longstanding leaders in the Indian pharma market.



#### 2. Tribute to Maulana Azad: National Education Day

National Education Day on November 11 honors Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India's first Education Minister and a pivotal figure in shaping the nation's modern education system. Celebrated annually since 2008, the day marks his birth anniversary with activities promoting educational reforms, literacy, and the right to education. Azad's contributions include founding the UGC, IITs, and AICTE, and promoting inclusive, quality education. The day reinforces education

as a foundation for national progress and social transformation in India.

#### 3. Maharashtra Launches Modern Logo, Slogan for Agriculture

After 38 years, Maharashtra's Agriculture Department has revealed a new logo and slogan, "Sashwat Sheti, Samruddha Shetkari," meaning "Sustainable Farming, Prosperous Farmer." The slogan emerged from a state-wide competition, receiving over 1,700 entries, highlighting public participation. The unveiling, led by CM Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai, represents a policy shift toward sustainable, technology-led farming. The logo embodies innovation, farmer empowerment, and sustainability, aiming to rebrand Maharashtra's agriculture sector for the future while honoring traditional wisdom and environmental growth.



#### 4. India-Bahrain Launch Instant Cross-Border UPI Payments

India and Bahrain have launched a real-time cross-border payment system linking India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with Bahrain's Fawri+ service, enabling instant, secure money transfers for individuals and businesses. Spearheaded by NPCI International Payments

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Limited and BENEFIT under RBI and Central Bank of Bahrain oversight, the initiative enhances fintech cooperation and financial inclusion. It benefits the large Indian diaspora in Bahrain by providing faster, cheaper remittances and strengthens bilateral trade and economic ties.



## 5. Palak Muchhal Sets Guinness Record for Heart Surgeries

Singer Palak Muchhal earned a Guinness World Record and Limca Book of Records for funding over 3,800 heart surgeries for underprivileged children through her Palak Palash Charitable Foundation. Inspired by a childhood encounter, she dedicates all her earnings from stage shows and personal donations to save children's lives. Palak's work extends beyond surgeries, aiding families of martyrs and disaster victims, and raising awareness for pediatric heart care, exemplifying the power of celebrity-driven social responsibility.

## 6. Neeraj Chopra, Bindra, Paes Lead Padma 2026

The Padma Awards 2026 list features prominent Indian sports icons like Neeraj Chopra, Abhinav Bindra, and Leander Paes. Bindra and Paes have been recommended for the Padma Vibhushan, while Chopra and Gagan Narang are in line for the Padma Bhushan. Emerging stars like Manu Bhaker and Harmanpreet Singh, along with notable sports administrators and experts, are

nominated for the Padma Shri. These awards recognize exemplary achievements and contributions shaping India's global sports presence.



## 7. UAE Executes First Digital Dirham Government Transaction Fast

The UAE successfully completed its first-ever government transaction using the Digital Dirham, a central bank digital currency, in under two minutes on November 12, 2025. Conducted between the Ministry of Finance and Dubai Department of Finance via the mBridge platform, this milestone marks a significant leap in the country's Financial Infrastructure Transformation (FIT) Programme. The Digital Dirham, fully regulated and government-backed, aims to enhance transparency, efficiency, and financial inclusion, setting the stage for broader adoption across public and commercial sectors.