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Weekly Current Affairs

English

National

India is set to establish its first Forest University in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh

India is set to establish its first Forest University in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, marking a major step in strengthening forestry, wildlife conservation, and environmental education. Spread over about 125 acres, the campus will include academic blocks, research labs, hostels, and student facilities, with an initial Rs. 50 crore allocation. The university will offer programmes in forestry, agroforestry, wildlife conservation, climate studies, and ecosystem biotechnology, with strong emphasis on field-based training and research. It aims to develop skilled professionals, promote biodiversity research, and support sustainable forest management.



Parliament has approved the SHANTI Bill, granting statutory status to the AERB

Parliament has passed the SHANTI Bill, 2025, completing its approval with the Rajya Sabha's clearance on 18 December. The law modernises India's nuclear governance by granting statutory status to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, strengthening regulatory independence and safety oversight. It aligns nuclear operations with IAEA norms, expands liability to include environmental damage, and recognises Small Modular Reactors as future-ready clean energy options. While safeguarding sovereignty and government control over critical materials, the Bill enables

limited private participation. The reform supports India's clean energy goals, targeting 100 GW nuclear capacity by 2047.

Jharkhand has approved a landmark law aimed at the welfare of gig workers

Jharkhand has approved the Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2025, marking a major step in protecting gig and platform workers. With the Governor's assent, the law establishes a formal welfare and social security framework for workers engaged through digital platforms. It mandates registration of workers and aggregators, creation of a Gig Workers' Welfare Board, payment of minimum wages, and provision of medical and social security benefits. To ensure compliance, aggregators can face penalties of up to Rs. 10 lakh for violations, positioning Jharkhand as an early reformer in gig economy regulation.

The Viksit Bharat G-RAM G Bill has been passed by the Lok Sabha

The Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025, was passed by the Lok Sabha on 18 December 2025, proposing a major overhaul of rural employment by replacing MGNREGA. The Bill raises guaranteed work to 125 days, shifts focus toward long-term livelihood assets, and integrates rural works with national infrastructure planning. It introduces budget caps, a new cost-sharing formula, and technology-driven monitoring using biometrics and AI. While aimed at improving productivity and transparency, concerns remain over state finances, digital exclusion, and the weakening of the rights-based framework.

Jammu and Kashmir Introduces Its First Youth-Oriented Gen Z Post Office

Jammu and Kashmir unveiled its first youth-oriented Gen Z Post Office at the AIIMS Vijaypur campus, modernising traditional postal services to better meet young users' expectations. The facility, part of broader postal reforms, offers a contemporary setup with digital payment options, integrated postal banking and insurance services, and

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streamlined service delivery under one roof. Designed to be accessible and student friendly, it aims to engage Generation Z through technology-enabled solutions and improved convenience for campus residents and staff.



Prime Minister to Open New Passenger Terminal at Guwahati's Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the new integrated passenger terminal at Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati, Assam, significantly expanding capacity and enhancing regional connectivity. Spread over a large area, the terminal is the country's first nature-themed airport facility, drawing inspiration from Assam's biodiversity and cultural heritage under the "Bamboo Orchids" design. With modern passenger amenities and advanced infrastructure, it is designed to handle millions of travelers annually and position Guwahati as a key aviation hub for northeast India.

Haryana Assembly Adopts Resolution Honouring 350 Years of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's Sacrifice

The Haryana Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a resolution to commemorate the 350th martyrdom year of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji during its winter session, honouring his supreme sacrifice in defence of religious liberty and human dignity. The chief minister highlighted the Guru's life as an enduring example of moral courage.

The state government, collaborating with Sikh institutions, organised diverse activities including competitions and community events to inspire youth and preserve historical legacy across the state.

Securities Markets Code Bill 2025 introduced in the Lok Sabha to unify capital market laws

The Finance Minister introduced the Securities Markets Code Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha to consolidate and modernise India's capital market legal framework. The Bill seeks to merge existing statutes into a single comprehensive law, expanding governance and accountability for the securities regulator, enhancing conflict-of-interest norms and broadening the regulator's board strength. It also proposes decriminalising select violations and sets procedural frameworks for enforcement, aiming to improve regulatory clarity, strengthen oversight and support efficient market functioning.



Supreme Court mandates environmental responsibility as an essential component of corporate social responsibility

The Supreme Court ruled that corporate social responsibility inherently includes environmental protection, making corporate duty to the environment an essential part of CSR obligations. The bench emphasized that companies cannot claim to fulfil CSR while ignoring impacts on ecosystems and endangered species. Citing constitutional duties, it held that CSR funds must support ecological conservation and that corporations share responsibility to protect and improve the natural environment. This decision reinforces environmental stewardship through corporate governance practices.

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Reserve Bank of India clears framework for deposit insurance based on risk assessment

The Reserve Bank of India's central board approved a new risk-based deposit insurance framework for banks, replacing the existing flat premium system. Under this approach, banks with stronger balance sheets and better risk management will pay lower premiums, while those with higher risk profiles will incur higher costs. The change aims to promote prudent banking practices and align insurance premiums with institutional risk levels. Deposit insurance coverage limits for depositors remain unchanged.

Karnataka Assembly passes Hate Speech and Hate Crimes Prevention Bill 2025

The Karnataka Assembly passed the Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill 2025, creating a standalone state law to criminalise and deter hate speech and associated offences. The law defines prohibited expressions that cause disharmony and hatred, covering spoken, written, visual and electronic communication. All offences are non-bailable and can attract significant prison terms. The bill passed amid strong opposition protests, which argue the law could be misused, and now awaits formal assent to take effect.

Government announces plan to set up Bureau of Port Security for strengthening port safety

The Government of India has approved the creation of a dedicated Bureau of Port Security under the Merchant Shipping Act to strengthen the security framework for ports, vessels and coastal logistics hubs. The new statutory body will operate under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and coordinate regulatory oversight, risk-based security measures and information exchange, with focus on physical and cyber threats. A senior Indian Police Service officer will lead the bureau, and the Central Industrial Security Force will conduct security assessments and training.

Competition Commission of India initiates investigation into IndiGo over alleged dominance misuse

India's antitrust watchdog, the Competition Commission of India (CCI), has taken cognisance of complaints against budget carrier IndiGo following

cancellations and operational disruption in early December 2025. The CCI is reviewing whether the airline, which holds a dominant share of the domestic aviation market, abused its position in violation of competition norms under Section 4 of the Competition Act by restricting services or imposing unfair conditions on travellers. A detailed probe may follow based on the preliminary assessment.

PM Modi Inaugurates a Rs. 10,601 Crore Fertiliser Plant in Dibrugarh, Assam

Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of a Rs. 10,601 crore ammonia-urea plant at Namrup in Dibrugarh, Assam, marking a major push toward fertiliser self-reliance. Developed by Assam Valley Fertilizer and Chemical Company Limited, the brownfield project will produce 12.7 lakh tonnes of urea annually and is expected to be commissioned by 2030. Backed by multiple central and state PSUs, the plant aims to cut import dependence, modernise ageing infrastructure, and strengthen agricultural and industrial growth across Northeast India.



PM Modi Inaugurates a Nature-Inspired Terminal at Lokpriya Gopinath Bardoloi Airport

Narendra Modi inaugurated the new terminal of Lokpriya Gopinath Bardoloi International Airport in Guwahati on December 20, 2025, strengthening infrastructure in Northeast India. Spread over 1.4 lakh sq m, the terminal can handle 1.3 crore passengers annually and features modern airside and passenger facilities. Inspired by Assam's

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biodiversity, its “Bamboo Orchids” design blends tradition with modernity. The Prime Minister also unveiled an 80-foot statue of Gopinath Bardoloi. The project enhances connectivity, tourism, and regional economic growth.

Finance Ministry Introduces a New Logo for Regional Rural Banks

The Ministry of Finance has introduced a common logo for Regional Rural Banks to create a unified national identity after the *One State One RRB* consolidation. Effective from May 1, 2025, the reform merged 26 RRBs across 11 states, leaving 28 banks nationwide. The new logo, using blue and green, symbolises trust, stability, growth, and rural prosperity. The initiative aims to enhance visibility, strengthen public confidence, modernise rural banking, and reinforce RRBs’ role in financial inclusion and welfare delivery.



ADB Pledges 4.26 Billion USD in Sovereign Loans to India in 2025

The Asian Development Bank committed 4.26 billion USD in sovereign lending to India in 2025, approving 16 projects aligned with national development priorities. The funding supports skilling, renewable energy, urban infrastructure, transport, healthcare, and tourism. Major allocations include \$846 million for the PM-SETU skilling programme, 650 million USD for rooftop solar under PM Surya Ghar Yojana, \$775 million for urban projects, and 729 million USD for metro and rapid rail systems. The investments aim to boost jobs, sustainability, and inclusive growth.

India and New Zealand Conclude Free Trade Agreement Negotiations

India and New Zealand concluded negotiations for a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on December 22, 2025, following a conversation between Narendra Modi and Christopher Luxon. Finalised in a record nine months, the pact will cut or eliminate tariffs on 95% of New Zealand exports to India and is expected to double bilateral trade within five years. It supports MSMEs, farmers, and investors, strengthens supply-chain integration, and could see New Zealand invest about 20 billion USD in India over 15 years, advancing trade-led growth and strategic cooperation.

India to Adopt a New CPI and GDP Data Series from February

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has announced the release of new base-year data series for India’s key macroeconomic indicators to improve accuracy and relevance. A revised retail inflation (CPI) series with base year 2024 will be released on February 12, 2026, followed by GDP/national accounts with base year 2022–23 on February 27, 2026. The updated Index of Industrial Production (IIP), also with base year 2022–23, will follow on May 28, 2026. The revision, finalized after stakeholder consultations, will better reflect structural economic changes, enhance transparency, and support sound policy and investment decisions.

Subansiri Lower Project Unit-2 has been commissioned

India has strengthened its clean energy push with the commissioning of Unit-2 (250 MW) of the Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project on the Subansiri River along the Arunachal Pradesh–Assam border. Developed by NHPC, the 2,000 MW project is India’s largest hydropower venture. The unit was inaugurated virtually by Manohar Lal. The project will add clean power, support flood moderation, strengthen supply in the North-East, and advance India’s renewable and net-zero goals as remaining units come online by 2026–27.

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The Reserve Bank of India has announced a Rs. 2.90 lakh crore liquidity infusion into the banking system

The Reserve Bank of India has announced liquidity infusion measures worth Rs. 2.90 lakh crore to ease banking system stress and manage forex volatility. The package includes Rs. 2 lakh crore via Open Market Operation (OMO) purchases of government securities in four tranches between December 29, 2025 and January 22, 2026, and a 10 billion USD dollar-rupee buy/sell swap with a three-year tenor scheduled for January 13, 2026. These steps aim to improve bank liquidity, stabilise the rupee, manage excess dollar liquidity, and support credit flow amid global economic uncertainties.

Haryana has declared Hansi as its 23rd district

The Haryana government has officially declared Hansi as the 23rd district of the state, effective December 22, 2025. Created by reorganising the Hisar district, the new district comprises the Hansi and Narnaund subdivisions. The notification, issued under the Haryana Land Revenue Act, 1887 and approved by the Governor, aims to improve administrative efficiency, decentralised governance, and faster development. Led by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, the move is expected to enhance service delivery, law and order, and regional growth.



Prime Minister Modi is set to inaugurate the Rashtra Prerna Sthal in Lucknow

Narendra Modi will inaugurate Rashtra Prerna Sthal in Lucknow, marking the 101st birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Built at a cost of about Rs. 230 crore over 65 acres, the complex honours leadership,

and democratic values. It features 65-foot bronze statues of Syama Prasad Mukherjee, Deendayal Upadhyaya, and Vajpayee, along with a lotus-shaped high-tech museum showcasing India's national journey. The project strengthens cultural tourism and institutionalises ideals of good governance and public inspiration.

Gujarat leads the country with over five lakh rooftop solar installations

Gujarat has emerged as India's leading state in rooftop solar adoption by crossing five lakh residential installations, achieving a cumulative capacity of 1,879 MW. This milestone marks nearly 50% progress toward its target of 10 lakh rooftop systems by March 2027. Strong policy support and subsidies worth Rs. 3,778 crore have driven household participation by reducing upfront costs. Simplified regulations, waived charges, and attractive incentives have further boosted adoption. Gujarat's achievement highlights its leadership in decentralised renewable energy and serves as a national model for clean energy transition.

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports unveils a comprehensive internship framework to strengthen the sports ecosystem

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has launched a Comprehensive Internship Policy to build a skilled talent pipeline for India's sports ecosystem. Offering 452 internships annually across bodies such as the Sports Authority of India, National Anti-Doping Agency, and National Dope Testing Laboratory, the programme targets students for hands-on training in governance, sports science, anti-doping, event management, and athlete support. Aligned with the National Sports Policy and Khelo Bharat Niti 2025, it promotes professionalisation, clean sport, and data-driven athlete development through transparent, merit-based selection.

NUDGE Campaign Flags Questionable Exemption and Deduction Claims for AY 2025-26

The Income Tax Department has launched a data-driven NUDGE (Non-intrusive Usage of Data to Guide and Enable) campaign for Assessment Year 2025-26, urging taxpayers to voluntarily review potentially ineligible deductions and

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exemptions before the December 31 revised-return deadline. Using advanced risk analytics, advisories are being issued via SMS and email, particularly highlighting bogus political donations, incorrect PAN details, and inflated claims. The initiative is advisory, trust-based, and aims to encourage self-correction, reduce litigation, and improve compliance—supported by rising voluntary revisions and additional tax payments from taxpayers.

Government of India Issues New P&NG Rules 2025 to Enhance Investment and Business Ease

The Government of India notified the Petroleum and Natural Gas (P&NG) Rules, 2025, in December 2025 to modernise regulation, attract investment, and simplify hydrocarbon operations. Issued under the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 2025, the rules replace the 1949 and 1959 frameworks. Key features include a single petroleum lease, 30-year tenure with extensions, faster approvals within 180 days, higher financial penalties instead of criminal action, investor-friendly dispute resolution, and infrastructure sharing provisions. The rules mandate stronger compliance, timely reporting, zero-flaring environmental goals, and designate the Oil Industry Safety Directorate as the offshore safety authority, boosting transparency, efficiency, and investor confidence.

International

Brazil has formally transferred the BRICS presidency to India

Brazil formally handed over the BRICS presidency to India on 12 December 2025 during the 4th BRICS Sherpas Meeting, marking a leadership transition ahead of India's tenure in 2026. The ceremonial transfer of the Amazon-crafted gavel symbolised continuity, sustainability, and collective responsibility. While Brazil remains president until December 31, India will steer future agendas focused on climate resilience, responsible AI, scientific cooperation, and global governance reforms, including the UN Security Council. The transition underscores BRICS' commitment to inclusive development and stronger Global South collaboration.

United States and Jordan Conduct Operation Hawkeye Against ISIS Targets in Syria

The United States and Jordan jointly launched Operation Hawkeye Strike, conducting large-scale air and artillery strikes against more than seventy ISIS targets across central Syria. The coordinated military action responded to a recent attack that killed American and partner forces personnel near Palmyra, aiming to degrade ISIS infrastructure, weapons depots and operational sites. Forces used fighter jets, attack helicopters and over one hundred precision munitions, with Jordanian aircraft supporting the assault. The operation reflects ongoing counterterrorism efforts to prevent ISIS resurgence and protect regional security.



India enforces anti dumping duty on selected steel products imported from China

India has imposed anti-dumping duties on selected cold-rolled steel imports from China to protect its domestic steel sector from below-cost foreign shipments. The duties, effective for five years, are aimed at countering the adverse impact of cheap imports on local producers and supporting industry competitiveness. The levies apply to specific steel categories, reflecting ongoing efforts to ensure fair trade practices and reinforce manufacturing stability while balancing import pressures and industrial growth objectives.

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Michaela Benthaus Set to Become the First Wheelchair User to Travel to Space

Michaela Benthaus is set to make history as the first wheelchair-bound person to travel to space aboard Blue Origin's New Shepard NS-37 suborbital mission. A German aerospace and mechatronics engineer associated with the European Space Agency, she has used a wheelchair since a spinal cord injury in 2018. The mission will cross the Kármán line, offering brief microgravity. Her flight marks a milestone for inclusive space exploration and challenges traditional notions of physical ability in human spaceflight.

Elon Musk Makes History as the First Person to Attain a 700 Billion USD Net Worth

Elon Musk has become the first individual to cross a 700 billion USD net worth, with Forbes estimating his wealth at about 749 billion USD. The surge followed a Delaware Supreme Court ruling that restored Tesla stock options valued at 139 billion USD, removing earlier valuation discounts. Tesla again stands as his largest asset, while SpaceX forms a nearly equal second pillar. Musk now outpaces Larry Page by an unprecedented margin of nearly 500 billion USD.



India Leads WADA's Global Doping Violations List for the Third Year in a Row

India topped the global doping offenders list for the third straight year, recording 260 positive cases in 2024, according to the World Anti-Doping Agency. With a 3.6% positivity rate, India was the only nation to cross triple digits, far exceeding figures from France, China, Russia, and the US. The data point to a systemic problem driven by socio-economic pressure and a medal-at-all-costs culture, especially in athletics, wrestling, and weightlifting. The trend threatens India's sporting credibility and could undermine its Olympic ambitions, despite recent corrective efforts by the National Anti-Doping Agency.

Oman Introduces Its First Polymer One-Rial Banknote, to Enter Circulation in January 2026

Oman has launched its first polymer one-rial banknote, marking a major shift from paper-based currency. Issued by the Central Bank of Oman, the note will enter circulation on January 11, 2026. Designed to enhance durability and security, it features advanced anti-counterfeiting elements such as a transparent window, colour-shifting foil, and iridescent ink. The imagery highlights Oman's environmental heritage and economic transformation, reflecting a balance between tradition and modern development.

India announces a 450 million relief assistance package for Sri Lanka following Cyclone Ditwah

India has announced a 450 million USD humanitarian and reconstruction package for Sri Lanka following the devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah. The assistance was

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announced in Colombo during the visit of S. Jaishankar, acting as a special envoy of Narendra Modi. The package includes a 100 million USD grant and 350 million USD in concessional credit for rebuilding infrastructure, housing, health, education, and agriculture. Delivered under Operation Sagar Bandhu, the support underscores India's *Neighbourhood First* policy and reinforces its role as a first responder and trusted partner in the Indian Ocean region.

Ranks/Reports/Indices

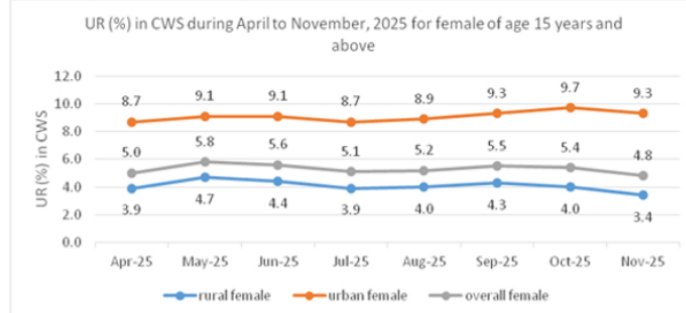
SEBI has permitted the issuance of zero-coupon bonds in smaller denominations

SEBI has permitted zero-coupon bonds to be issued in smaller denominations of Rs. 10,000, a reform announced on 18 December 2025 to expand retail access to debt markets. Earlier, such lower face values applied only to interest-bearing securities, excluding zero-coupon bonds due to the absence of periodic payouts. Since these bonds generate returns through price appreciation and are redeemed at par, SEBI has aligned their treatment with other fixed-income instruments. The move is expected to democratise investment, improve liquidity, diversify products, and strengthen India's corporate bond market.

The overall LFPR showed an upward trend, with unemployment dropping to a new low in November 2025

India's labour market showed continued improvement in November 2025, according to the PLFS released by the NSO. The Labour Force Participation Rate rose to 55.8%, the highest since April 2025, driven mainly by stronger rural participation. The Worker Population Ratio increased to 53.2%, reflecting higher employment, especially among rural women. Meanwhile, the Unemployment Rate fell to 4.7%, its lowest since April, with rural unemployment touching a new low of 3.9%. The data points to broader labour absorption and improving workforce inclusion across regions and genders.

unemployment reaching a new low of 3.9%. The data points to broader labour



India's Foreign Exchange Reserves Increase to 688.94 Billion, Shows Central Bank Data

India's foreign exchange reserves rose to sixty eight eight point nine four billion dollars in the week ending December 12, driven by gains in foreign currency assets and gold holdings, according to central bank data. Foreign currency assets grew, and gold reserves increased significantly in the reporting period. Special Drawing Rights and the reserve position with the International Monetary Fund also saw modest growth. The rise in reserves supports external stability and strengthens India's ability to meet international payment obligations.

PGIMER Chandigarh Ranked Highest Among Health Technology Assessment Institutions in India

The Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, was recognised as India's leading Health Technology Assessment (HTA) institute at the ARISE 2025 national conclave, for the second consecutive year. The award, presented by senior health officials, honours the institute's role in advancing evidence-based health policy, efficient resource use, and cost-effective care. PGIMER's HTA Resource Hub, led by experts in health economics, strengthens its position by supporting data-driven decisions in public health and equitable healthcare planning across the country.

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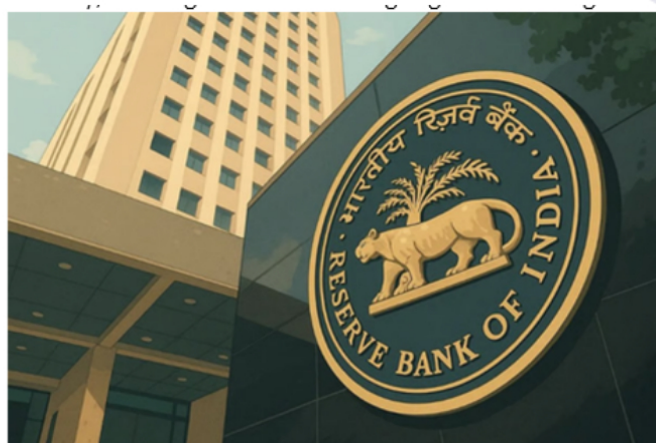
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RBI Board Approves a Revamp of the Deposit Insurance Framework

The Reserve Bank of India has approved a risk-based deposit insurance framework to strengthen India's banking system. The decision was taken at the 620th meeting of the RBI Central Board in Hyderabad, chaired by Governor Sanjay Malhotra. Under the new approach, banks' insurance-related treatment will be linked to their risk profile and financial health. This reform promotes better governance, discourages excessive risk-taking, enhances systemic stability, and aligns India's banking regulation with global best practices, while keeping depositor protection unchanged.



Global Food City Rankings for 2025–26 have been released

Food-driven travel is reshaping global tourism, as highlighted in the TasteAtlas *World's 10 Best Food Cities 2025–26*. European cities dominate the list, with Italy

securing six spots, led by Naples and Milan. Mumbai ranks 5th globally, earning recognition for its vibrant, affordable street food culture that reflects history, migration, and innovation. Other Indian cities such as Delhi, Amritsar, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Chennai also feature in the global top 100. The rankings underline how cuisine now defines destination appeal and cultural identity worldwide.

NITI Aayog Publishes Study on India's Higher Education Internationalisation

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) released the report 'Internationalisation of Higher Education in India: Prospects, Potential, and Policy Recommendations' in December 2025, outlining a roadmap to make India a global higher education hub by 2047. Prepared with IIT Madras, AIU, and Acumen, the report focuses on "internationalisation at home" in line with NEP 2020, using surveys, expert interviews, and global benchmarking. It highlights rising international student inflow but notes outbound dominance. The report proposes 22 policy recommendations, 76 action pathways, and 125 indicators across strategy, finance, branding, outreach, and curriculum, suggesting initiatives like Bharat Vidya Kosh, Vishwa Bandhu scholarships/fellowships, and stronger global partnerships.

Summits/MoUs/Conferences/Agreement

Odisha is set to host a Regional AI Impact Conference on December 19–20

Odisha will host the Regional AI Impact Conference on December 19–20, reinforcing its role in India's growing AI-driven governance ecosystem. The event follows a curtain-raiser by the Electronics and IT Department outlining the state's AI Policy 2025, innovation roadmap, and practical AI deployments. Part of a national series leading to the India AI Impact Summit 2026, the conference aligns with the theme "Planet, People, Progress." Odisha aims to develop a responsible AI ecosystem, expand AI use in public services, and promote the Odia language through AI initiatives like Bhasha Dham.

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India and Argentina have signed the ICAR–INTA Work Plan for 2025–27

India and Argentina have signed the ICAR–INTA Work Plan (2025–27) to deepen cooperation in agricultural research, technology exchange, and capacity building. The agreement promotes collaboration in sustainable agronomy, biotechnology, digital farming, mechanisation, and livestock improvement. It includes joint research, germplasm exchange, expert interactions, and training programmes across key crops and value chains. Emphasis is also placed on plant and animal health, including FMD control and biosecurity. With annual reviews, the partnership aims to strengthen climate-resilient, science-led agriculture and enhance long-term food security in both countries.

India and Netherlands Establish Joint Trade and Investment Committee to Boost Economic Cooperation

India and the Netherlands have set up a Joint Trade and Investment Committee (JTIC) to deepen bilateral economic cooperation, promoting trade and investment flows between both countries. The committee, formed through a memorandum of understanding, will provide a structured platform to review bilateral trade relations, address barriers, explore collaboration in key economic sectors, and promote two-way investments. It will meet annually, alternating between India and the Netherlands, with senior government officials co-chairing the sessions to ensure sustained engagement and dialogue.

Prime Minister Unveils Ashwagandha Commemorative Stamp at Global Traditional Medicine Summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a commemorative postal stamp on Ashwagandha during the closing of the Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine in New Delhi, highlighting the herb's international significance in traditional healthcare. The summit saw several initiatives launched for the traditional medicine sector, including digital platforms, quality benchmarks and reports on training in Yoga. The event also featured recognition for contributors to Yoga promotion and discussions on integrating traditional practices with modern science to expand global reach.

India Hands Over Three Quick Impact Projects to Deepen Ties with Myanmar

India has reinforced its development partnership with Myanmar by handing over three Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in the Mandalay Region, underscoring a people-centric approach to regional cooperation. The initiatives include introducing an Indian-made rapier loom to boost vocational weaving skills, constructing a new Girls' Training School to support women's education, and promoting clean energy through agricultural waste gasification. Implemented under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, these projects enhance livelihoods, encourage sustainability, and strengthen India's role as a reliable development partner in Southeast Asia.



LoI Signed for Establishing a Centre of Excellence in CRISPR Research and Innovation

India has strengthened its biotechnology capabilities by signing a Letter of Intent to establish the Centre of Excellence for CRISPR Innovation and Translation (CoE-CIT), announced on December 22, 2025. The public–private partnership brings together Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research and CRISPRBITS Private Limited. The centre aims to translate CRISPR-based laboratory research into real-world clinical applications, bridging the “bench-to-bedside” gap. It will promote

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affordable gene-editing solutions, strengthen academia–industry collaboration, and support India’s push for self-reliance in advanced healthcare and biotechnology innovation.

Science and tech/Space/Defence

Exercise Desert Cyclone II, a joint India–UAE military exercise, has commenced

India and the United Arab Emirates are conducting Exercise Desert Cyclone II in Abu Dhabi from 18–30 December 2025, reinforcing their growing defence partnership. The joint exercise involves 45 Indian Army personnel from a Mechanised Infantry unit and a matching contingent from the UAE Land Forces. It aims to enhance interoperability, joint planning, and operational coordination, with emphasis on urban warfare and sub-conventional operations under a UN mandate. Training includes heliborne missions and the use of UAS and counter-UAS systems, reflecting modern battlefield requirements and deepening bilateral military cooperation.

ISRO Announces December Twenty Four Launch Schedule for LVM3 M6 Mission

The Indian Space Research Organisation confirmed that its LVM3-M6 mission is scheduled for launch on December 24, 2025, at 08:54 hours Indian Standard Time from the Second Launch Pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. This commercial mission will carry the BlueBird Block-2 communication satellite under a contract with a United States firm, aiming to enhance space-based broadband connectivity worldwide. ISRO has also opened options for the public to witness the launch by registering online for the Launch View Gallery.

IN SPACe releases proposal to establish Antariksh Prayogshala space laboratories in academic institutions

India’s space sector promoter IN-SPACe has issued a Request for Proposal to establish Antariksh Prayogshala space laboratories at select academic institutions nationwide. The initiative will set up up to seven state-of-the-art labs to provide hands-on training and boost

industry-academia collaboration in space technology. Selected institutions will receive financial support covering most project costs, enabling practical learning and innovation. This effort is part of strengthening India’s space ecosystem and developing skilled talent for future space sector growth.

Scientists identify a crucial missing mechanism in the process of cellular autophagy

Researchers at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) have discovered a previously unknown cellular mechanism essential for autophagy, the cell’s internal cleanup process that removes damaged components. The team found that the exocyst complex, a group of eight proteins traditionally known for transporting molecules to the cell surface, plays a key role in forming autophagosomes — specialized structures that engulf cellular waste. Seven of these proteins are required for proper autophagosome growth, and without them, waste clearance fails, impairing cellular health and offering new therapeutic avenues for neurodegenerative diseases and cancer.

Indian Navy Inducts New ASW Shallow Water Craft Anjadip

The Indian Navy received ‘Anjadip’, an Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC), on December 22, 2025, strengthening coastal defence and indigenous shipbuilding. It is the third of eight vessels under the ASW SWC programme, designed to counter submarine threats in shallow waters. Built indigenously by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers with L&T Shipyard under a PPP model, the ship features advanced sonar, lightweight torpedoes, and anti-submarine rockets. The induction boosts maritime security and supports Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence.

Indian Army Partners with NSUT for AI and Software-Based Defence Projects

The Indian Army has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Netaji Subhas University of Technology to develop AI-based and software-driven defence solutions. Announced on December 22, 2025, the partnership enables

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NSUT students and faculty to work on live Army projects, translating academic research into operational applications. As noted by the Additional Directorate General of Public Information, the collaboration will enhance technology-led preparedness through training programmes, research in AI and cybersecurity, and capacity building, supporting indigenous innovation and defence modernisation under Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

The BlueBird Block-2 satellite was launched successfully using ISRO's 'Baahubali' rocket

The Indian Space Research Organisation launched the BlueBird Block-2 communication satellite on December 24, 2025, using its most powerful LVM3 rocket, also called *Baahubali*, from Sriharikota. Developed by AST SpaceMobile, the satellite enables direct broadband connectivity to ordinary smartphones without special hardware. The mission marks a milestone in global satellite-based mobile connectivity, strengthens India-US space cooperation, and reinforces ISRO's growing role in high-value commercial space launches.

The Indian Coast Guard has inducted its first pollution control vessel

The Indian Coast Guard has inducted its first Pollution Control Vessel, *Samudra Pratap*, marking a major advance in marine environmental protection. Built indigenously by Goa Shipyard Limited, the vessel features advanced pollution response systems, firefighting capability, dynamic positioning, and modern weaponry. With over 60% indigenous content, it strengthens India's ability to respond to oil spills, chemical leaks, and maritime emergencies. The induction enhances coastal security, EEZ protection, and supports national initiatives like Aatmanirbhar Bharat and sustainable maritime governance.

NASA's MAVEN Mars orbiter has lost communication with the space agency

NASA has lost contact with its long-serving Mars orbiter MAVEN, which went silent in early December 2025 after operating since 2014. Telemetry gaps and partial tracking data suggest unexpected rotation and a possible orbital change, though the cause remains unknown. MAVEN has

been crucial for studying Mars' atmospheric loss and relaying data from surface rovers. Communication duties have been shifted to backup orbiters like Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter and Mars Odyssey, while recovery efforts continue.

INS Sindhughosh has been decommissioned after rendering nearly four decades

The Indian Navy decommissioned INS Sindhughosh on December 19, 2025, ending a distinguished 40-year service. Commissioned in 1985 as the lead vessel of the Sindhughosh-class submarines, it played a vital role in underwater warfare, maritime surveillance, and strategic deterrence. The ceremony at the Naval Dockyard was attended by senior officers, veterans, and former crew, reflecting its legacy. The retirement marks a transition toward modern and indigenous submarine platforms while honoring a cornerstone of India's naval history.

Sports

U-19 Asia Cup Final: Pakistan Clinches a 191-Run Victory Over India

Pakistan Under-19 cricket team clinched their first outright Men's Under-19 Asia Cup title with a dominant 191-run victory over the India Under-19 cricket team in Dubai. Batting first, Pakistan piled up 347/8, powered by Sameer Minhas's blistering 172 off 113 balls. India's chase collapsed to 156 in just 26.2 overs under sustained pressure. Pakistan's disciplined bowling sealed a historic win, with Minhas earning both Player of the Match and Player of the Series, highlighting Pakistan's growing dominance in youth cricket.



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Miscellaneous

Central Bank Imposes Monetary Penalty on Kotak Mahindra Bank for Regulatory Lapses

The Reserve Bank of India imposed a monetary penalty of sixty one point nine five lakh rupees on Kotak Mahindra Bank for multiple regulatory compliance violations. The penalties stem from findings during a supervisory inspection that highlighted deficiencies related to basic savings bank deposit account norms, business correspondent activities and inaccurate reporting to credit information companies. The bank's failure to adhere to several central bank directions led to the fine, underscoring regulatory enforcement to maintain banking sector discipline.



Jay Shah Honoured with the 'Transformational Leader of the Year' Award

Jay Shah was honoured with the *Transformational Leader of the Year* award at NDTV Indian of the Year 2025 for reshaping Indian and global cricket. As Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (2019–2024), he steered reforms amid the pandemic, prioritising stability and equity. His tenure delivered pay parity for women cricketers, the launch of the Women's Premier League, and record Indian Premier League media rights deals. These measures strengthened finances, expanded opportunities, and left a lasting institutional impact.

Kisan Diwas 2025

Kisan Diwas (National Farmers Day) 2025 is observed across India on December 23 to honour farmers' vital role in food security and rural development. The date marks the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh, India's fifth Prime Minister and a steadfast advocate of farmers' rights. Declared in 2001, the day highlights challenges like climate change and market volatility while promoting sustainable, technology-driven agriculture. Through seminars, exhibitions, and outreach programmes, Kisan Diwas reinforces the idea that national prosperity is rooted in rural prosperity.



National Hub Scheme for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Entrepreneurs (NSSH)

The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has strengthened efforts to promote entrepreneurship among SC/ST communities through the National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Hub (NSSH) Scheme. Implemented by the National Small Industries Corporation, the scheme focuses on capacity building, credit access, skill development, and market linkages. It also supports participation in public procurement, including the mandatory 4% purchase target from SC/ST enterprises. The initiative aims to ensure inclusive growth, social justice, and stronger representation of marginalised groups in India's MSME ecosystem.

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India and the Netherlands Collaborate to Promote Lothal's Maritime Heritage

India and the Netherlands have signed an MoU to support the National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal, Gujarat, highlighting India's ancient seafaring legacy. The agreement was exchanged between S. Jaishankar and David van Weel. Under the partnership, NMHC will collaborate with National Maritime Museum Amsterdam on museum design, conservation, research, and exhibitions. The initiative aims to boost cultural tourism, global outreach, and India's maritime soft power rooted in the 4,500-year-old legacy of Lothal.

India's Eight Core Industries Register 1.8% Growth in November 2025

India's infrastructure-linked eight core industries recorded 1.8% year-on-year growth in November 2025, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Expansion was led by cement (14.5%) and steel (6.1%), reflecting sustained construction and infrastructure activity, while fertilisers (5.6%) and coal (2.1%) showed moderate gains. However, crude oil (-3.2%) and natural gas (-2.5%) output declined. Overall, the data signal steady industrial momentum, with core sectors—accounting for over 40% of IIP—supporting broader economic activity despite energy-side pressures.



National Consumer Day 2025

India observes National Consumer Day every year on December 24 to promote consumer rights and awareness, marking the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act in

1986. The 2025 theme, *Efficient and Speedy Disposal through Digital Justice*, highlights technology-led grievance redressal. Reforms under the 2019 Act, digital platforms like e-Jagriti, and AI-enabled National Consumer Helpline have improved accessibility, transparency, and case disposal. Institutions such as Central Consumer Protection Authority and Bureau of Indian Standards further strengthen consumer protection in India's evolving digital marketplace.

NCW Rolls Out 'SHAKTI Scholars' Fellowship for Young Researchers

The National Commission for Women has launched SHAKTI Scholars: NCW Young Research Fellowship on December 22, 2025, to encourage policy-oriented research on women's issues. Under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the programme focuses on women's safety, gender-based violence, legal rights, digital security, POSH implementation, leadership, health, education, economic empowerment, and social equality. Indian citizens aged 21–30 with at least a bachelor's degree or independent researchers can apply. Selected fellows receive a Rs. 1 lakh grant for a six-month project, with submissions accepted via email till December 31, 2025.

Paytm to Establish Fully Owned Units in Indonesia and Luxembourg

One97 Communications, through its cloud subsidiary Paytm Cloud Technologies Limited, has approved the incorporation of wholly owned subsidiaries in Indonesia and Luxembourg to expand its international payments and financial services operations, with up to Rs. 25 crore investment in each. It also cleared the restructuring of its UAE unit Paytm Arab Payments L.L.C., bringing Abbar Global Opportunities Holdings Limited on board as a 49% partner (~Rs. 19 crore), making the entity a 51% subsidiary of PCTL. The UAE transaction is expected to close by February 28, 2026.

Observance of Good Governance Day 2025

Good Governance Day is observed on December 25 to mark the 101st birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, one of India's most respected statesmen. Instituted in 2014, the day underscores India's commitment to transparent,

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accountable, and citizen-centric governance. It highlights principles such as the rule of law, participation, responsiveness, equity, and efficiency, reminding institutions to serve people with integrity. The day also reflects Vajpayee's legacy of ethical leadership, democratic values, and developmental vision. Across the country, seminars, awareness drives, and governance initiatives reinforce the importance of good governance in strengthening democracy and public trust.

