

January 2026

CURRENT AFFAIRS

- TOPIC WISE CURRENT AFFAIRS
- 150 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE
- ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANT EVENTS



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PREFACE

This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for various Central & State level Competitive Examinations, covering content from the month of January 2026.

The Magazine is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

The first section is dedicated to Topic Wise Current Affairs with a short description to provide information about all major happenings this month.

Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers

The Second Section contains 150 Multiple Choice Questions based on daily current affairs.

Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Event

The Third Section covers some major happenings in this month along with analysis. The content has been covered from various online & offline sources including reputed newspapers like The Hindu, Indian Express etc. All the news topics have been explained keeping in mind their underlying issues. Every issue has been covered comprehensively. Some of the information provided may not be directly relevant for the examination. As the content is very wide, we have only covered a limited set of issues. You can utilize it smartly along with Daily Study of News Papers as well as other sources.



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Section 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs

Section 2

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SECTION 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

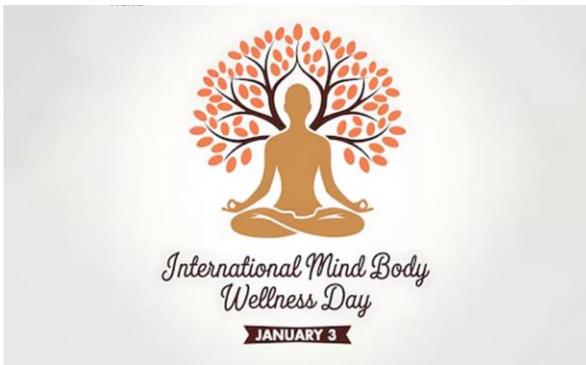


1: Important Days



Global Family Day : 01 January :-

Global Family Day is observed every year on 1 January and is dedicated to promoting peace, unity, and harmony within families across the world. The day traces its origins to the Global Ceasefire Initiative of the United Nations, which marked the first day of the new millennium in 2000 as a day of non-violence and peace. Over time, it evolved into Global Family Day, emphasizing the idea that strong, supportive families are the foundation of peaceful societies. The observance highlights the role of families in nurturing values such as love, tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect.



International Mind Body Wellness Day : 03 January :-

International Mind Body Wellness Day is observed every year on 3 January to highlight the deep connection between mental health and physical well-being and to encourage people to adopt holistic lifestyle practices. The day focuses on the idea that true health is achieved not only through physical fitness but also through mental clarity, emotional balance, and spiritual awareness. It promotes activities such as meditation, yoga, mindful

breathing, balanced nutrition, and stress management as essential tools for overall wellness.



Savitribai Phule Jayanti : 03 January :-

Savitribai Phule Jayanti is celebrated annually on 3 January to commemorate the birth anniversary of Savitribai Phule (1831–1897), one of India's earliest social reformers and the country's first female teacher. She played a pioneering role in promoting women's education, particularly for girls from marginalized and oppressed communities during the 19th century. Along with her husband, social reformer Jyotirao Phule, she established the first school for girls in Pune in 1848, challenging deep-rooted caste discrimination and gender inequality.



World Braille Day : 04 January :-

World Braille Day is observed every year on January 4 to honor the life and legacy of Louis Braille, the French educator who created the Braille writing system — an innovative tactile code that enables blind and visually impaired people to read and write through touch. This date marks Louis Braille's birthday and was officially designated as World Braille Day by the United Nations

General Assembly in November 2018 to raise awareness about the importance of braille literacy as a fundamental tool for communication, education, and accessibility for people with visual impairments around the world.



World Day of War Orphans : 06 January :-

World Day of War Orphans is observed every year on 6 January to draw global attention to the plight of children who have lost one or both parents due to war, armed conflict, or civil unrest. The day was initiated by the French organisation SOS Enfants en Détresse (SOS Children in Distress) to highlight the long-term humanitarian consequences of wars on the most vulnerable section of society—children. Armed conflicts often leave children without family support, access to education, healthcare, shelter, and emotional security, pushing them into poverty, exploitation, displacement, or forced recruitment. The observance emphasizes the responsibility of governments, international organisations, and civil society to protect war-affected children.



Earth's Rotation Day : 08 January :-

Earth's Rotation Day is observed every year on 8 January to highlight the scientific significance of Earth's rotation on its axis and its impact on life on the planet. The

rotation of Earth, which takes approximately 24 hours to complete one cycle, is responsible for the alternation of day and night, influencing climate patterns, weather systems, ocean currents, and biological rhythms. The day also commemorates the work of French physicist Léon Foucault, who, in 1851, demonstrated Earth's rotation through the famous Foucault pendulum experiment.



Pravasi Bharatiya Divas : 09 January :-

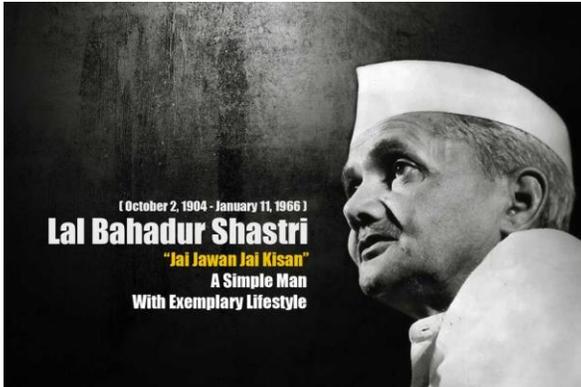
Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is observed every year to recognise and celebrate the valuable contribution of the Indian diaspora to India's development and global standing. It is commemorated on 9 January to mark the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India in 1915, an event that played a crucial role in shaping India's freedom struggle. The day provides an important platform for engaging with Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), enabling discussions on investment, knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and cultural connections.



World Hindi Day : 10 January :-

World Hindi Day is observed every year on 10 January to promote the global presence, acceptance, and development of the Hindi language. The day

commemorates the first World Hindi Conference held in Nagpur in 1975, which marked a major step toward establishing Hindi as an international language. The Government of India began formally observing World Hindi Day in 2006 with the objective of strengthening Hindi's role beyond national boundaries. The theme for World Hindi Day in 2026 is centered on "Hindi: From Traditional Knowledge to Artificial Intelligence."



Death Anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri : 11 January

:-

The nation observes the death anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri on 11 January each year, marking his passing in 1966 in Tashkent (then Soviet Union), a day after signing the historic Tashkent Declaration with Pakistan that sought to end the 1965 war. Shastri, India's second Prime Minister, is remembered for his leadership during the war, his enduring slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan", and his reputation for integrity and simplicity. His contributions to strengthening India's agricultural and defence sectors continue to be commemorated by leaders and citizens alike on this day.



National Youth Day (India) : 12 January :-

National Youth Day is observed every year on 12 January in India to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda (born 12 January 1863), one of the nation's most revered spiritual leaders, philosophers, and youth icons. The Government of India declared this day as National Youth Day in 1984, and it has been celebrated since 1985 to inspire and motivate the youth of the country by spreading Swami Vivekananda's teachings on self-confidence, character building, service, and spiritual growth.



Makar Sankranti : 14 January :-

Makar Sankranti is an important solar festival celebrated across India every year, usually on January 14, when the Sun enters the zodiac sign of Capricorn (Makara), marking the beginning of the auspicious Uttarayana period. Unlike many Hindu festivals based on the lunar calendar, Makar Sankranti follows the solar cycle, which is why its date remains largely fixed. The festival signifies the end of winter and the start of longer, warmer days, symbolising renewal, prosperity, and hope. It is closely associated with agriculture and the harvest season, and people express gratitude to nature and the Sun God for abundance.



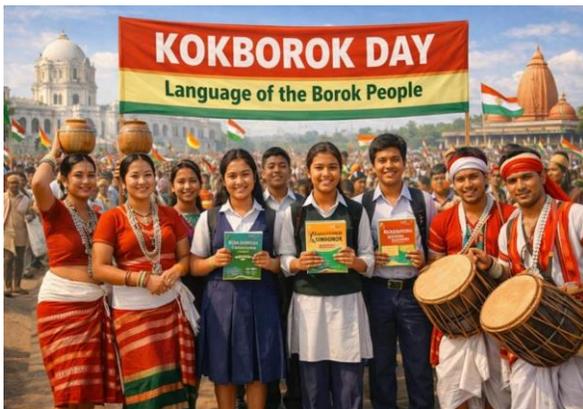
Indian Army Day : 15 January :-

Army Day in India is celebrated every year on January 15, commemorating the day in 1949 when Field Marshal K. M. Cariappa took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, marking the transfer of command from British to Indian leadership after independence. The day honours the valour, sacrifice, discipline and professionalism of the Indian Army, and serves as a tribute to the men and women who defend the nation's borders and uphold its sovereignty. The theme of Indian Army Day 2026 is "Year of Networking and Data Centricity."



National Startup Day (India) : 16 January :-

National Startup Day is celebrated in India every year on January 16 to recognize and honour the role that startups play in driving innovation, entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic growth across the country. This date marks the anniversary of the Startup India initiative, which the Government of India launched on January 16, 2016, with the aim of building a strong ecosystem where new ventures could thrive through easier compliance, access to funding, mentorship, and collaboration opportunities.



Kokborok Day : 19 January :-

Kokborok Day is an annual cultural and linguistic observance held on 19 January, primarily in the Indian state of Tripura, to celebrate and promote the Kokborok language, the native language of the Tripuri people and one of the official languages of the state. The day marks the anniversary of the language's recognition as an official state language in 1979, a milestone in the preservation of regional identity and cultural heritage. Kokborok belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language family and has been spoken for centuries in Tripura and neighbouring regions, including parts of Assam and Bangladesh; its rich literary and oral traditions reflect the history and worldview of the Tripuri community.



Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti : 23 January :-

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti is celebrated every year on 23 January to mark the birth anniversary of one of India's most revered freedom fighters, Subhas Chandra Bose, fondly called "Netaji." Born on 23 January 1897 in Cuttack (now in Odisha), Bose played a pivotal role in India's struggle for independence against British rule. He is best known for his leadership of the Indian National Army (INA) and his powerful call to young Indians with slogans like "Give me blood, and I will give you freedom!" In 2021, the Government of India formally declared his birth anniversary as "Parakram Diwas" (Day of Valour) to honour his courage, patriotism and contribution to the independence movement.



National Girl Child Day (India) : 24 January :-

National Girl Child Day is observed annually in India on January 24 to highlight the importance of empowering girls and addressing the challenges they face, such as gender discrimination, unequal access to education, early marriage, and health issues. The day was first initiated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2008 as part of the government's broader effort to promote gender equality and safeguard the rights of the girl child. Various awareness campaigns, workshops, and community programmes are organised across the country to encourage positive societal attitudes toward girls.



International Day of Education : 24 January :-

The International Day of Education is marked every year on January 24 to recognise education as a fundamental human right and a powerful driver of peace and sustainable development. Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2018, the day draws global

attention to the role of education in eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, and fostering social and economic progress. The theme for the 8th International Day of Education is "The power of youth in co-creating education".



National Voters' Day (India) : 25 January :-

National Voters' Day is observed annually on 25 January to commemorate the foundation of the Election Commission of India in 1950. The day aims to encourage greater participation of citizens, especially first-time and young voters, in the democratic process. It highlights the importance of voting as a fundamental right and a civic duty in strengthening India's democratic framework. Various awareness programmes, voter registration drives, and oath-taking ceremonies are organised across the country to promote ethical voting and informed electoral participation. The theme for National Voters' Day 2026 is "My India, My Vote."



National Tourism Day (India) : 25 January :-

National Tourism Day is observed every year on 25 January in India to highlight the importance of tourism as a driver of economic growth, employment generation,

and cultural exchange. The day is promoted by the Ministry of Tourism to raise awareness about India's rich and diverse heritage, ranging from historical monuments and spiritual centres to natural landscapes and local traditions. Tourism plays a crucial role in supporting livelihoods, especially in rural and remote areas, by creating opportunities for small businesses, artisans, guides, and hospitality workers.



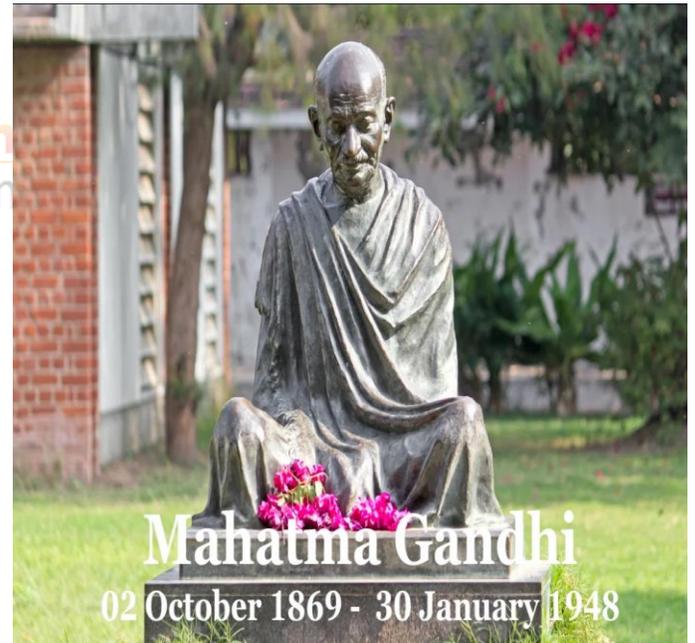
International Customs Day : 26 January :-

International Customs Day is observed every year on January 26 to recognise the crucial role played by customs administrations in facilitating global trade, safeguarding borders, and ensuring economic security. The day commemorates the inaugural session of the Customs Co-operation Council, now known as the World Customs Organization (WCO), held in 1953. For countries like India, the day underscores the work of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in balancing trade facilitation with enforcement. This year's theme is "Customs protecting society through vigilance and commitment."



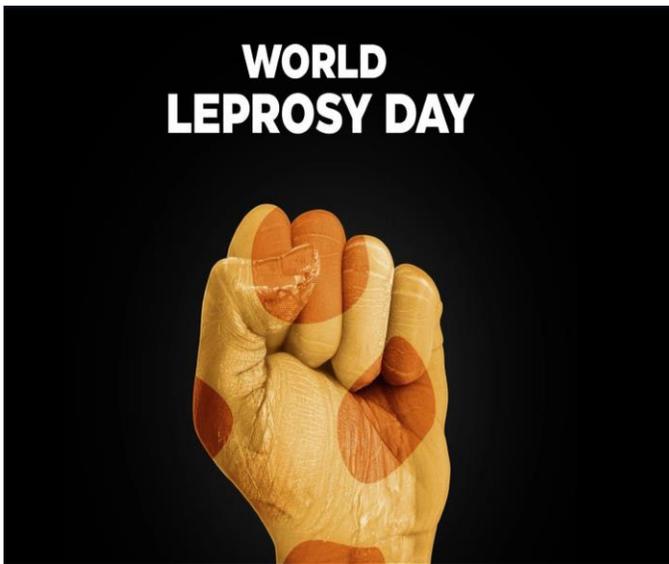
Republic Day : 26 January :-

India celebrates Republic Day on January 26 each year to mark the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950, transforming the country into a sovereign democratic republic. The date holds historical importance as it replaced the Government of India Act, 1935, and established constitutional governance based on justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. The main celebrations take place at Kartavya Path in New Delhi, featuring a grand parade that showcases India's cultural diversity, military strength, and technological achievements. The President of India unfurls the national flag and confers gallantry awards, while a foreign leader is traditionally invited as the Chief Guest.



Martyrs' Day (India) : 30 January :-

Martyrs' Day is observed in India every year on January 30 to commemorate the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, who was assassinated on this day in 1948. The day serves as a solemn reminder of Gandhi's ideals of non-violence, truth, and peaceful resistance, which played a decisive role in India's freedom struggle. Across the country, homage is paid to Gandhi and other martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the nation. The President, Vice President, Prime Minister, and other dignitaries pay floral tributes at Raj Ghat in New Delhi, followed by a two-minute silence at 11 a.m. to honor the fallen heroes.



WORLD LEPROSY DAY

World Leprosy Day : 30 January :-

World Leprosy Day is observed annually on the last Sunday of January, which often falls close to January 30, to raise awareness about leprosy and to promote efforts toward eliminating stigma and discrimination against those affected by the disease. The day was initiated in 1954 to highlight that leprosy is a curable condition and that early diagnosis and treatment can prevent disability. In India, which has historically borne a significant burden of the disease, the observance also focuses on public health outreach, early detection programs, and social inclusion of persons affected by leprosy.



International Zebra Day : 31 January :-

International Zebra Day is observed every year on January 31 to raise global awareness about zebras, their ecological importance, and the growing threats to their survival. The day highlights the conservation challenges faced by all three zebra species—plains zebra, mountain zebra, and Grevy's zebra—due to habitat loss, climate change, illegal hunting, and human-wildlife conflict. International Zebra Day also draws attention to conservation initiatives led by wildlife organizations and local communities, particularly in Africa, where zebra populations are declining in several regions.

2: Agreements



Delhi Partners with IIT Kanpur for AI-Based Grievance System :-

The Delhi government, in collaboration with IIT Kanpur, is set to launch the Intelligent Grievance Monitoring System (IGMS), an AI-driven platform aimed at enhancing grievance redressal in the capital. The system will integrate existing portals into a unified dashboard for efficient complaint management. Features include semantic search, root cause analysis, and predictive analytics, promising improved public service delivery and accountability. This initiative reflects Delhi's commitment to leveraging technology for citizen-centric governance.



Israel-Syria Intelligence Sharing Agreement Reached :-

Israel and Syria have agreed to exchange intelligence and explore commercial opportunities to reduce military tensions. Brokered in Paris with U.S. oversight, the agreement includes a coordination mechanism for addressing disputes and promoting peaceful engagement. This diplomatic shift aims to improve regional stability and reflects Syria's efforts for international recognition as a sovereign state. The U.S. supports these developments as part of broader Middle East peace efforts.



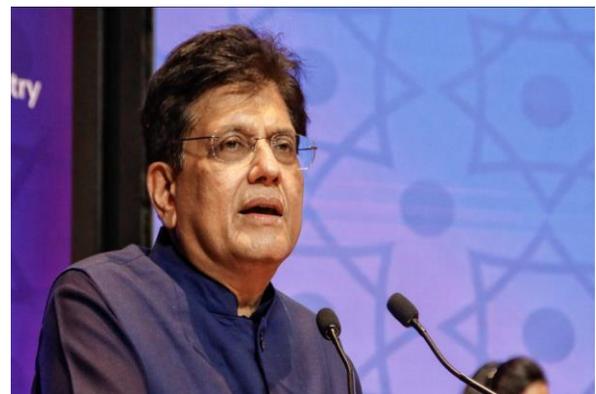
India and Fiji extend agriculture MoU, establish joint working group :-

India and Fiji have extended their Memorandum of Understanding on agricultural cooperation for five more years. The agreement, facilitated by Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, includes forming a Joint Working Group to enhance collaboration in agriculture, food security, and technology sharing. The partnership aims to bolster agricultural research and capacity-building initiatives, reflecting India's commitment to international cooperation in vital sectors.



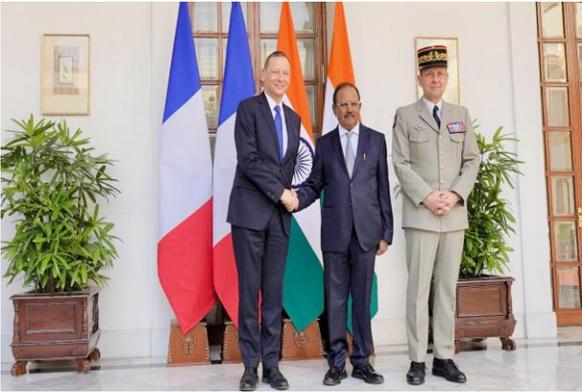
India-Oman CEPA: A New Era of Economic Partnership

India and Oman have signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), enhancing trade in goods and services, investment, and professional mobility. The agreement provides 100% duty-free access to Oman across 98.08% of tariff lines, benefiting sectors like minerals, chemicals, and textiles. The CEPA also includes commitments on professional mobility and regulatory cooperation. This strategic agreement is expected to boost trade, create jobs, and strengthen economic ties, leveraging Oman as a gateway to GCC and East African markets.



India-EU FTA Negotiations Gain Momentum in Brussels :-

Union Minister Piyush Goyal held high-level talks in Brussels to advance the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations. The discussions focused on key aspects like market access and rules of origin. Both sides expressed a strong political will to conclude a comprehensive and balanced agreement, seen as strategically important for future economic cooperation between India and the EU.



India and France Reaffirm Strategic Partnership :-

During the 38th India-France Strategic Dialogue in New Delhi, India and France reaffirmed their strategic partnership, focusing on security, defence, technology, and space. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and French Diplomatic Adviser Emmanuel Bonne discussed joint developments aligned with Make in India initiatives. The dialogue covered regional and international security challenges and preparations for French President Emmanuel Macron's upcoming India visit. The partnership aims to enhance peace and stability, reflecting the countries' commitment to collaborative solutions and strategic cooperation.



EU and Mercosur sign historic trade deal :-

The European Union and Mercosur signed a landmark free trade agreement in Paraguay after 25 years of negotiations. This deal aims to lower tariffs and boost trade between the two regions, creating the largest free trade zone globally. While concerns over environmental impacts and market competition remain, the agreement is hailed as a significant step towards economic cooperation and growth amid global uncertainties.



Syria and Kurdish Forces Reach Agreement to End Clashes :-

Syria's government and Kurdish forces have reached a deal to integrate Kurdish civilian and military authorities under central control, ending recent clashes. The agreement marks a significant shift in Syria's northeast, previously a semi-autonomous Kurdish region. The deal includes the withdrawal of Kurdish forces from key provinces and the integration of Kurdish units into Syrian defense ministries. The move aims to stabilize the region and enhance security, addressing long-standing tensions between the Syrian state and Kurdish groups.



Maharashtra Secures Rs 14.5 Lakh Crore Investments at WEF Summit :-

The Maharashtra government announced a monumental Rs 14.5 lakh crore investment through Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) on the opening day of the World Economic Forum summit. These agreements, nearly matching last year's total investment at Davos, are expected to create over 15 lakh jobs. The investments support Maharashtra's vision to become a \$5 trillion economy by 2047. Key sectors include infrastructure,

with significant MoUs signed by MMRDA with global firms.



ADNOC Signs \$3 Billion LNG Deal with HPCL :-

ADNOC Gas has signed a 10-year LNG supply agreement with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) valued between \$2.5 billion and \$3 billion. The deal, announced during UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's visit to India, includes the supply of 0.5 million tonnes per annum of LNG to HPCL. Sourced from ADNOC's Das Island facility, the agreement supports India's plan to increase natural gas in its energy mix. This

strengthens UAE-India energy ties and reinforces India's energy strategy.



India-EU FTA Boosts Indian Pharma and MedTech Sectors :-

Union Minister J.P. Nadda praised the India-EU Free Trade Agreement, which offers new opportunities for Indian pharmaceuticals and medical device manufacturers. The agreement grants access to the EU's \$572.3 billion market, expected to accelerate growth in high-value segments and reinforce India's global healthcare role. Preferential market access for Indian products is a highlight of this landmark deal.

3: Appointments



PM Modi Congratulates New Thiruvananthapuram Mayor After BJP's Historic Win :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the newly elected Thiruvananthapuram Corporation Mayor V V Rajesh and Deputy Mayor G S Asha Nath following BJP's historic victory. This landmark win marks BJP's breakthrough in Kerala's urban politics, ending the 'fixed match' between CPI(M)-led LDF and Congress-led UDF.

Modi emphasized the BJP's vision for a 'Viksit Thiruvananthapuram' resonating with the city's residents, highlighting the party's commitment to urban development and governance.



Two judges appointed for Patna HC :-

In a recent development aimed at strengthening the judiciary in Bihar, the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, has appointed two new judges to the Patna High

Court as per a notification from the Union Ministry of Law and Justice. The two advocates elevated to the bench are Ritesh Kumar and Praveen Kumar, both of whom were practicing lawyers at the Patna High Court prior to their appointment. Ritesh Kumar has experience serving as counsel for the Bihar state government and representing several state universities, while Praveen Kumar is known for his specialization in criminal law.



TVS Supply Chain Solutions appoints Vikas Chadha as Global CEO :-

TVS Supply Chain Solutions Ltd., a global logistics and supply chain management company headquartered in India, has appointed Vikas Chadha as its Global Chief Executive Officer (CEO). In this role, Chadha will be responsible for leading the company's strategic direction, operations, and growth initiatives across international markets. The appointment signifies a continued focus by TVS Supply Chain Solutions on strengthening its global footprint and enhancing operational efficiency in an increasingly competitive logistics industry.



Hyundai Motor Group to appoint former head of Tesla's humanoid robot program Milan Kovac as adviser :-

Hyundai Motor Group's decision to bring in Milan Kovac as an adviser reflects the conglomerate's growing focus on advanced robotics, artificial intelligence, and future mobility technologies. Milan Kovac is widely known for leading Tesla's humanoid robot initiative, often associated with the development of the Optimus robot, where he played a key role in integrating AI, hardware engineering, and real-world deployment strategies. His appointment signals Hyundai's intent to strengthen its robotics roadmap, especially through its subsidiary Boston Dynamics and other smart manufacturing and automation initiatives.



ICICI Bank board approves Sandeep Bakhshi's reappointment as MD & CEO till 2028 :-

The board of ICICI Bank, one of India's largest private sector lenders, has approved the reappointment of Sandeep Bakhshi as Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for an additional two-year term, extending his leadership from 4 October 2026 to 3 October 2028. Bakhshi has been at the helm of ICICI Bank since October 2018, guiding the institution through phases of strategic growth, tighter risk management, and improved asset quality. His tenure has also seen the bank navigate evolving regulatory norms and market conditions, helping sustain its position as a major player in both retail and corporate banking.



Nitin Nabin Becomes BJP's Youngest National President

Nitin Nabin assumed charge as the youngest National President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at 45, succeeding JP Nadda. The ceremony in New Delhi was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and senior BJP leaders. Nabin, a five-time Bihar Legislative Assembly member, is known for his organizational skills and administrative experience. His leadership marks a new chapter for the BJP, emphasizing youth and innovation in the party's approach to national politics.



HDFC Bank Gets RBI Nod To Re-Appoint Kaizad Bharucha As Whole-Time Director :-

The Reserve Bank of India has approved the re-appointment of Kaizad Bharucha as a Whole-Time Director of HDFC Bank, reinforcing continuity in the bank's senior leadership at a crucial phase of integration and growth following its merger with HDFC Ltd. Kaizad Bharucha, a seasoned banker with decades of experience in treasury operations, risk management, and international banking, has played a key role in strengthening HDFC Bank's balance sheet and global market operations.



Sanjeev Khirwar appointed new MCD Commissioner :-

Sanjeev Khirwar, a 1994-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the AGMUT (Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territories) cadre, has been appointed as the new Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. The appointment, formalised through an official Home Ministry order communicated to the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, positions Khirwar at the head of one of India's largest civic bodies at a crucial time.



Kolkata Knight Riders Appoint Dishant Yagnik As Fielding Coach Ahead Of IPL 2026 :-

Indian Premier League franchise Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) appointed Dishant Yagnik as their new fielding coach ahead of the IPL 2026 season, strengthening their support staff before the tournament. Yagnik, a former wicketkeeper-batter who has transitioned into coaching

roles after his playing career, is known for his emphasis on athleticism, agility, and modern fielding techniques. His appointment reflects KKR's focus on improving on-field performance in a format where sharp fielding can significantly influence match outcomes.



Pamela Conti appointed as Indian U-17 women's team head coach before AFC Asian Cup :-

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has appointed Pamela Conti, the former Italian international footballer, as the head coach of the India women's under-17 national football team as the side prepares for the AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup 2026. The tournament is scheduled to be played in China from April 30 to May 17, 2026. Conti, 43, had an illustrious playing career, earning 90 caps and scoring 30 goals for Italy, featuring in multiple UEFA European Women's Championships and playing club football across Europe and the United States.



Fino Payments Bank Board Re-appoints Mr. Rishi Gupta as Managing Director & CEO :-

The Board of Directors of Fino Payments Bank Limited has approved the re-appointment of Mr. Rishi Gupta as the Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the bank. This decision follows the recommendation of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee and reflects the board's confidence in his leadership and strategic vision for the bank. The re-appointment is effective from May 2, 2026, and is set for a three-year term through May 1, 2029. It is subject to approval by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as well as shareholder approval, in line with regulatory requirements under the Banking Regulation Act and SEBI listing norms.

4: Awards



India's 'Homebound' Progresses Towards Oscars, Praised by Martin Scorsese :-

The film 'Homebound,' starring Ishaan Khatter and Vishal Jethwa, has been shortlisted for the Oscars in the International Feature Film category. Renowned filmmaker Martin Scorsese praised the movie for its compelling narrative on friendship and human dignity. Directed by Neeraj Ghaywan, 'Homebound' is celebrated for its portrayal of empathy and connection in a divided world, resonating globally.



ASTRAM project wins Skoch Award for sustainable traffic management :-

Project ASTRAM (Actionable Intelligence for Sustainable Traffic Management), an innovative traffic management initiative launched in October 2024 from the Police Command and Control Centre in Vijayawada, has been honoured with the SKOCH Gold Award-2025 in the Police and Safety category for its significant contributions to sustainable and efficient traffic management. The SKOCH Awards are one of India’s respected independent honours recognising excellence in governance, public service delivery, and technology-driven solutions.



Italy Honours Shrinivas Dempo with Prestigious Civilian Award :-

Shrinivas Dempo, Chairperson of the Dempo Group and Honorary Vice Consul of Italy in Goa, has been conferred with the esteemed Italian civilian honour Cavaliere dell’Ordine della Stella d’Italia (Knight of the Order of the Star of Italy). This prestigious decoration is awarded by the Italian Republic to individuals who have significantly promoted friendly relations with Italy and contributed to international cooperation. The award ceremony, held in Goa and presided over by the Consul General of Italy in Mumbai, acknowledged Dempo’s efforts in strengthening Indo-Italian relations, particularly through his role in assisting Italian citizens and facilitating investments in the region.



‘Hamnet’ ‘One Battle After Another’ Take Top Film Prizes At Golden Globes :-

At the 83rd Golden Globe Awards — one of Hollywood’s major annual honors — two films emerged as the big winners, each taking a “top film” prize in their respective categories. “Hamnet”, a period drama directed by Chloé Zhao and based on the novel about the emotional aftermath of William Shakespeare’s son’s death, was awarded Best Motion Picture – Drama. Meanwhile, “One Battle After Another”, a film by Paul Thomas Anderson, dominated the Globes’ comedy/musical category. It not only secured Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy, but also won Best Director, Best Screenplay, and Best Supporting Actress for Teyana Taylor — making it one of the most celebrated films of the night.



Major Swathi Shantha Kumar Wins UN Secretary-General's Award 2025 :-

Major Swathi Shantha Kumar, an Indian Army officer from Bengaluru, has been awarded the United Nations Secretary-General's Award 2025 in the Gender Category for her outstanding peacekeeping work in South Sudan under the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Her project, titled "Equal Partners, Lasting Peace", focused on integrating gender-responsive approaches into peacekeeping operations and strengthening community engagement in conflict-affected areas.



सत्यमेव जयते

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
Government of India

Sukhatme National Award in Statistics 2026: Nominations Invited :-

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation invites nominations for the Sukhatme National Award in Statistics 2026. This prestigious award recognizes Indian statisticians for outstanding contributions to official statistics. The award will be presented during Statistics Day on June 29, 2026, and includes a citation, shawl, and memento. This initiative

highlights the importance of statistical research in enhancing India's data systems.



Buxar havildar awarded Sena Medal posthumously :-

A havildar (non-commissioned officer) from Buxar, Bihar, named Dilip Kumar Singh, has been posthumously awarded the Sena Medal, one of India's prestigious military gallantry awards, in recognition of his bravery and sacrifice while serving in Jammu Kashmir. Singh lost his life during a counter-insurgency operation, a type of mission undertaken by the Indian Army in regions affected by militancy and insurgent activities. The Sena Medal — conferred for gallantry and distinguished service — acknowledges acts of courage and selflessness that go above and beyond the call of duty.



JIPMER gets Kayakalp Award :-

The Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), a premier central medical institute in Puducherry, has been recognised

under the Kayakalp Award scheme for 2024–25 by the Ministry of Health Family Welfare. Under this national initiative, which promotes excellence in cleanliness, hygiene, waste management, and infection control practices at public health facilities across India, JIPMER was adjudged among the top institutions and awarded the third place in the Kayakalp Awards for the current cycle.



C-DOT wins SKOCH Award 2025 for Cell Broadcast Solution :-

The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) has been conferred the SKOCH Award-2025 at the 104th SKOCH Summit for its Cell Broadcast Solution (CBS). This technology is an emergency and disaster alert platform that integrates key government agencies — such as the India Meteorological Department (IMD), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Central Water Commission, and others — on a unified platform. Through CBS, real-time, geo-targeted emergency alerts are disseminated via mobile networks in multiple languages, significantly enhancing India’s disaster communication capabilities. C-DOT, an R centre under the Department of Telecommunications, designed the solution to improve early warning dissemination and public safety during crises.



Taylor Swift to join Songwriters Hall of Fame :-

Taylor Swift is set to become the second-youngest inductee into the Songwriters Hall of Fame, joining renowned artists like Stevie Wonder. At 36, Swift's induction recognizes her prolific songwriting career, including 14 Grammy wins and her impact on the music industry. Swift recently re-acquired her music rights, further solidifying her legacy. Her latest album, 'The Life of a Showgirl,' achieved record-breaking sales, and her Eras tour garnered widespread acclaim. The induction ceremony will take place in June 2026, celebrating Swift's contributions to the global music landscape.



Banaras Lit Fest announces 2026 Book Awards winners, Namita Gokhale wins Lifetime Achievement Award :-

The Banaras Literature Festival announced the winners of its 2026 Book Awards, celebrating excellence in Indian writing and publishing across multiple genres. A major highlight of the announcement was the conferment of the Lifetime Achievement Award on acclaimed author and publisher Namita Gokhale. Known for her significant contribution to Indian literature, especially in promoting contemporary Indian writing and regional voices,

Gokhale has played a key role in shaping the country's literary landscape.



Vampire Thriller 'Sinners' Breaks Oscar Nomination Record :-

'Sinners,' a Warner Bros vampire thriller, has made Oscars history with 16 nominations, including Best Picture. The film, celebrating blues music and Black culture, features Michael B. Jordan in a dual role. The nominations reflect the Academy's recognition of unconventional storytelling, positioning 'Sinners' as a frontrunner in the upcoming awards ceremony.



IAF Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla Awarded Ashoka Chakra :-

Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla of the Indian Air Force received the Ashoka Chakra, India's highest peacetime gallantry award, for his exceptional courage during the Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station. His leadership facilitated scientific experiments and agricultural trials in microgravity, including successful crop cultivation. The award acknowledges his decisive actions and commitment, inspiring future generations to strive for excellence. This recognition highlights India's growing contributions to space exploration and scientific research.



President Murmu Approves 131 Padma Awards for 2026 :-

President Droupadi Murmu has approved the conferment of 131 Padma Awards, recognizing exceptional service in various fields. The awards include five Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan, and 113 Padma Shri honors, with categories spanning art, medicine, literature, and public affairs. The list highlights the contributions of women and posthumous recipients, celebrating India's diverse talents and achievements. The Padma Awards reflect the nation's gratitude towards individuals who have significantly advanced their respective domains.



Madhya Pradesh Police Officers Honored with National Medals :-

Four officers from Madhya Pradesh Police received the President's Medal for Distinguished Service, and 17 personnel were awarded the Medal for Meritorious Service. This recognition highlights the state's commitment to excellence in law enforcement, public safety, and community service. The awards reflect the officers' dedication to maintaining law and order, showcasing the professionalism and integrity of Madhya Pradesh's police force. Such honors inspire continued commitment to public service and safety.

5: Banking



ICICI Bank launches capital gains account scheme :-

ICICI Bank has launched a new Capital Gains Account Scheme (CGAS) starting January 1, 2026, after receiving authorization from the Government of India to handle CGAS deposits — a facility previously limited mostly to public sector banks. Under this scheme, resident individuals and Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) can deposit un-invested long-term capital gains or sale proceeds from specified asset sales into specially designated accounts at ICICI Bank.



Bank employees' unions threaten to go on nationwide strike on January 27 :-

Bank employees' unions across India have threatened a nationwide strike on January 27, 2026, if their demands are not met. The warning comes as part of a long-standing dispute over working conditions and weekly off days in the banking sector. Under the umbrella of the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), which brings together several major bank employee organisations including the All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC), unions are demanding the implementation of a five-day work week for bank staff. Currently, most banks operate six days a week, with employees getting Sundays and only the second and fourth Saturdays off.



UCO Bank celebrated 84th Foundation Day :-

UCO Bank celebrated its 84th Foundation Day, marking another milestone in its long journey as one of India's leading public sector banks. Originally established in 1943 as United Commercial Bank, the institution was founded by industrialist G.D. Birla to serve the financial needs of trade, industry, and common citizens. Over the decades, UCO Bank has expanded its presence across India with a wide network of branches and digital banking services, supporting sectors such as agriculture, MSMEs, retail banking, and financial inclusion initiatives.



Indian Army, HDFC Bank renew MoU for another 3 years :-

The Indian Army and HDFC Bank have officially renewed their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for another three years, extending their collaboration until 2029 to continue providing dedicated banking benefits and support to Army personnel. Under this extended agreement, HDFC Bank will offer tailored banking services and Personal Accident Insurance coverage to serving and retired Indian Army members — a benefit that provides financial protection in the event of accidental death or disability.



सत्यमेव जयते

वित्त मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
FINANCE

DFS Reforms Strengthen India's Banking Sector in 2025

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) reported significant reforms in 2025, enhancing India's banking sector's health and digital transition. Key measures included the Banking Laws (Amendment) Act 2025, EASE reforms, and the DigiDhan Mission. The public sector banks saw a decline in non-performing assets, improved capital adequacy, and record profits, reflecting stronger financial resilience. These reforms are pivotal in supporting India's economic ambitions and the Viksit Bharat 2047 roadmap.



Four banks move CIC against RBI nod to disclose NPAs, defaulters' list under RTI :-

In a major transparency vs. confidentiality battle in Indian banking, four large banks — State Bank of India (SBI), Bank of Baroda (BoB), RBL Bank, and Yes Bank — have petitioned the Central Information Commission (CIC) to block the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) directive to disclose certain information under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. The dispute arose after RTI applicants sought data on large loan defaulters, willful defaulters and regulatory inspection findings, which the RBI supported disclosing in line with transparency obligations and past Supreme Court rulings.



RBI issues revised Integrated Ombudsman Scheme to hear complaints against banks :-

The Reserve Bank of India has issued a revised Integrated Ombudsman Scheme with the objective of making grievance redressal simpler, faster, and more accessible for bank customers. The scheme consolidates and streamlines the complaint-handling mechanism for banks and other regulated financial entities under a single framework, reducing confusion caused by multiple ombudsman arrangements. Under the revised structure,

customers can lodge complaints related to deficiencies in banking services through a centralized digital platform, email, or physical submission, without needing to identify the specific ombudsman office.



Cabinet approves ₹5,000 crore equity infusion into SIDBI :-

The Union Cabinet approved an equity infusion of ₹5,000 crore into SIDBI to enhance credit flow to MSMEs. The equity will be infused in phases, starting with ₹3,000 crore in FY 2025-26. This capital boost aims to increase SIDBI's lending capacity, thereby supporting approximately 102 lakh MSMEs by FY 2028. The move is expected to generate 1.12 crore jobs, contributing to India's economic growth. With a focus on digital credit products and venture debt for startups, SIDBI aims to maintain a robust capital-to-risk-weighted-assets ratio, ensuring financial stability and expanded credit access.



بنك الإمارات دبي الوطني
Emirates NBD



RBL BANK

CCI approves Emirates NBD's acquisition of RBL Bank :-

The Competition Commission of India has approved Emirates NBD's acquisition of a majority stake in RBL Bank. This strategic move allows Emirates NBD to extend its operations in India, acquiring between 51% and 74% of RBL's shares. The acquisition involves a mandatory open offer and a preferential allotment of equity shares.

Emirates NBD's Indian banking operations will merge with RBL Bank, subject to regulatory approvals. This acquisition highlights the UAE-based bank's commitment to expanding its presence in India's growing financial sector, offering comprehensive banking services across retail, corporate, and investment banking.



Reserve Bank of India moves to inject over Rs 2 lakh crore into banking system :-

The Reserve Bank of India's decision to inject over ₹2 lakh crore into the banking system reflects a proactive monetary step aimed at easing liquidity conditions and ensuring smooth credit flow in the economy. Such liquidity infusion is typically carried out through instruments like open market operations, variable rate repo auctions, or longer-term repo operations. The move helps banks meet short-term funding needs, supports lending to businesses and consumers, and stabilises money market interest rates.



Telangana Tops In Urban Development Funding: RBI Report :-

According to a new Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report, Telangana has emerged as one of the leading Indian states in terms of allocations and spending on urban

development. The RBI's analysis places Telangana alongside states like Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat among those with the highest proportions of social sector expenditure going into urbanisation, reflecting the state's focus on urban infrastructure, civic

services, housing and city-level public investment. Urban development, as a share of social sector spending, tends to be higher in states with a younger demographic and faster ongoing urbanisation, and Telangana's trend in funding aligns with this pattern identified by RBI.

6: Books and Author



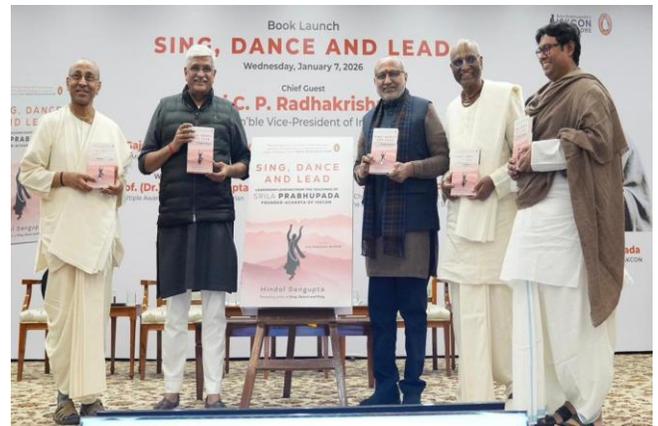
Dharmendra Pradhan Releases Urdu Book of Modi's Speeches :-

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan released 'Khutbat-e-Modi: Lal Qila Ki Faseel Se', an Urdu compilation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speeches. Published by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language, the book marks a significant step towards linguistic inclusion. The speeches emphasize initiatives like Antyodaya and Swachh Bharat, reflecting a vision for a New India. Pradhan highlighted the importance of such publications in connecting citizens with the Prime Minister's ideas and fostering an informed discourse.



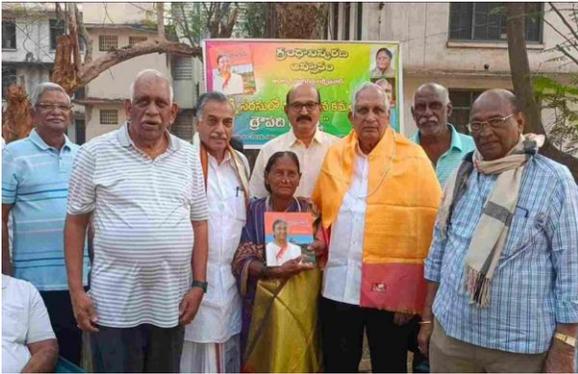
Dharmendra Pradhan Promotes Indian Languages with 55 Literary Works :-

Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan released 55 literary works in classical Indian languages to promote India's rich linguistic heritage. The initiative, part of the government's efforts, includes works in Tamil, Odia, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada, and Indian Sign Language. This effort aims to place India's linguistic heritage at the center of education and research, fostering cultural pride and strengthening engagement with classical knowledge traditions. The release highlights the inclusion of Tirukkural in Indian Sign Language, reflecting a vision of an inclusive India by ensuring wider access to knowledge.



New Book on Leadership Lessons from Srila Prabhupada Launched :-

Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan launched 'Sing, Dance and Lead', a book by Hindol Sengupta, exploring leadership insights from A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's life. The launch emphasized leadership rooted in values and service, with Prabhupada's life as a model of humility and moral clarity. The Vice-President highlighted the enduring impact of Prabhupada's work through ISKCON and its global reach, inspiring leadership that uplifts society.



Book on life of President Droupadi Murmu released in Visakhapatnam :-

A biography of President Droupadi Murmu titled "Agni Sarassulo Vikasinchina Kamalam Droupadi Murmu" was released at Andhra University in Visakhapatnam. The book authored by former Member of Parliament and Vishwa Hindi Parishad president Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad presents a detailed and inspirational account of the life of President Droupadi Murmu, tracing her remarkable journey from humble beginnings marked by adversity to becoming the highest constitutional authority in India. A distinctive aspect of the book's release was its symbolic unveiling by Lakshamma, a sanitation worker at Andhra University, which underscored the ideals of social equality, dignity of labour, and inclusivity—values that closely align with President Murmu's life story and leadership philosophy.



A new book "Stree Ramayana" launched in Tiruchi :-

In Tiruchirapalli, a new book titled Stree Ramayana was formally launched, drawing attention to the female characters of the ancient epic Ramayana and presenting their stories in a way that centres women's perspectives and experiences. The launch brought together local

readers, scholars, and culture enthusiasts, highlighting a growing interest in revisiting traditional narratives through more inclusive and diverse viewpoints. The book's author Jaisri Raju Sriram, have worked to re-imagine the epic by foregrounding the inner lives, choices and emotional journeys of women such as mata Sita, Mandodari, Kaikeyi and others, who have often been overshadowed in mainstream retellings.



PM Modi Praises Jain Scholar's 500th Book Release :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the contributions of Jain scholar Shrimad Vijayaratna Sunder Surishwarji Maharaj during the release of the saint's 500th book. Modi highlighted the relevance of the book's theme, 'Premnu Vishva, Vishvano Prem', in today's world of division and conflict. He lauded Maharaj's work for offering spiritual solutions to contemporary challenges, emphasizing the interconnectedness of life as taught by Jain principles. Modi underscored the youth's role in nation-building, supported by guidance from spiritual leaders.



Manish Tewari launches his book 'A World Adrift' :-

Congress MP Manish Tewari launched his new book A World Adrift: A Parliamentarian's Perspective on the Global Power Dynamic at the India International Centre

(IIC) in New Delhi. The event featured former Union finance minister and veteran diplomat Yashwant Sinha as the releasing guest and drew diplomats, policy experts, academics, and political figures, including Ghulam Nabi Azad and Mukul Wasnik, underscoring the wide interest in the book's theme. According to Tewari and speakers at the launch, the book argues that the post-World War II global order has effectively collapsed, leaving the world in a state of deep uncertainty marked by rapid geopolitical change that institutions struggle to keep up with.



IPS Officer Manbir Singh's Book Rajaram Launched at World Book Fair :-

IPS officer Manbir Singh recently launched his new book Rajaram at the New Delhi World Book Fair 2026, held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The launch event took place at the fair's Authors' Corner and was presided over by chief guest Suryaprakash Khatri, an MLA from Timarpur, and Dr. Sant Ram Deshwal, a Padma Shri awardee from Sonipat. Singh's book, Rajaram, explores historical narratives with fresh insights, and speakers at the event said it adds significant new perspectives to Indian history.



Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan released the book "Chalice of Ambrosia: Ram Janmabhoomi – Challenge and Response" :-

Vice President of India C. P. Radhakrishnan released the book "Chalice of Ambrosia: Ram Janmabhoomi – Challenge and Response", a work that documents and reflects upon the long, complex journey of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and its broader social, cultural, and legal dimensions. The book explores the historical background, constitutional challenges, and responses that shaped one of modern India's most significant civilizational debates. By releasing the book, the Vice President underscored the importance of documenting contemporary history with balance and scholarly depth.



Dr Jitendra Singh Releases Two Books at India's First NAMO Book Fest :-

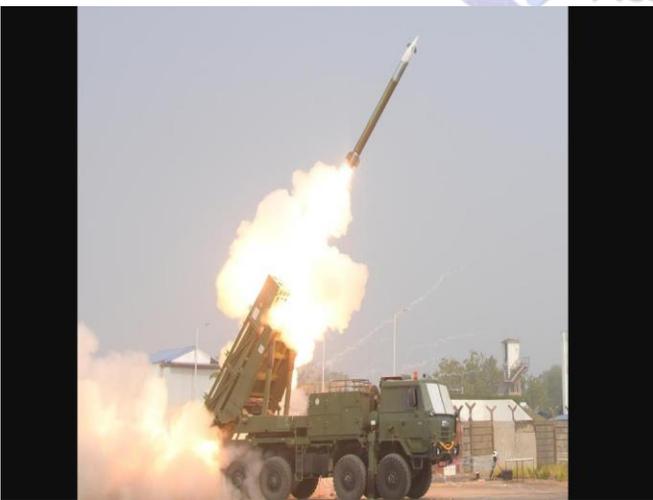
Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh released two books at India's first NAMO Book Fest, an event conceptualised to promote reading, authorship, and intellectual engagement among youth and citizens. The books, titled 'Gen V Bano' and 'Mahatma', focus on governance, public policy, and India's evolving political and administrative landscape. Speaking at the festival, he highlighted the role of books in shaping informed citizens and strengthening democratic values. The NAMO Book Fest marked a unique initiative to connect authors, readers, and policymakers on a common platform, encouraging dialogue on ideas, leadership, and national development through literature.



BJP, Congress, NCP-SP Leaders Together Launch Book 'From Dynasties to Democracy' on Rajasthan Politics :-

At the recent Jaipur Literature Festival, senior political figures from across party lines — including leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress, and the Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar (NCP-SP) — came together to launch the book 'From Dynasties to Democracy: Politics, Caste and Power Struggles in Rajasthan.' Authored by journalists Deep Mukherjee and Tabeenah Anjum, the book offers a comprehensive narrative of Rajasthan's political evolution from its integration into independent India in 1949 through to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, examining how feudal structures, caste dynamics and entrenched power hierarchies have shaped the state's modern politics.

7: Defence



DRDO's Successful Test of Long-Range Pinaka Rockets :-

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted the maiden flight test of the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket (LRGR-120) in Odisha. The rocket, capable of striking targets up to 120 km away, marks a significant enhancement of the Indian Army's artillery capabilities. The LRGR, developed indigenously, promises greater precision and operational flexibility, reinforcing India's commitment to self-reliance in defense technology.



UAE Withdraws Counter-Terrorism Forces from Yemen Amid Security Concerns :-

The UAE announced the withdrawal of its remaining counter-terrorism teams from Yemen, citing safety concerns amidst ongoing regional tensions. Despite officially leaving the Saudi-led coalition in 2019, the UAE maintained a presence to counter groups like Al Qaeda. The decision follows a strategic review of security commitments and reflects the UAE's broader goal of regional stability. This move coincides with Saudi Arabia's recent military operations in southern Yemen, highlighting the complex geopolitical landscape.



India-UAE Boost Military Ties with Strategic Discussions

India's Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi met with UAE Land Forces Commander Yousef Maayouf Saeed Al Hallami to enhance military engagement and advance bilateral defense cooperation. The discussions, part of General Dwivedi's visit to the UAE, focused on strengthening defense ties and expanding cooperation across key military domains. The visit underscored military diplomacy and strategic partnerships, emphasizing defense engagement and military-to-military ties.



Rajnath Singh Commissions India's First Indigenous Pollution Control Vessel :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh commissioned the Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Samudra Pratap, marking a significant step in India's maritime capabilities. Built by Goa Shipyard Limited, this indigenously designed Pollution Control Vessel enhances India's marine pollution response and maritime safety. With over 60% indigenous content, the ship reflects India's self-reliance in shipbuilding. The vessel is equipped with advanced pollution detection systems, fire-fighting equipment,

and aviation facilities, emphasizing India's commitment to environmental protection and maritime security.



Passing Out Parade Held for Trainees at INS Chilka :-

A ceremonial passing out parade was held at INS Chilka for 2,172 naval trainees, including 113 women Agniveers. The event marked the completion of 16 weeks of training, emphasizing discipline and readiness. Vice Admiral Sameer Saxena reviewed the parade, highlighting the Indian Navy's commitment to inclusivity and gender neutrality. The trainees were urged to uphold the Navy's core values and continue honing their skills as they advance in their careers.



DRDO advances hypersonic missile program with scramjet engine test :-

The DRDO successfully tested a long-duration scramjet engine, marking a significant milestone in India's hypersonic missile program. Conducted at the DRDL in Hyderabad, the test achieved a runtime of over 12 minutes, placing India among the few nations with advanced hypersonic capabilities. The achievement underscores India's commitment to strengthening its defense infrastructure and technological prowess.



US Conducts Airstrikes in Syria Targeting Islamic State :-

The U.S. military carried out multiple airstrikes in Syria as part of an ongoing operation against the Islamic State. The strikes, launched in response to a December attack on American personnel, targeted ISIS positions across the country. This military action is part of a broader U.S.-led coalition effort, involving Syria's security forces, to eliminate ISIS threats. The strikes underscore ongoing security challenges in the region and the U.S.'s commitment to combating terrorism.



US Central Command Opens Air Defence Cell in Qatar :-

The United States, along with regional partners, has opened a new combined air and missile defence coordination cell at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. The Middle Eastern Air Defense-Combined Defense Operations Cell aims to enhance joint responses to aerial threats across West Asia. The initiative brings together U.S. and regional personnel to improve integration, information sharing, and coordinated planning. This

move strengthens regional defence cooperation and marks a significant step forward in addressing joint security challenges in the region.



Republic Day Parade 2026 to Feature First-Ever Battle Array Display :-

The Republic Day celebrations in 2026 will mark the 150th anniversary of the national song 'Vande Mataram' with a unique blend of India's military strength and cultural diversity. The parade on January 26, 2026, will feature a phased battle array display by the Indian Army and will be attended by European dignitaries. This event will showcase 30 tableaux from various states and ministries, highlighting themes of freedom, self-reliance, and national development. The Indian Army's display will include advanced military equipment and contingents, culminating in a grand flypast featuring 29 aircraft.



ICGS Sankalp reaches Mauritius for maritime cooperation :-

Indian Coast Guard Ship Sankalp arrived in Mauritius as part of its overseas deployment, strengthening maritime

cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region. The visit aligns with India's SAGAR vision, focusing on maritime safety and security. During its stay, ICGS Sankalp will engage in professional interactions with Mauritian maritime agencies, conduct joint drills, and showcase India's indigenous shipbuilding capabilities, reflecting India's commitment to regional security.



Republic Day 2026: Tri-services Tableau to Highlight 'Operation Sindoor' :-

During the 77th Republic Day Parade, the Indian Armed Forces will present a Tri-Service tableau titled 'Operation Sindoor: Victory Through Jointness.' The tableau showcases India's evolving military doctrine with an emphasis on joint operations and precision strikes. It highlights indigenous defence systems developed under the 'Brand India Defence' initiative, reflecting India's emergence as a technologically advanced military power. The display aims to project 'Victory Through Jointness' as a defining feature of India's contemporary defence posture, reinforcing the message that terrorism and violence will not be tolerated.



Tri-Service Tableau to Highlight 'Operation Sindoor' at Republic Day Parade :-

The Indian Armed Forces are set to showcase a Tri-Service tableau titled 'Operation Sindoor: Victory Through Jointness' during the 77th Republic Day Parade. This presentation highlights India's focus on joint military operations and self-reliant defense capabilities. The tableau will feature the coordination among the Army, Navy, and Air Force, with advanced systems like the M777 howitzers and Akash air defense. The display reinforces India's commitment to modernizing its defense posture and achieving strategic goals through indigenous advancements.



Bhairav Battalion and Suryastra Debut at Republic Day Parade :-

The 77th Republic Day parade featured the debut of the Bhairav Battalion and the Suryastra rocket launcher, showcasing India's enhanced combat capabilities. The Bhairav Battalion, established in October 2025, bridges the gap between conventional infantry and special forces. The Universal Rocket Launcher System 'Suryastra', an indigenous development, can deliver precision strikes up to 300 kilometers. This modernization move highlights India's focus on indigenous defense advancements and operational flexibility, underscoring a significant leap in the nation's military prowess.



US-India Ties Strengthen with Defence Talks and Cooperation :-

Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi met US Secretary of the Army Daniel P. Driscoll to discuss enhancing defence cooperation and military engagements. This meeting follows recent dialogues between US and Indian officials, focusing on trade, energy, and regional security. The discussions aim to deepen the strategic partnership under the 'New Framework for India-US Defence Cooperation'. This collaboration underscores shared commitments to

global peace and security, aligning with both nations' interests in the Indo-Pacific region.



Wings India 2026 to Highlight India's Aviation Growth :-

Wings India 2026, Asia's largest civil aviation event, is set to showcase India's advancements in the aviation sector. Scheduled to be held in Hyderabad, the event will feature over 150 exhibitors and numerous business meetings. It aims to highlight India's transformation into a major aviation hub, with emphasis on connectivity, manufacturing, and sustainability. The event will bring together global industry leaders, reflecting India's strategic importance in the global aviation landscape.

8: Economy



India's GDP Rebounds with 8% Growth in Early 2025 :-

India's economy showcased a robust recovery with an 8% year-on-year growth in GDP during the first half of FY2025–26, surpassing previous periods. The economic resurgence is attributed to strong domestic demand, policy stability, and significant infrastructure investments. The agriculture sector grew steadily, while

the industrial sector, particularly manufacturing, saw a remarkable 9% expansion. Services remained a key growth driver, expanding by 9.2%. This growth trajectory positions India as a leading global economy amid challenging global conditions.



Vande Bharat Sleeper Train to Launch on Guwahati–Kolkata Route :-

The Vande Bharat Sleeper train, designed for long-distance travel, will soon commence operations on the Guwahati-Kolkata route. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the completion of trials and certifications, with Prime Minister Modi set to flag off the inaugural journey. The train boasts advanced safety features and modern amenities, promising a comfortable travel experience. Fares have been set competitively to offer an affordable alternative to air travel.



UPI Transactions Surge 29% in December with Digital Payments Growth :-

UPI transactions in India rose 29% year-on-year in December, reaching 21.63 billion, with transaction values growing 20% to Rs 27.97 lakh crore. The increase highlights the sustained momentum of digital payments, driven by wider UPI adoption across retail and rural markets. Person-to-merchant transactions grew faster than person-to-person payments, indicating UPI's expanding role in consumer spending. The growth reflects India's ongoing digital transformation and the effectiveness of initiatives to promote cashless transactions, fostering financial inclusion and convenience.



Launch of Digital Fertilizer Subsidy Claim System :-

India's Department of Fertilizers has launched a fully digital subsidy claim process. This reform aims to enhance transparency and efficiency, processing claims worth ₹2 lakh crore annually. The initiative aligns with the Digital India vision, supporting financial governance and reducing misuse risks in subsidy distribution.



India's Forex Reserves Rise by \$3.2 Billion, Says RBI :-

India's foreign exchange reserves increased by \$3.293 billion, reaching \$696.610 billion as of December 26, according to the Reserve Bank of India. The rise in reserves reflects strong capital inflows and effective management of liquidity by the central bank. Foreign currency assets and gold reserves have contributed to this growth, highlighting India's economic stability and resilience. The RBI continues to monitor market developments to maintain orderly conditions and support economic growth.



India's Dealmaking Activity Doubles to \$157.9 Billion in 2025 :-

India's dealmaking activity reached a three-year high in 2025, with total deal value nearly doubling to \$157.9 billion. The surge was driven by large domestic spin-offs,

share buybacks, and cross-border interest. Industrials, Energy and Power, Financials, and High Technology sectors accounted for the majority of deal value. The strong IPO pipeline for 2026, coupled with robust domestic liquidity and investor demand, positions India as an attractive market for equity issuance.



Jaishankar and Luxembourg PM Discuss Finance, Tech Cooperation :-

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met Luxembourg Prime Minister Luc Frieden to discuss expanding cooperation in finance, technology, and innovation. The meeting highlighted mutual interests in strengthening India-EU relations and promoting bilateral ties. Jaishankar conveyed greetings from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and emphasized Luxembourg's role in supporting India's engagement with the European Union. The discussions reflect India's strategic focus on enhancing international partnerships in key sectors.



India's Livestock Sector Boosts Agricultural Economy :-

India's livestock sector has shown robust growth, contributing significantly to the agricultural economy

with a compound annual growth rate of 12.77% since 2014-15. The sector's share in agriculture's Gross Value Added (GVA) increased to 30.87% in 2023-24. India leads in milk production, contributing 25% of global output, and ranks high in egg and meat production. This growth underscores the sector's critical role in supporting India's food security and rural livelihoods.



India Joins Pax Silica Initiative for Tech Supply Chain Security :-

India's invitation to the US-led Pax Silica initiative marks its recognition as a trusted partner in securing technology supply chains. Participating in discussions on critical minerals, India aims to enhance its role in strategic tech sectors. The initiative aligns with India's goal to become a global AI and innovation hub. It also highlights India's commitment to developing sovereign capabilities while remaining open to global partnerships, ensuring access to advanced technologies and strategic autonomy.



Tesla Sells 225 Electric Vehicles in India Despite High Import Duties :-

Tesla retailed 225 Model Y SUVs in India in 2025, amidst high import duties. The sales reflect the growing interest in electric vehicles, with the Model Y priced between Rs 59.89 lakh and Rs 67.89 lakh. Despite the high costs, Tesla's presence marks a significant step in India's EV market, which accounts for 8% of new vehicle registrations. The market is dominated by electric two-wheelers, but Tesla's entry signals potential growth in the four-wheeler segment.



China's GDP Growth Slows Amid Domestic Demand Challenges :-

China's GDP growth slowed to a three-year low in Q4 2025, with domestic demand weakening. Despite achieving the 5% annual target, trade tensions and structural imbalances pose risks. Manufacturing provided economic support, but reliance on exports highlights vulnerabilities. The property crisis and deflationary pressures persist, affecting consumer confidence. Policymakers face challenges in boosting domestic consumption and maintaining growth. The data underscores the need for strategic economic reforms to address long-term challenges and sustain growth in the face of global economic uncertainties.



India on Track to Achieve Upper Middle Income Status by 2030 :-

According to an SBI Research report, India is set to achieve a \$4,000 per capita income by 2030, transitioning to an upper middle-income country. This economic milestone reflects India's rapid growth trajectory, with significant increases in GDP and per capita income over recent decades. The report emphasizes the importance of continued reforms to sustain growth and achieve high-income status by 2047. India's economic progress underscores its potential as a major global economic player, with implications for domestic and international economic policies.



India, EU agree on trilateral framework for global cooperation :-

India and the European Union have agreed on a trilateral framework for global development cooperation during their first Joint Steering Committee meeting in New Delhi. This strategic partnership aims to address key development challenges in partner countries, emphasizing shared values and mutual interests. The agreement seeks to enhance collaboration on solutions for global issues, aligning with the ongoing political momentum around the India-EU Free Trade Agreement. This development marks a significant step in deepening the India-EU strategic partnership, boosting economic and developmental ties.



Maharashtra to establish India's first Innovation City near Mumbai :-

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced plans to build India's first 'Innovation City' near Mumbai, focusing on attracting global investors and fostering innovation ecosystems. The project, supported by Tata Sons' commitment of USD 11 billion, aims to create a hub for innovation and technology. The Innovation City will provide plug-and-play systems for global access, enhancing Mumbai's position as a technological center. The initiative reflects Maharashtra's strategic vision to integrate global innovation with local strengths, boosting the state's economic and technological landscape.



India's Forex Reserves Surge to \$701 Billion in January 2026 :-

India's foreign exchange reserves have seen a significant increase, rising by \$14.167 billion to reach \$701.360 billion as of January 16, 2026. This growth is attributed to an increase in gold reserves and foreign currency assets, as reported by the Reserve Bank of India. The reserves are nearing their all-time high of \$704.89 billion recorded in September 2024. The rising forex reserves

are crucial for India's economic stability, covering more than 11 months of merchandise imports, and highlighting the resilience of India's external sector.



India's Retail Sector Hits Three-Year High in Leasing Growth :-

India's retail sector achieved a 54% growth in leasing activity in 2025, reaching a three-year peak. Key cities like Delhi NCR, Hyderabad, and Mumbai saw significant expansions, with shopping malls and high streets capturing major leasing shares. Domestic retailers accounted for 82% of the activity, driven by economic resilience and rising consumer spending. This growth reflects India's robust retail landscape, poised for continued expansion against a global backdrop of uncertainty.



Gold and Silver Prices Surge Amid US Dollar Weakness

Gold and silver prices reached record highs due to a weakening US dollar and anticipated Federal Reserve rate cuts. Geopolitical tensions and fears of a US government shutdown further fueled demand for these safe-haven assets. Gold futures peaked at Rs 1,59,820 per 10 grams, while silver exceeded the \$99 mark. As the Federal Open Market Committee meets, traders anticipate potential rate cuts, driving continued interest in precious metals.

9: International



South Korea Extends Visa Fee Waiver for Indian Tourists

South Korea has extended the waiver on visa processing fees for group tourists from India and five other countries until June 2026. This initiative aims to boost inbound tourism, recovering to pre-pandemic levels, with a 17.3% increase in foreign arrivals in November 2025. The move is part of South Korea's broader strategy to enhance its tourism sector, benefitting from increased travel demand as global restrictions ease.



Guinea's Coup Leader Doumbouya Wins Presidential Election :-

Guinea's coup leader, Mamady Doumbouya, has been elected president, securing 86.72% of the vote. His victory marks a return to civilian rule in the resource-rich nation. Doumbouya's leadership has been characterized by a focus on resource nationalism, enhancing his popularity. However, political space remains restricted,

drawing criticism from international observers. The election outcome signals potential shifts in Guinea's political and economic landscape.



Protests Intensify in Iran Amid Economic Crisis :-

Iran witnessed its most intense protests in three years, driven by soaring inflation and currency depreciation. Clashes between demonstrators and security forces resulted in fatalities and injuries across multiple cities. The unrest highlights the economic challenges facing Iran amid Western sanctions and geopolitical tensions.



Bulgaria Enters Euro Zone, Adopts Euro Currency :-

Bulgaria celebrated its entry into the euro zone, adopting the euro as its currency. The transition marks a significant economic milestone, aligning Bulgaria with EU monetary policies. The move, supported by businesses, is expected to enhance economic stability and integration within the European Union.



Trump Leaves Door Open For Further Military Strikes in Venezuela :-

Following the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro by US forces, President Donald Trump has suggested the possibility of further military actions if Venezuela's interim government does not align with US interests. The capture, portrayed as a law enforcement action, aims to hold Maduro accountable for drug trafficking charges. Trump's comments have sparked international attention and raised questions about US foreign policy and its implications for regional stability in Latin America.



Paris' Louvre Museum Reopens Amid Staff Strike :-

The Louvre Museum in Paris reopened after a brief closure due to a staff strike over pay and working conditions. Parts of the museum remain closed as workers protest against management issues following a jewel heist and infrastructure problems. The Louvre, the world's most visited museum, faces challenges in

maintaining its status amid internal disputes. The ongoing strike highlights the need for addressing employee concerns to ensure the smooth functioning of this iconic cultural institution.



Iran Protests Intensify Amid Economic Crisis and US Warnings :-

Iran is experiencing its most significant wave of unrest in three years, driven by economic collapse and inflation. Protests have spread to over 78 cities, with security forces responding with force. The US has issued warnings against violence, complicating Iran's efforts to manage the situation. The unrest highlights deepening economic challenges and geopolitical tensions in the region.



Flash Floods in Indonesia's North Sulawesi Claim 14 Lives :-

Flash floods in Indonesia's North Sulawesi have resulted in 14 fatalities, with four individuals still missing. Heavy rains triggered the disaster, affecting infrastructure and leading to mass evacuations. Rescue efforts continue as authorities work to clear debris and ensure the safety of affected communities.



Trump Withdraws US from Key International Entities :-

U.S. President Donald Trump announced the withdrawal from 35 international entities, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, citing conflicts with national interests. The move, part of a broader review of international memberships, aligns with Trump's skepticism of multilateral institutions. The decision includes exiting UN Women and UNFPA, affecting funding and participation in global initiatives. This reflects Trump's focus on prioritizing U.S. sovereignty and economic strength over globalist agendas.



Australia Battles Bushfires Amidst Heatwave :-

Australia's Victoria state is grappling with severe bushfires that have razed homes, cut power to tens of thousands, and burned vast swathes of land. The fires, sparked by an intense heatwave, have destroyed over 130 structures and left 38,000 residences without power. Authorities have declared disaster zones and evacuated communities to ensure safety. The blazes are the worst since the Black Summer fires of 2019-2020. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese warned of extreme fire

weather and expressed solidarity with affected communities.



Iran Faces Intensified Protests Amid Internet Blackout :-

Iran is witnessing widespread protests against economic hardship, with a near-total internet blackout hindering communication. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei accused foreign adversaries of instigating the unrest and vowed a strong response. The protests, now entering their third week, have resulted in significant casualties amid a harsh security crackdown. The situation has strained Iran's relations with Western countries, with calls for respecting protesters' rights.



Greenland Parliament to Discuss US Control Threats :-

Greenland's parliament will convene to address US President Donald Trump's threats to take control of the island. Trump argues that US ownership is essential to prevent Russian or Chinese occupation. Greenland's leaders have expressed their desire for independence and rejected American intervention. The meeting aims to ensure a comprehensive political debate on Greenland's future and address concerns over sovereignty. The situation underscores geopolitical tensions over Arctic territories and resources.



Australia's Queensland Hit by Tropical Cyclone Koji :-

Tropical Cyclone Koji struck Queensland, Australia, causing widespread power outages and property damage. The cyclone, with wind gusts up to 95 kph, brought heavy rain and flooding risks. Over 15,000 properties lost power, and roads were closed. Premier David Crisafulli highlighted the potential for flooding and assured citizens of effective management. The cyclone follows previous severe weather events, emphasizing the need for disaster preparedness and response in the region.



Massive Protests Erupt in Minneapolis Over ICE Shooting :-

Massive protests erupted in Minneapolis following the fatal shooting of Renee Good by an ICE agent. The incident has intensified nationwide demonstrations against federal immigration policies. Protesters, led by Indigenous Mexican dancers, marched demanding justice and the abolition of ICE. The shooting occurred amidst a significant federal operation in the area, further straining relations between federal agencies and local communities. The protests highlight ongoing tensions over immigration enforcement in the US.



Trump's Greenland Acquisition Efforts Strain US-Denmark Relations :-

President Donald Trump has reiterated the U.S. interest in acquiring Greenland, causing tensions with Denmark and Greenland. Despite Danish and Greenlandic officials' firm rejection of the proposal, Trump emphasizes Greenland's strategic importance for national security. The situation has prompted discussions on Arctic defense and sovereignty, with Denmark increasing its military presence in Greenland. This development underscores the geopolitical significance of the Arctic region and the complexities of international diplomacy.



UN Security Council to Address Iran Protests and Oil Market Impact :-

The UN Security Council will convene to discuss the situation in Iran following widespread protests and a subsequent crackdown by authorities. The unrest has led to Iran temporarily closing its airspace, affecting global oil markets and prompting the U.S. to withdraw some military personnel from the region. The meeting aims to address the geopolitical implications of the unrest and its impact on international relations, highlighting the significance of maintaining stability in the Middle East.



Japan's Prime Minister Calls Snap Election Amid Rising Public Support :-

Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi plans to dissolve parliament's lower house, triggering an early election to capitalize on her rising popularity. With public support for her policies on economic growth and immigration reform, Takaichi aims to restore the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's majority. The election will test her leadership and ability to address pressing issues like cost-of-living concerns and national security. A strong result could enable her to implement key policy initiatives and strengthen her government's position.



South Korean Ex-President Sentenced for Obstruction :-

Former South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol has been sentenced to five years in prison for charges including obstructing his arrest after a failed martial law declaration. The Seoul Central District Court found him guilty, marking the first ruling related to his criminal charges. This case underscores the legal and political challenges faced by former leaders in South Korea.



Trump Receives Nobel Medal from Venezuelan Leader Machado :-

Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado gifted her Nobel Peace Prize medal to US President Donald Trump, recognizing his commitment to Venezuela's freedom. The gesture, symbolic of mutual respect, highlights ongoing diplomatic efforts following Nicolás Maduro's capture. This move underscores the complex geopolitical dynamics and aspirations for democratic reforms in Venezuela.



Guatemalan President Declares State of Siege Amid Gang Violence :-

Amid escalating gang violence, Guatemalan President Bernardo Arevalo declared a 30-day nationwide state of siege. The decision follows deadly riots and attacks that resulted in police casualties and hostages. The state of siege aims to combat organized crime, although civil liberties remain unaffected. The unrest, linked to the Barrio 18 gang, highlights ongoing security challenges in Guatemala. Measures include enhanced security powers and a temporary suspension of certain civil rights.



UAE and Bahrain join Gaza 'Board of Peace' initiative :-

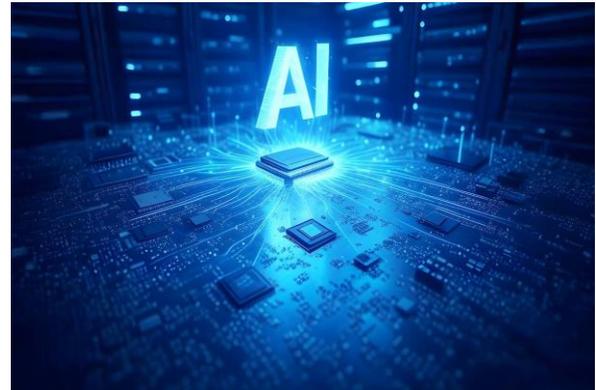
The UAE and Bahrain have joined the US-led 'Board of Peace' initiative for Gaza, supporting post-war reconstruction efforts. Both nations expressed confidence in President Trump's leadership and commitment to peace in the region. The Board of Peace aims to focus on Gaza's reconstruction, humanitarian assistance, and governance as part of a broader US peace plan. This participation aligns with Bahrain's role as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and underscores the UAE's commitment to regional stability and the Palestinian people's rights.



Bezos' Blue Origin announces TeraWave satellite network :-

Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin plans to deploy 5,408 satellites for its TeraWave communications network, designed to provide high-speed data services globally by 2027. The network aims to serve around 100,000 enterprise customers, offering data speeds of up to 6 Tbps. TeraWave will compete in the satellite constellation market, dominated by Elon Musk's SpaceX. This initiative aligns with the industry's push to build space-based data centers for AI processing, highlighting Blue Origin's

strategic entry into the growing satellite communications sector.



South Korea enacts world's first comprehensive AI regulations :-

South Korea has introduced the AI Basic Act, the world's first comprehensive AI regulations, to strengthen trust and safety in the sector. The laws require human oversight in high-impact AI applications and mandate clear labeling for AI-generated content. The Ministry of Science and ICT aims to promote AI adoption while ensuring safety and trust. However, startups express concerns over compliance burdens and vague language. The government plans to support companies with a guidance platform and may extend the grace period to minimize industry impact.



Dubai's Gulfood 2026 Hosts India as Partner Country for First Time :-

For the first time, Dubai's Gulfood, the world's largest annual food and beverage event, is hosting India as its partner country. The event, taking place from January 26 to 30, 2026, spans two mega venues and features 161

Indian exhibitors showcasing the country's diverse agri-food ecosystem. India's participation highlights its expanding agri-food exports and rising global demand for Indian products. The Bharati Pavilion, featuring high-potential agri-food startups, is a key aspect of India's presence. Gulfood 2026 records unprecedented expansion, emphasizing sustainability and innovation.



UAE to Host Global Future Councils Meetings for Five Years :-

The UAE and the World Economic Forum have agreed to host the annual Global Future Councils meetings in Dubai for the next five years. This strategic partnership aims to address socio-economic challenges and support resilient development models. The councils, a key element of UAE-WEF cooperation, have convened thousands of experts to tackle global issues. The partnership reflects the UAE's vision of creating impactful global collaborations and reinforces its role as a hub for shaping future solutions.



Rafah Border Crossing May Reopen for Humanitarian Access to Gaza :-

The Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt is expected to reopen soon, potentially increasing humanitarian aid access to Gaza. The reopening aligns with the US-backed peace plan and aims to address the humanitarian needs in the region. The crossing, crucial for Gaza's population, has been closed since a ceasefire agreement. Its reopening is anticipated to facilitate aid deliveries and travel, contributing to recovery efforts following the recent conflict. This development is a significant step towards improving living conditions in Gaza.



UN Human Rights Council Holds Emergency Session on Iran's Protest Crackdown :-

The UN Human Rights Council convened an emergency session to address the violent crackdown on protests in Iran. The session aims to investigate human rights violations and hold accountable those responsible for the unrest. Rights groups report significant casualties during the protests, marking a severe challenge to Iran's government. This international effort seeks to document abuses for potential future trials and emphasizes the global community's commitment to upholding human rights standards and addressing violations.



Massive Winter Storm Causes Havoc in the United States :-

A severe winter storm has disrupted life across the United States, causing over a million power outages and flight cancellations. The storm, affecting states from the South to the Northeast, has led to hazardous conditions with freezing rain and snow. Authorities report significant power outages, particularly in Tennessee and surrounding states. Emergency services urge residents to stay indoors as temperatures plummet, creating dangerous road conditions. The government has deployed measures to ensure electricity supply and public safety during this historic weather event.

**Ukraine and Russia Engage in Constructive UAE Talks :-**

Ukraine reports potential follow-up meetings with Russia after productive trilateral talks in Abu Dhabi, involving the US as a mediator. The discussions focused on ending the ongoing conflict, with representatives from military and diplomatic sectors exploring security conditions and ceasefire mechanisms. Ukraine appreciates UAE's mediating role, highlighting the Gulf state's growing influence in international diplomacy. These talks mark a significant step towards resolving the prolonged conflict, fostering hope for peace and stability in the region.

**UN Reports Hundreds Missing in Mediterranean Tragedy :-**

The UN migration agency reports hundreds feared dead or missing after recent shipwrecks in the Mediterranean Sea, exacerbated by Cyclone Harry. Poor weather conditions hindered rescue efforts. The IOM highlighted the dangers of overcrowded, unseaworthy boats and condemned the actions of smugglers. The Central Mediterranean remains the deadliest migration route, with over 1,340 deaths reported in 2025 alone. This tragedy underscores the urgent need for international cooperation to address migrant safety.

**South Korean Ex-First Lady Kim Sentenced for Bribery :-**

Former South Korean First Lady Kim Keon Hee was sentenced to one year and eight months in jail for accepting bribes from Unification Church officials. The court acquitted her of stock price manipulation charges. This ruling follows investigations into her husband, ex-President Yoon Suk Yeol, and highlights ongoing political

scandals in South Korea. Kim's legal team plans to appeal the ruling, maintaining her innocence on all charges.



Nepal Advances Green Energy with New Legal Framework :-

Nepal is enhancing its green energy initiatives with a robust legal framework aimed at achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2045. Efforts include converting traditional brick kilns to electric ones and expanding renewable energy sources. The government emphasizes private sector involvement and investment in green technologies to support sustainable development.



Amazon Cuts 16,000 Jobs Amid AI and Efficiency Push :-

Amazon confirmed the elimination of 16,000 corporate jobs, completing a plan for around 30,000 cuts since October. The company is closing its Fresh grocery stores and Go markets, while discontinuing the Amazon One biometric payment system. The layoffs, affecting nearly 10% of Amazon's corporate workforce, aim to reduce layers and increase efficiency. The move highlights the impact of artificial intelligence on workforce dynamics, with AI tools driving automation and influencing corporate restructuring.



Federal Reserve Holds Interest Rates Amidst Solid Economic Outlook :-

The Federal Reserve maintained interest rates between 3.50%-3.75%, citing a solid economy with diminished risks to inflation and employment. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell emphasized a cautious approach to future rate adjustments. The decision reflects stable economic conditions, with inflation slightly above target and a stabilizing job market. The Fed's outlook supports a lengthy pause before any further rate changes, amidst ongoing evaluations of economic data and global conditions.



BHARATI Pavilion Showcases Indian Agri-Food Startups at Gulfood 2026 :-

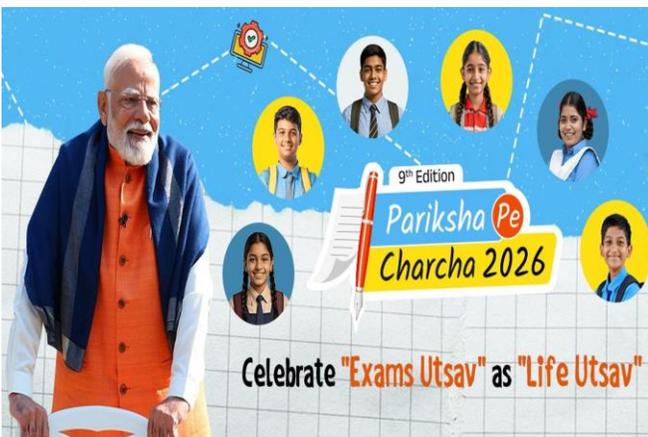
India's BHARATI Pavilion at Gulfood 2026 highlights agri-food innovation, featuring eight high-potential startups. Organized by APEDA, the pavilion promotes export-ready startups, showcasing innovative food products and agri-tech solutions. India's presence at the global exhibition emphasizes its role as a reliable sourcing destination in agri-food trade. The initiative aims to strengthen buyer-seller linkages and support India's position as an innovation-driven player in the global agri-food value chain.

10: Miscellaneous



UN Chief Guterres Delivers New Year Message in Hindi

For the first time, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued a New Year message in Hindi, urging global leaders to prioritize development over military spending. Highlighting the chaos and uncertainty worldwide, Guterres emphasized the need for investments in poverty alleviation rather than warfare. His message, resonating with India's efforts to promote Hindi at the UN, calls for a focus on peace and sustainable development in 2026.



Pariksha Pe Charcha Sets Record with Over 3 Crore Registrations :-

Pariksha Pe Charcha, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative, has reached a new milestone with over 3 crore registrations. The program addresses exam stress and promotes positive learning attitudes among students. The high participation reflects its growing impact and the

importance of dialogue in education. The initiative continues to engage students, parents, and teachers, fostering a supportive learning environment.



First Mountain Tunnel Breakthrough Achieved in Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train Project :-

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the breakthrough of the first mountain tunnel in the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail project, marking significant progress in the bullet train corridor. The 1.5-kilometre-long tunnel in Palghar district was completed using advanced tunneling techniques. Once operational, the high-speed rail service will boost economic integration between Mumbai and Ahmedabad, reduce travel time, and provide environmental benefits by cutting carbon emissions.



Prayagraj Magh Mela: Devotees Gather for Holy Dip :-

The ongoing Magh Mela in Prayagraj sees thousands of devotees taking a holy dip at the Sangam, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers. The 44-day-long festival began on January 3 with the Paush Purnima bath. Enthusiastic participants from across the country praise the arrangements made by the Uttar Pradesh government, highlighting the efficient crowd management and logistical planning. The Magh Mela, a significant religious gathering, reflects India's rich cultural and spiritual heritage, attracting pilgrims and tourists alike.



India rejects China's Shaksgam Valley claims, asserts territorial integrity :-

India has reiterated its stance against China's claims in the Shaksgam Valley, asserting its right to take necessary measures to protect its interests. The Ministry of External Affairs emphasized that the area is Indian territory and criticized the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor for passing through illegally occupied regions. The statement reflects ongoing geopolitical tensions and India's commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty.



Major Airlines Suspend Flights to Iran Amid Protests :-

International airlines, including Flydubai and Emirates, have suspended flights to Iran amidst escalating protests and internet blackouts. The unrest, triggered by economic grievances, has resulted in significant disruptions and heightened security concerns. The situation poses risks for airlines operating in the region, highlighting the broader impact of domestic instability on international travel and commerce.



PNGRB Initiates Study on India's Vehicular Fuel Transition :-

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) commenced a study on 'Comparative Assessment of Vehicular Fuels in India's Energy Transition,' emphasizing a multi-dimensional approach. Conducted with industry stakeholders, the study aims to support India's sustainable development through informed energy choices. It will evaluate fuels like CNG, LNG, and electric mobility using technical, environmental, and economic criteria. The study aligns with India's goal of increasing natural gas in the energy mix to 15% by 2030, reflecting a strategic response to energy transition.



Delhi Govt to Inaugurate 81 New Ayushman Arogya Mandirs :-

The Delhi government will inaugurate 81 new Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, enhancing primary healthcare access across the capital. This marks the fifth phase of the program's expansion, bringing the total number of centers to 319. Health Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh emphasized the initiative's role in providing accessible and preventive healthcare, aligning with the national vision of 'Healthcare for All.' These centers will offer free consultations, medicines, diagnostic tests, and preventive health programs, significantly reducing pressure on major hospitals and ensuring timely care for residents.



CSIR Skill Initiative Trains Over 1.9 Lakh Across India :-

CSIR's Integrated Skill Initiative has trained over 1.9 lakh individuals, aligning with India's Atmanirbhar Bharat vision. The program bridges skill gaps between scientific research and industry needs, offering training in 18 key sectors like aerospace, agriculture, and healthcare. It empowers participants, including students, researchers, and rural communities, by providing skills in advanced technologies. This initiative significantly contributes to India's skilled workforce development.



Delhi International Kite Festival to Become Global Attraction: Amit Shah :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah called for efforts to make the Delhi International Kite Festival a major global attraction. Speaking at the festival, Shah highlighted its potential to connect people across cultures and suggested forming a committee to expand the event. He emphasized the festival's role in promoting cultural unity and diversity, reflecting India's rich cultural heritage. The kite festival aims to bring together participants from different regions and countries, fostering cross-cultural exchanges and enhancing Delhi's tourism appeal.



Harvard India Conference to Feature PV Sindhu and Shashi Tharoor :-

The 23rd India Conference at Harvard will feature prominent Indian figures such as Olympic champion P.V. Sindhu and parliamentarian Shashi Tharoor. The event, focusing on India's global role, will include discussions on India's sports ecosystem and international engagement. Sindhu will speak on sports leadership, while Tharoor will address India's constitutional ideals. The conference aims to foster dialogue on India's future, with participation from policymakers, cultural figures, and entrepreneurs. This reflects India's rising influence in global affairs.



Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2026 to Span 40 Locations Across India :-

The 25th Bharat Rang Mahotsav, organized by the National School of Drama, will be held across 40 locations in India, featuring diverse theatrical performances in 228 languages. The festival aims to democratize theatre, showcasing productions from various communities and regions. With international collaborations, BRM 2026 marks a significant expansion of India's cultural footprint.



Brazilian Theatre Production Debuts at Bharat Rang Mahotsav :-

The Brazilian theatre production 'Passado Presente Zenturo' will make its international debut at the Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2026 in India. This adaptation blends Brazilian and global theatrical influences, exploring themes of time and memory. Scheduled for performances in Bengaluru and New Delhi, the production showcases Brazil's contemporary theatre on a global stage, fostering cultural exchange and artistic collaboration.



Centre Amends Consent Rules to Streamline Environmental Approvals :-

The Indian government has amended environmental consent guidelines under the Air and Water Acts to streamline approval processes and strengthen compliance mechanisms. Key reforms include consolidated consent and authorizations, elimination of periodic renewals, and site-specific environmental assessments. These changes aim to enhance transparency, reduce delays, and support sustainable industrial development.

11: National



India Achieves Record Renewable Energy Capacity in 2025 :-

India added a record 44.51 GW of renewable energy capacity in 2025, nearly doubling last year's figures. Solar power led the surge with 34.98 GW, while wind energy also saw significant growth. This expansion aligns with India's ambitious goal of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based energy capacity by 2030. As of November 2025,

renewable sources account for over 51% of India's total installed power capacity, marking substantial progress in the country's energy transition.



PM Modi to Inaugurate Exhibition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics in New Delhi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate 'Lotus Light: Relics of the Awakened One' on January 3, 2026, in New Delhi. The exhibition will feature the revered Sacred Piprahwa Relics, highlighting India's deep-rooted cultural ties with Buddhism. These relics, believed to be associated with Gautama Buddha, were discovered in the late 19th century and underscore India's commitment to preserving spiritual heritage. The event marks a significant cultural and diplomatic engagement, promoting universal values of peace and enlightenment.



Delhi Cabinet Approves Bill to Decriminalize Minor Offences :-

The Delhi Cabinet has cleared the Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026, to decriminalize minor offences and simplify compliance. The legislation aims to reduce the burden on courts and promote ease of doing business. It aligns with central government policies, replacing criminal penalties with civil fines for procedural violations. The move is expected

to enhance administrative efficiency and encourage a more business-friendly environment.



CRPF Inaugurates Open-Air Gym in Ramban, J :-

On January 2, 2026, the CRPF's 84 Battalion inaugurated an open-air gym at its headquarters in Ramban, Jammu and Kashmir. This initiative aims to promote physical fitness among CRPF personnel, symbolizing renewed energy and commitment after the area suffered extensive flood damage in August 2025. The gym reflects the force's focus on morale and resilience, crucial for maintaining operational readiness in challenging terrains.



Savitribai Phule Remembered for Her Contributions to Women's Education :-

On the birth anniversary of Savitribai Phule, Prime Minister Narendra Modi honored her as a pioneer of women's education in India. Savitribai, the first female teacher of modern India, worked alongside her husband Jyotirao Phule to promote women's rights and education. Her establishment of the country's first girls' school marked a significant step in the fight against gender discrimination and social inequality. Her legacy continues to inspire social reform movements across the

country, emphasizing the transformative power of education.



NHAI Sets Guinness Records in Expressway Construction :-

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) achieved two Guinness World Records during the construction of the Bengaluru–Kadapa–Vijayawada Expressway. This accomplishment marks a significant milestone in world-class highway infrastructure development under the Bharatmala Phase-II project. The expressway is designed to reduce travel time significantly, enhancing connectivity between Andhra Pradesh and Bengaluru. This record-setting construction exemplifies India's commitment to infrastructure modernization and economic growth, reflecting the exceptional dedication of engineers and workers involved in the project.



PM Modi to Visit Somnath Temple for Swabhiman Parv Celebrations :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit the historic Somnath Temple in Gujarat on January 10 and 11, 2026, to participate in the Somnath Swabhiman Parv. This event commemorates 1,000 years of resilience and

continuity since the first invasion of the temple by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1026. The Prime Minister will partake in various cultural and ceremonial activities, including the Shaurya Yatra, which honors the warriors who defended the temple over the centuries. The visit underscores the temple's significance as a symbol of India's cultural and spiritual heritage.



PM Modi to interact with young leaders at Viksit Bharat Dialogue 2.0 :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to engage with young leaders during the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue 2.0 in New Delhi from January 10-12, 2026. The event coincides with National Youth Day, celebrating Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary. The dialogue aims to inspire youth participation in nation-building, with PM Modi addressing their ideas and contributions to a prosperous India.



Prasar Bharati launches 'Creator's Corner' to boost digital talent :-

Prasar Bharati has introduced 'Creator's Corner' on DD News, a platform to showcase emerging digital content creators. The initiative aligns with the government's push to harness the creative economy, providing

opportunities for creators from diverse backgrounds. With a dedicated prime-time slot, the segment aims to foster a vibrant ecosystem for digital content in India.



Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports Initiates New Committees in NSFs :-

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has directed National Sports Federations to establish committees on International Relations and Make in India in Sports. These committees will enhance global engagement by overseeing interactions with international federations, formulating cooperation plans, and promoting domestic sports manufacturing. The initiative aims to strengthen India's role in international sports while supporting indigenous product development. This strategic move aligns with the government's vision to enhance India's competitiveness and self-reliance in the global sports arena.



EU Leaders to Attend India's Republic Day as Chief Guests :-

India has invited the top leadership of the European Union (EU) — António Luís Santos da Costa, President of the European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen,

President of the European Commission — to be the Chief Guests at its 77th Republic Day celebrations on January 26, 2026, in New Delhi. This marks an important diplomatic milestone in India-EU relations, as it is the first time that leaders representing the EU's highest political offices will attend the Republic Day parade together in this honorary role.



India Launches Responsible Nations Index for Ethical Governance :-

India launched the Responsible Nations Index (RNI) to evaluate countries on ethical governance and global responsibility. Unveiled at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, the index emphasizes inclusive development and moral responsibility. Developed by the World Intellectual Foundation with contributions from JNU and IIM Mumbai, the RNI redefines national success in an interconnected world. The launch event featured discussions on rethinking responsibility-led development, marking a shift towards evaluating nations based on ethical and humanitarian values.



Amrit Udyan to open for public from February 3 to March 31 :-

The Rashtrapati Bhavan's Amrit Udyan will be open to the public from February 3 to March 31, except on Mondays and March 4. Visitors can book slots online or register on-site for free. The gardens, showcasing India's horticultural richness, will be accessible from Gate No. 35, with shuttle services from Central Secretariat Metro Station. This annual opening allows citizens to experience the beauty of the President's Estate, promoting awareness and appreciation of India's botanical heritage. The initiative aligns with efforts to increase public engagement with national heritage sites.



Culture Ministry to showcase '150 Years of Vande Mataram' tableau :-

The Ministry of Culture will present a Republic Day Parade tableau in 2026 themed '150 Years of Vande Mataram'. The tableau will depict the national song's historical journey and cultural significance, portraying it as a symbol of India's civilizational memory. Featuring the original manuscript and diverse cultural representations, the tableau aims to highlight Vande Mataram's role in the freedom movement and its enduring national spirit. This initiative reflects the Ministry's commitment to celebrating India's heritage and unity, connecting past achievements with contemporary aspirations.



Centre Approves Wage and Pension Revision for NABARD and RBI :-

The Central Government has sanctioned wage revisions for Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs), along with pension adjustments for retirees of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and NABARD. This measure, effective from August 2022, is designed to boost employee morale and enhance social security for pensioners, impacting over 46,000 employees and retirees. The decision reflects the government's dedication to ensuring financial well-being in the financial sector, with an estimated expenditure of ₹8,170.30 crore for PSGICs alone.



PM Modi Distributes Over 61,000 Appointment Letters at Rozgar Mela :-

On January 24, 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi distributed more than 61,000 appointment letters at the 18th Rozgar Mela in New Delhi. The event, which aims to accelerate government recruitment, was attended by Union Minister Jitendra Singh and other dignitaries. PM Modi emphasized the importance of youth in nation-building and highlighted India's demographic advantage.

The Rozgar Mela aligns with the government's mission to provide employment opportunities and has so far issued over 11 lakh recruitment letters. The initiative also seeks to strengthen sectors like defence, healthcare, and education.



President Murmu Inaugurates 'Granth Kutir' at Rashtrapati Bhavan :-

President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated Granth Kutir at Rashtrapati Bhavan, showcasing India's literary heritage in classical languages. The Kutir houses around 2,300 books and manuscripts in languages like Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, and more. This initiative aims to preserve and promote India's cultural and scholarly traditions. Granth Kutir, developed with support from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, aligns with the Gyan Bharatam Mission, which seeks to digitize and disseminate India's manuscript heritage, encouraging the study of classical languages.



Vice President Radhakrishnan Pays Tribute to Netaji's Legacy in Cuttack :-

Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan honored Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's legacy at the Parakram Diwas celebrations in Cuttack, Odisha. The event highlighted

Netaji's contributions to India's independence and his vision for a strong, self-reliant nation. The Vice President emphasized the need to draw inspiration from Netaji's spirit of valour and unity in achieving national goals. The celebrations included inaugurating exhibitions and galleries dedicated to Netaji, fostering public awareness of his enduring impact on India's history.



Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026 Engages Over 6.76 Crore Participants :-

The ninth edition of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026 expanded to a nationwide dialogue, engaging students from Coimbatore, Raipur, Dev Mogra, and Guwahati. More than 4.5 crore registered, with an additional 2.26 crore participating in activities. This initiative, launched in 2018, aims to foster stress-free examinations and has grown significantly, reflecting its increasing national footprint. Pariksha Pe Charcha now symbolizes a movement towards nurturing individuality in education across India.



India Energy Week 2026: PM Modi Highlights \$500 Billion Investment :-

At India Energy Week 2026, PM Modi emphasized India's potential as a global energy sector leader, highlighting a

\$500 billion investment opportunity. Addressing representatives from 125 countries, he noted India's energy independence goals and its role as a top petroleum exporter. The upcoming India-EU Free Trade Agreement is expected to boost manufacturing and services, offering extensive investment prospects across the energy value chain.



Jitendra Singh Felicitates Deep Ocean Mission Scientists

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh honored scientists from India's Deep Ocean Mission, who were invited as special guests at the Republic Day Parade 2026. The ceremony recognized their contributions to advancing deep-sea exploration capabilities. The Ministry of Earth Sciences applauded their efforts in positioning India at the forefront of ocean research, marking a moment of pride for the scientific community and the nation.



President Murmu Hosts 'At Home' Reception on Republic Day :-

President Droupadi Murmu hosted the traditional 'At Home' reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan, marking the conclusion of Republic Day celebrations. The event saw attendance from PM Modi, VP Radhakrishnan, and EU

leaders. The reception emphasized diplomatic engagement, reflecting India's commitment to justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. It provided an opportunity for informal interactions, reinforcing international partnerships.



NDCT Amendments to Boost Indian Pharma Innovation

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare announced amendments to the New Drugs and Clinical Trials (NDCT) Rules, 2019, aiming to streamline drug development and approval processes in India. These changes are expected to reduce timelines by 90 days, promote ease of business, and reinforce India's position as a global hub for pharmaceutical research. The reforms align with the government's vision for regulatory trust and innovation-led growth.



President Murmu Inaugurates Parliament's Budget Session :-

President Droupadi Murmu opened the Budget Session of Parliament, emphasizing the government's vision for social justice and inclusive growth. She highlighted India's achievements and commemorations over the past year, marking 2026 as pivotal for the nation's

journey towards development. The address outlined the government's commitment to empowering marginalized communities and enhancing welfare outreach.



UIDAI Launches Enhanced Aadhaar App for Secure Digital Identity :-

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) launched a new Aadhaar app, emphasizing enhanced security and privacy. Union Minister Jitin Prasad unveiled the app, which allows need-based data sharing, offering users greater control over personal information. UIDAI CEO Bhuvnesh Kumar highlighted the app's role in identity verification, making it faster and more reliable. The voluntary app supports direct app-to-app verification, eliminating the need for printed Aadhaar

copies. This launch marks a step forward in India's digital identity ecosystem.



India to Play Decisive Role in Global Energy Balance: PM Modi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted India's growing role in shaping the global energy demand-supply balance during India Energy Week 2026. Interacting with global energy leaders, PM Modi emphasized India's economic growth and investment opportunities in the energy sector. He noted a \$100 billion potential in exploration and production, backed by policy reforms. The discussion underscored India's position as a reliable partner in the global energy ecosystem, attracting strong interest from international companies.

12: Obituaries



Begum Khaleda Zia, First Woman PM of Bangladesh, Passes Away :-

Begum Khaleda Zia, Bangladesh's first female Prime Minister and a pivotal political figure, died at 80 after a prolonged illness. Zia, who led Bangladesh three times and shaped its political landscape for decades, was known for her partnership with Ziaur Rahman and

leadership of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Her tenure was marked by significant developments in Bangladesh's political history. Zia's passing marks the end of an era in Bangladeshi politics, with leaders across the globe extending condolences.



Suresh Kalmadi, former Union Minister and Congress leader, passes away at 81 :-

Senior Congress leader Suresh Kalmadi passed away in Pune, at the age of 81, after a prolonged illness. He breathed his last around 3:30 am while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Pune. He also held the position of Minister of State for Railways in the federal government. Beyond politics, Kalmadi was well known as the President of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and for his role as Chairman of the Organising Committee of the 2010 Commonwealth Games held in Delhi. That event, while a major milestone for India's sporting history, was also surrounded by allegations of financial irregularities and controversy that later clouded parts of his legacy.



Hungarian Filmmaker Bela Tarr Passes Away at 70 :-

Renowned Hungarian filmmaker Bela Tarr, known for his distinct cinematic style, passed away at 70 after a long illness. Tarr's work, including acclaimed films like 'Sátántangó' and 'Werckmeister Harmonies,' explored themes of human fragility and existential despair. His contributions to cinema have left a lasting impact, influencing filmmakers worldwide. Tarr's passing marks the end of an era in Hungarian cinema, but his legacy will continue to inspire future generations of filmmakers and cinephiles.



PM Modi Mourns Agnivesh Agarwal's Passing :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed condolences over the sudden demise of Agnivesh Agarwal, son of Vedanta Group Chairman Anil Agarwal, due to cardiac arrest. Agnivesh was a key figure in the business sector, having founded Fujairah Gold and led Hindustan Zinc. Beyond his professional life, he was known for his compassion and simplicity. PM Modi's message highlighted Agnivesh's impact on his family and society, reflecting deep sorrow over his untimely death.



Actor-singer, Indian Idol Season 3 winner Prashant Tamang passes away at 43 :-

Prashant Tamang — the acclaimed Indian singer and actor who rose to fame after winning Indian Idol Season 3 in 2007 — has passed away at the age of 43. Tamang, who originally belonged to Darjeeling and once served as a constable with the Kolkata Police, became a national figure after his Indian Idol victory, a win that was especially celebrated by fans across the Northeast and the Gorkha community. In the years since his debut on television, he successfully transitioned into acting and

was widely praised for his role in the acclaimed web series Paatal Lok Season 2.



Former ECB chief executive David Collier passed away aged 70 :-

David Collier, the former chief executive of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), passed away at the age of 70 on January 13, 2026. Collier's decade-long tenure as ECB chief from 2004 to 2014 was widely regarded as a transformative era for English cricket, highlighted by multiple historic achievements: under his leadership, the England men's team secured the Ashes series four times and also won its first ICC global title by lifting the T20 World Cup in 2010; concurrently, the England women's team achieved five Ashes series wins and both the 50-over and T20 World Cup titles in 2009.



Veteran singer Raju Bandara passed away :-

Veteran Sri Lankan singer and musician Raju Bandara passed away at the age of 65, family sources confirmed. Bandara, a well-known figure in Sri Lanka's music scene, had a long and celebrated career as a singer, composer, and stage performer. His death followed a brief illness, and tributes have poured in acknowledging his

contributions to music and the cultural life of the region. Known for his soulful performances and enduring popularity, Bandara's passing marks the end of an era for many fans and fellow musicians.



Veteran Congress leader Bheemanna Khandre passes away :-

Veteran Congress leader Bheemanna Khandre's passing marks the end of a significant chapter in Karnataka's political landscape. A senior and respected figure within the Indian National Congress, Khandre was known for his long-standing association with public service and grassroots politics. Over the years, he played an important role in strengthening the party's organizational base and was widely regarded for his commitment to social justice and regional development. His political legacy is also reflected in his family's continued involvement in public life, particularly in Karnataka politics. His demise is being mourned as a loss of an experienced statesman who dedicated decades to public service.



PM Modi Condoles the Passing of Industrialist Mohan Lal Mittal :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the demise of industrialist and philanthropist Mohan Lal Mittal, recognizing his contributions to industry and social welfare. Modi praised Mittal's dedication to Indian culture and his support for philanthropic initiatives. Mittal's legacy includes significant contributions to societal progress and industrial development. The Prime Minister's condolences underscore the impact of Mittal's work on India's industrial landscape and his commitment to cultural and social causes.



Former Kerala High Court judge A. Lakshmi Kutty passes away :-

Retired Justice A. Lakshmi Kutty, a former judge of the Kerala High Court, passed away on January 19, 2026. She served on the Kerala High Court bench from 2000 until her retirement in 2004, having been appointed as a district judge in 1987 before her elevation. After retiring from the High Court, she also contributed to public life as

a member of the Kerala State Human Rights Commission and served as Chairperson of the Kerala State Fishermen Debt Relief Commission, engaging with human rights and social welfare issues beyond her judicial career. Her death was mourned by the legal community and public alike.



PM Modi Condoles Demise of Tamil Scholar Gnanasundaram :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the passing of distinguished Tamil scholar D. Gnanasundaram. Remembered for his contributions to Tamil culture and literature, Gnanasundaram enriched societal cultural consciousness with his exceptional understanding of Kamba Ramayanam. PM Modi highlighted his influential legacy and offered condolences to his family and admirers, marking a significant loss to Indian scholarship.

13: Ranks & Reports



India's Economy Projected to Reach \$26 Trillion by 2047: EY Report :-

According to an Ernst & Young report, India is poised to become a \$26 trillion economy by 2047, with per capita income exceeding \$15,000. Factors such as economic liberalization, digital infrastructure, and IT services are driving growth. The report highlights India's potential to emerge as the 'office of the world,' with significant opportunities in technology and non-IT services sectors. This trajectory positions India as a key player in the global economic landscape.



Ahmedabad Institute Sets Record with 500 Kidney Transplants in 2025 :-

The Institute of Kidney Diseases and Research Centre in Ahmedabad achieved a national milestone by conducting 500 kidney transplants in 2025. This record underscores the institute's role as a leader in public healthcare, offering advanced medical services to economically disadvantaged patients. The achievement highlights the success of India's healthcare initiatives, including the Ayushman Bharat scheme, in providing accessible and quality medical care.



Maruti Suzuki Exports Record 3.95 Lakh Vehicles in 2025

Maruti Suzuki India reported its highest-ever exports, shipping 3.95 lakh vehicles in 2025, marking a 21% increase from the previous year. This achievement highlights India's manufacturing prowess and the global appeal of Maruti Suzuki models. The company exported 18 models to over 100 countries, including the newly introduced e VITARA, its first Battery Electric Vehicle. CEO Hisashi Takeuchi noted that these exports are a testament to the trust of international customers and contribute significantly to India's export momentum amid global trade challenges.



GST Collections in December Rise by 6.1% to Rs 1.75 Lakh Crore :-

India's GST collections for December 2025 rose by 6.1% year-on-year to approximately Rs 1.75 lakh crore, reflecting continued economic recovery and improved tax compliance. The increase was driven by gains in Central and State GST components. For the fiscal year 2025-26, GST collections totaled Rs 16.5 lakh crore, up 8.6% from the previous year. These figures indicate robust economic activity and highlight ongoing efforts to streamline tax processes. The GST Council's recent reforms, including rate rationalization, are expected to further enhance efficiency and business friendliness.



Ahmedabad Flower Show Achieves Guinness World Records :-

The Ahmedabad International Flower Show 2026 achieved two Guinness World Records for the largest flower mandala and portrait. Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the event for showcasing creativity, sustainability, and community participation. The show highlights Ahmedabad's cultural vibrancy and has gained global recognition for its imaginative floral displays. The event reflects India's rich heritage and modern artistic

achievements, enhancing the city's identity on the international stage.



Gold Prices Expected to Hit New Highs in 2026 :-

Gold prices are projected to reach new highs in 2026, driven by sustained central bank buying, anticipated US Fed rate cuts, and geopolitical risks. ING's Commodities Outlook 2026 reports a bullish trend supported by strong ETF inflows and diversification strategies by central banks. Gold prices are expected to average \$4,325 per ounce, with silver also benefiting from strong industrial demand and limited supply growth. The outlook highlights gold's role as a safe-haven asset amid global uncertainties.



India Ranks 8th Globally in WHO Pharmacovigilance Contributions :-

Union Minister J.P. Nadda released the 10th edition of the Indian Pharmacopoeia, emphasizing India's progress in pharmaceutical quality and regulatory standards. India now ranks 8th globally in WHO pharmacovigilance contributions, reflecting its commitment to patient safety. The new edition includes expanded coverage of key medicines and the first-time inclusion of blood component monographs. The release underscores India's growing stature in global health diplomacy and pharmaceutical regulation.



India's Pharma Exports Surge to \$30.47 Billion in FY 2024-25 :-

India's pharmaceutical sector has achieved a significant milestone with exports reaching \$30.47 billion in the fiscal year 2024-25, reflecting a robust growth of 9.4% year-on-year. According to the Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (PHARMEXCIL), India remains the world's third-largest pharmaceutical producer by volume, supplying affordable and quality medicines to over 150 countries. The council highlighted the sector's potential for sustained export-led growth, emphasizing strategic priorities and policy alignment to strengthen exports.



SAIL Achieves Record December Sales, Reports 37% Growth :-

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) reported its highest-ever December sales, with a provisional volume of 2.1 million tonnes, marking a 37% growth. The performance reflects the company's focus on timely deliveries and branding initiatives. SAIL's strong domestic and export sales underscore its leading position in the global steel industry, contributing to India's industrial growth.



Railway Electrification Hits 99.2% in India's Transport Network :-

India's Railways achieved 99.2% electrification of its broad-gauge network, marking a major milestone in the country's sustainable transport strategy. The ambitious 'Mission 100% Electrification' reduces pollution, strengthens energy security, and supports faster, greener, and reliable train operations. Electrification catalyzes regional growth, industrial development, and energy efficiency, positioning India among global leaders in sustainable railway infrastructure. This transformation reflects India's century-long commitment to modernization and cleaner transport solutions.



India's EV Market Reaches 2.3 Million Sales in 2025 :-

India's electric vehicle market recorded 2.3 million sales in 2025, with EVs comprising 8% of new registrations. Two-wheelers led growth, accounting for 57% of sales, followed by electric three-wheelers. Uttar Pradesh emerged as the largest EV market, contributing 18% of national sales. Investment in the sector rose by 27%, with manufacturers attracting significant funding. The report highlights India's rapid EV adoption, with projections indicating continued growth and a substantial export opportunity in auto components.



India's CPI Inflation Rises to 1.33% in December :-

India's Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rose to 1.33% in December 2025, up from 0.71% in November. Despite the increase, food inflation remained negative for the seventh consecutive month, reflecting stable prices. The Reserve Bank of India revised its inflation forecast and cut the repo rate, citing a favorable economic outlook. Strong GDP growth and low inflation have created a supportive environment for economic expansion, with the central bank prioritizing growth amid stable price conditions.



Extra Sleep and Walking Can Extend Life: Study :-

A study published in The Lancet journal eClinicalMedicine suggests that five extra minutes of sleep and two minutes of brisk walking can add a year to one's life. The research, which tracked 60,000 people over eight years, highlights the combined benefits of sleep, physical activity, and diet. Improvements in these areas can lead to nine additional years of life. The study emphasizes a holistic approach to health, showing that small lifestyle changes can have significant public health benefits by reducing sedentary time and enhancing overall well-being.



Oxfam Report Highlights Growing Wealth Inequality Among Billionaires :-

Oxfam's latest report reveals a significant surge in billionaire wealth, deepening economic and political divides. Despite global poverty challenges, billionaire fortunes grew by 16% in 2025, reaching \$18.3 trillion. The report links this wealth boom to U.S. policies favoring the wealthy, including tax cuts and reduced scrutiny of monopolies. Oxfam calls for national inequality reduction plans and higher taxes on extreme wealth. The findings underscore the growing concentration of wealth and influence, raising concerns about democratic stability and the need for policy measures to address widening economic disparities.



China's Population Decline Continues as Birthrate Hits Record Low :-

China's population fell for the fourth consecutive year in 2025, with the birthrate reaching a record low. The decline poses challenges for Beijing's economic plans, as an aging population strains resources. The number of over-60s is set to increase significantly, impacting the workforce and social services. China's policy shifts, including retirement age adjustments, aim to address these demographic changes. The trend underscores the need for sustainable population management strategies

and highlights the long-term implications for economic growth and social stability.



Study Finds No Link Between Childhood Vaccines and Epilepsy :-

A recent study led by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found no association between routine childhood vaccinations and an increased risk of epilepsy. Published in The Journal of Pediatrics, the study analyzed over 2,000 children diagnosed with epilepsy and found no correlation with vaccination status or aluminum exposure. The findings provide reassurance about the safety of childhood vaccines at a time when vaccination coverage is declining in some populations.



China Expects Record 9.5 Billion Passenger Trips During Lunar New Year :-

China anticipates a record 9.5 billion passenger trips during the 40-day Lunar New Year holiday period. The extended holiday aims to boost domestic consumption, with travel and tourism sectors leading the services-led consumption push. Railway and aviation trips are expected to exceed historical peaks, reflecting China's focus on strengthening transportation capacity and supporting economic recovery. The holiday travel period serves as a barometer of China's economic health and transportation system resilience.

14: Schemes & Committees



Rajasthan Launches AI-ML Policy 2026 to Boost Innovation :-

The Rajasthan Cabinet has approved the AI-ML Policy 2026, aiming to transform the state into a technology-driven hub. The policy focuses on ethical AI use, enhancing e-governance, and promoting innovation-led growth. It includes initiatives for reducing AI bias, data security, and establishing an AI Centre of Excellence. The policy also emphasizes AI education and skill development, with incentives for industries and startups to foster a robust AI ecosystem, aligning with national digital transformation goals.



Centre Promotes Indigenous Fish Species under Blue Revolution :-

The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying is focusing on promoting indigenous fish species as part of the Blue Revolution strategy. This initiative aims to enhance sustainability, food security, and livelihoods while conserving India's aquatic biodiversity. Indigenous species like fringed-lipped carp and Indian white shrimp are prioritized for large-scale adoption. The government supports this through schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, promoting genetic improvement and infrastructure development to boost production and rural livelihoods.



Centre Unveils ₹235-Crore Port Projects in Tamil Nadu

The Central Government has launched port infrastructure projects worth ₹235 crore at Chennai Port Authority and Kamarajar Port Limited in Tamil Nadu. These projects aim to enhance maritime capacity and advance India's maritime-led growth strategy. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal highlighted the focus on climate-resilient, digitally enabled ports and the integration of digital governance systems to improve operational efficiency and ease of doing business.



Gujarat's 'Poshan Udaan 2026' Campaign Promotes Nutrition Awareness :-

Gujarat launched 'Poshan Udaan 2026', a campaign leveraging the Makar Sankranti festival to raise nutrition awareness among children, adolescent girls, and mothers. Led by the Department of Women and Child Development, the initiative includes nutrition-themed kite-making, slogan-writing contests, and health check-ups. The campaign aims to promote dietary diversity, reduce junk food consumption, and prevent anemia, engaging communities statewide. This initiative highlights the importance of balanced diets and hygiene, with kites carrying health messages symbolically soaring across Gujarat's skies, emphasizing the state's commitment to a healthier society.



PM Modi to Launch Infrastructure Projects in West Bengal :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch infrastructure projects worth over ₹4,000 crore in West Bengal on January 17-18. The projects include India's first Vande Bharat Sleeper Train and several key rail and road initiatives to enhance connectivity and development in

the region. Modi will also inaugurate a new passenger rail service and a state-of-the-art electric catamaran for inland water transport, highlighting efforts to modernize transportation infrastructure and boost economic growth in West Bengal.



New Seed Act 2026 to Enhance Farmer Protection and Transparency :-

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the proposed Seed Act, 2026, aimed at protecting farmers and ensuring seed quality. The Act introduces stringent quality control measures and penalties for substandard seeds, with enhanced traceability through QR codes on seed packets. It mandates registration of seed companies and supports traditional seed practices. The legislation represents a significant step toward modernizing India's seed regulation framework, enhancing transparency and accountability in the agricultural sector, and safeguarding farmers' interests.



PM Modi performs Bhoomi Pujan of Kaziranga Elevated Corridor :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed the Bhoomi Pujan for the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project in Assam, a ₹6,950 crore initiative aiming to improve connectivity while protecting Kaziranga National Park's ecosystem. The project includes a 35-km elevated wildlife corridor to allow free movement of animals and reduce human-wildlife conflict. Modi also flagged off two Amrit Bharat Express trains, emphasizing the government's focus on development and heritage preservation.



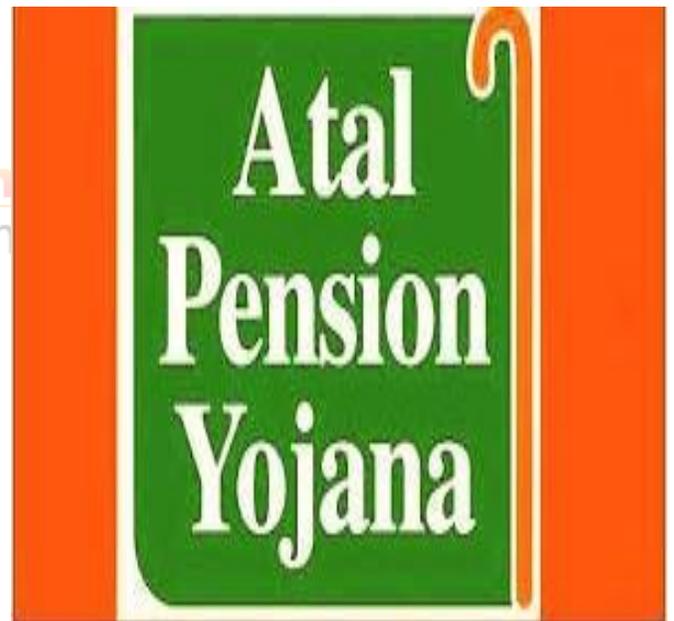
PM Modi inaugurates rail projects worth ₹3,250 crore in Malda :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated rail and road projects worth over ₹3,250 crore in Malda, West Bengal. The projects aim to enhance connectivity and development in the region. A key highlight is the introduction of India's first Vande Bharat Sleeper train, marking a significant step in the modernization of Indian Railways. Modi emphasized the impact of these projects on facilitating trade and creating new opportunities for the youth.



Maharashtra CM Fadnavis unveils new medtech roadmap at Davos :-

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced a plan to make healthcare more affordable using advanced medical technology. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, he highlighted collaborations with global medical companies and educational institutions like MIT and the University of Berkeley. The initiative aims to lower treatment costs and improve healthcare access in Maharashtra. The Raigad Pen Growth Centre, near the new Mumbai airport, will host this medtech hub, attracting significant foreign investment and creating high-paid jobs.



Atal Pension Yojana extended till 2030-31 :-

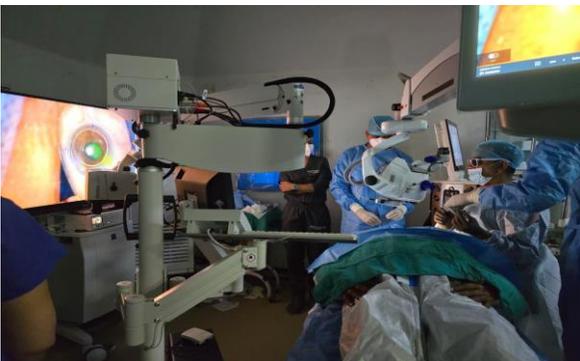
The Union Cabinet has extended the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) until FY 2030-31, continuing government support for promotional activities and gap funding. This decision aims to enhance old-age income security for low-income workers, particularly in the unorganised sector, and promote financial inclusion. By ensuring continued awareness and funding, the government seeks to sustain the scheme's momentum and viability. The APY extension aligns with the vision of a pensioned society, contributing to the larger goal of Viksit Bharat @2047, with a focus on social welfare and economic stability.

15: Science & Technology



INSV Kaundinya Embarks on Maiden Voyage to Oman :-

The Indian Navy's traditional sailing vessel INSV Kaundinya has embarked on its maiden international voyage to Oman, marking a significant moment in India's maritime heritage revival and naval diplomacy. The vessel is a reconstructed ancient stitched ship, inspired by historical depictions from the Ajanta Caves and based on traditional shipbuilding techniques used in the Indian Ocean region over a thousand years ago. Built using coir rope stitching instead of metal nails, INSV Kaundinya reflects the advanced maritime skills of ancient Indian shipwrights.



Army Hospital Performs India's First 3D Flex Aqueous Angiography :-

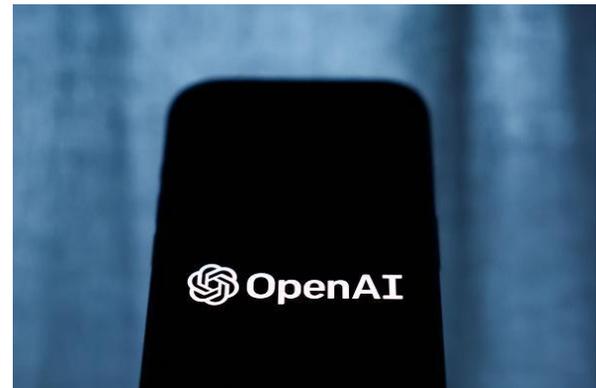
The Army Hospital (Research Referral) in Delhi has successfully performed India's first 3D Flex Aqueous Angiography with iStent, marking a significant advancement in glaucoma treatment. This innovative procedure enhances real-time visualization of aqueous outflow pathways, enabling precise surgical intervention. As glaucoma remains a leading cause of

blindness, this breakthrough is expected to significantly improve patient outcomes and position Indian medical services at the forefront of ophthalmic care.



BSNL Launches Voice Over WiFi Services Nationwide :-

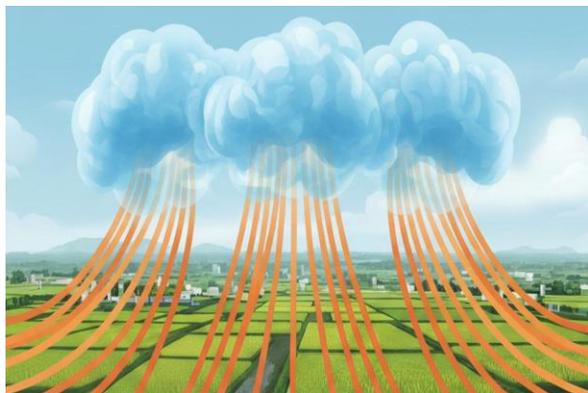
BSNL has introduced Voice over WiFi (VoWiFi) services across India, enabling customers to make voice calls over Wi-Fi networks using their mobile numbers. This service, aimed at improving connectivity in areas with weak cellular signals, offers seamless handover between Wi-Fi and mobile networks. VoWiFi is available free of charge and is expected to enhance service quality, especially in rural and remote areas. The nationwide rollout is part of BSNL's network modernization efforts, reflecting its commitment to expanding reliable connectivity and improving customer experience.



OpenAI Introduces ChatGPT Health to Enhance Medical Interactions :-

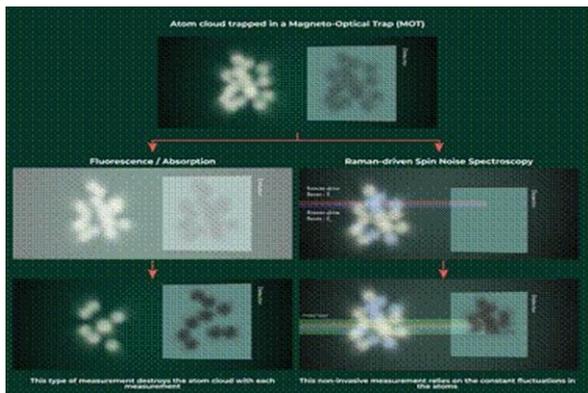
OpenAI has launched ChatGPT Health, a feature designed to integrate users' medical records and wellness apps, enhancing the relevance of health-related

conversations. Developed with over 260 physicians globally, this innovation aims to complement clinical care, not replace it. It allows users to connect apps like Apple Health and MyFitnessPal, providing insights into diet, exercise, and insurance options. The feature underscores OpenAI's commitment to privacy, with encrypted conversations and the ability to delete chats within 30 days, initially available to users outside Europe.



Water Vapour More Influential Than Aerosols in Indo-Gangetic Plain: Study :-

A study by Indian and international scientists highlights water vapour's significant impact on heating the atmosphere over the Indo-Gangetic Plain, surpassing aerosols. This finding is crucial for accurate climate modeling and predicting monsoon patterns. Researchers used data from six AERONET sites, coupled with radiative transfer simulations, to assess interactions between aerosols and water vapour. The study, published in Atmospheric Research, emphasizes the need to incorporate these interactions into climate models to improve regional climate change assessments.



New Technique Measures Quantum State of Atoms Non-Invasively :-

Researchers at the Raman Research Institute, Bengaluru, have developed Raman Driven Spin Noise Spectroscopy (RDSNS), a non-invasive technique to measure the local density of cold atoms. This advance is pivotal for quantum computing and sensing, overcoming limitations of traditional techniques that disturb atomic states. By using laser beams to detect spin fluctuations, RDSNS provides precise density measurements without altering the atomic system, opening new avenues for quantum technology applications.



CSIR-NPL Launches New Calibration Facilities to Boost Quality Infrastructure :-

CSIR-National Physical Laboratory inaugurated two apex calibration facilities to enhance India's national quality and measurement infrastructure. The National Primary Standard Facility for Solar Cell Calibration supports the solar manufacturing sector by reducing dependence on international labs. The National Environmental Standard Laboratory provides domestic validation for air pollution monitoring equipment. These facilities aim to support indigenous manufacturers and improve data reliability for environmental and industrial applications.



UAE Expands Polar Research Through Global Partnerships :-

The United Arab Emirates is enhancing its polar research capabilities through international treaties and collaborations. The UAE has joined the Antarctic Treaty System and secured observer status on the Arctic Council. Emirati researchers are participating in India's Antarctic Expedition, exploring Mars-like landscapes. These efforts aim to advance global climate science and establish permanent research laboratories at both poles, highlighting the UAE's commitment to environmental research and international cooperation.



Elon Musk's xAI Limits Image Generation Amid Backlash

Elon Musk's AI startup, xAI, has restricted its Grok chatbot's image generation feature on the X platform after backlash over inappropriate content creation. Users had exploited the tool to create unauthorized images, leading to widespread condemnation. The European Commission and other regulators criticized the platform for failing to prevent illegal content, prompting xAI to implement these changes. This development highlights ongoing challenges in regulating AI-generated content and ensuring user safety on digital platforms.



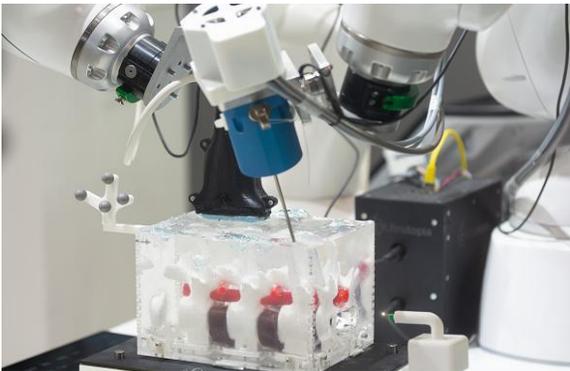
AIIMS Bhopal Achieves Milestone with Complex Cardiac Surgery :-

The Department of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery at AIIMS Bhopal successfully performed a complex cardiac surgery on a 30-year-old patient from Narmadapuram district. The patient, suffering from a history of heart attack and paralysis due to large clots in the heart, underwent a left ventricular thrombectomy. The surgery, led by Dr. Yogesh Niwariya, removed all clots, significantly reducing the risk of stroke and other complications. This achievement underscores AIIMS Bhopal's growing capabilities in handling advanced medical procedures, ensuring patients need not seek treatment outside the state.



ISRO's PSLV-C62 mission fails :-

ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C62) mission suffered a setback after it failed to place its payloads into the intended orbit due to a technical anomaly during the flight. The mission was launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota and was aimed at deploying multiple satellites, including an important Earth observation payload meant for strategic and civilian applications. According to ISRO, the launch progressed normally in the initial stages, but a problem arose during the third stage of the rocket, leading to deviation from the planned trajectory and eventual mission failure. This resulted in the loss of all onboard satellites.



AIIMS Raipur Achieves 100 Robotic Surgeries Milestone

AIIMS Raipur completed 100 robotic-assisted surgeries within four months of launching its program, marking a significant milestone in advanced surgical care. The center has performed various procedures, enhancing patient outcomes through minimally invasive techniques. The program aims to make robotic surgery more accessible in Central India, supporting surgeon training and academic development. This achievement reflects AIIMS Raipur's commitment to delivering high-quality care and its growing capabilities in the medical field.



Scientists Identify Stem Cell 'Neighbourhood' Key to Healthy Ageing :-

Researchers at the Agharkar Research Institute, Pune, discovered that ageing in tissues may begin in the support cells surrounding stem cells, rather than within the stem cells themselves. The study, published in Stem Cell Reports, highlights the importance of the stem cell 'neighbourhood' in maintaining tissue health. The research challenges traditional views on ageing, suggesting that strengthening support cells could prolong stem cell function. Although conducted on fruit flies, the findings have implications for human tissues

and could inform strategies to preserve tissue health and regenerative capacity.



Chronic Liver Disease Risk Predicted by Oral Bacteria: Study :-

A study published in Nature Microbiology reveals that mouth bacteria can predict chronic liver disease risk. Researchers found that the oral and gut microbiomes become similar as liver disease progresses, with oral bacteria colonizing the gut. This discovery opens new therapeutic strategies, suggesting that protecting the gut barrier could slow disease progression. This study highlights the importance of oral health in preventing liver disease.



New Study Proposes Combined Therapy for Childhood Brain Cancer :-

Australian researchers have discovered a promising combined drug therapy for treating diffuse midline gliomas, a difficult-to-treat childhood brain cancer. The study, published in 'Science Translational Medicine', found that the combination of drugs targeting FACT and BET proteins effectively shuts down cancer-driving genes. Laboratory tests showed the treatment slowed tumor growth and extended survival in mice, with

potential immune system activation. The findings bring hope for more effective therapies against aggressive brain cancers and highlight the importance of innovative cancer research.



NASA Targets February 6 for Artemis II Crewed Moon Mission :-

NASA has scheduled its Artemis II mission for February 6, marking humanity's first crewed lunar spaceflight since 1972. The mission will send four astronauts, including NASA's Reid Wiseman and Canada's Jeremy Hansen, on a journey around the Moon aboard the Orion spacecraft. This historic mission aims to advance human spaceflight, laying groundwork for Artemis III, which plans a lunar south pole landing in 2027. The Artemis II mission is a critical step toward establishing a sustainable lunar presence and preparing for crewed missions to Mars.



Sunita Williams retires from NASA after record-breaking career :-

Sunita Williams, a trailblazing astronaut, has retired from NASA after a distinguished 27-year career. Known for her endurance and leadership, Williams logged 608 days in space, including a record nine spacewalks. Her contributions to astronaut training and operations, as

well as her participation in the NEEMO program, have paved the way for future space exploration. Williams' legacy includes advancing scientific research and international collaboration aboard the International Space Station. Her retirement marks the end of an era in human spaceflight, inspiring future generations to explore the final frontier.



Delhi Police to use AI-enabled smart glasses for Republic Day 2026 security :-

In preparation for the Republic Day 2026 celebrations, Delhi Police will enhance security measures with the deployment of AI-enabled smart glasses and facial recognition systems. This initiative aims to improve surveillance and threat detection across the national capital. According to Additional Commissioner of Police Devesh Kumar Mahala, this technology will enable police to identify suspects more accurately. The smart glasses, equipped with a built-in camera and linked to a database of 65,000 criminals, will scan faces in real-time, alerting officers immediately upon recognizing individuals with criminal records.



Indian Railways Deploys Humanoid Robot for Passenger Safety :-

Indian Railways has introduced a humanoid robot named ASC ARJUN at Visakhapatnam Railway Station to enhance passenger safety and service delivery. The robot, developed using indigenous technology, will assist Railway Protection Force personnel in station operations. Equipped with AI-based crowd monitoring and a Face Recognition System, ASC ARJUN will patrol

platforms and make automated announcements in multiple languages. This initiative reflects Indian Railways' commitment to adopting emerging technologies for improved public convenience and operational efficiency, marking a significant advancement in the railway network's modernization efforts.

16: Sports



Arjun Erigaisi Wins Bronze at FIDE World Blitz Chess Championship :-

Indian chess grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi secured a bronze medal at the FIDE World Blitz Chess Championship in Doha, marking another significant achievement following his recent success in the Rapid Chess Championship. Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised Erigaisi's dedication and skill, highlighting India's growing prominence in international chess. Erigaisi's consecutive podium finishes reinforce India's status as a burgeoning chess powerhouse and inspire future generations of players.



Five Indian Match Officials Join FIFA's 2026 List :-

Five Indian match officials have been added to FIFA's International List for 2026, including referees Rachana Kamani, Ashwin Kumar, and Aditya Purkayastha. This inclusion underscores India's growing presence in international football officiating. The officials have completed advanced training courses, preparing them for upcoming global events like the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The expanded list reflects FIFA's commitment to diversifying officiating talent and recognizes the dedication and skill of Indian referees in the world of football, promoting the country's visibility in the sport.



Venus Williams to Compete in 2026 Australian Open :-

Venus Williams, a seven-time Grand Slam champion, has received a wild card entry for the 2026 Australian Open. Returning to Melbourne Park for the first time since 2021, Venus is set to become the oldest woman to compete in the tournament's main draw at 45. Her participation marks a significant moment in tennis history, highlighting her enduring legacy and competitive spirit.



Devank Dalal Tops Kabaddi Champions League Auction

The inaugural Kabaddi Champions League auction saw Devank Dalal emerge as the highest-bid player, signed by Bhiwani Bulls for Rs. 19.2 lakhs. The auction, characterized by strategic bids and excitement, sets the stage for a competitive season. The league promises high-octane action and showcases rising talent in Indian kabaddi.



Usman Khawaja Announces International Retirement :-

Australian cricketer Usman Khawaja announced his retirement from international cricket, with the Sydney Test against England as his final match. Debuting in 2010, Khawaja's career includes 6,206 runs and 16 centuries. His retirement marks the end of an era, with his contributions fondly remembered by fans.



Bangladesh Suspends IPL Broadcast After KKR Drops Mustafizur Rahman :-

The Bangladesh government has suspended the broadcast of the IPL 2026 season following the exclusion of Bangladeshi cricketer Mustafizur Rahman from Kolkata Knight Riders. The decision, driven by directives from the Board of Control for Cricket in India, reflects geopolitical tensions and concerns over alleged atrocities against minorities in Bangladesh. The suspension underscores the complexities of sports diplomacy and the broader political implications in international cricket relations.



Steve Smith Achieves 37th Test Century in Ashes Series

Australia's Steve Smith scored his 37th Test century during the fifth Ashes Test, solidifying his place among cricket's greats. His performance at the SCG adds to his impressive record, contributing to Australia's lead in the series. Smith's consistency and skill continue to inspire cricket enthusiasts worldwide.



New Zealand's Adithya Ashok Eager to Bowl Against Kohli and Rohit :-

New Zealand's leg-spinner Adithya Ashok, born in Vellore, India, is excited to face Indian cricket stars Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in the upcoming ODI series. Ashok, who has honed his skills at the CSK Academy in Chennai, sees this as a golden opportunity to test his abilities against two of the modern game's greats. The series offers him a platform to learn and grow by competing against world-class opponents, and he aims to make the most of this experience.



Sri Lanka Appoints Vikram Rathour as Batting Coach for T20 World Cup :-

Sri Lanka Cricket has appointed Vikram Rathour as their batting coach ahead of the T20 World Cup 2026. Rathour, who previously served as India's batting coach, brings valuable experience to the team. His appointment comes as Sri Lanka prepares to co-host the tournament. The team has also enlisted Lasith Malinga as a fast-bowling consultant, reflecting their commitment to strengthening their squad for the upcoming international competition.



Mumbai Marathon 2026 set to break participation records :-

The Mumbai Marathon 2026, Asia's largest participative sporting event, will feature over 69,000 runners. Scheduled for January 18, the marathon promotes community health and unity while making significant socio-economic contributions to the city. The event reflects the growing popularity of running in India and its role in fostering a healthy lifestyle.



Fit India's 'Sundays on Cycle' Revives in Delhi with Enthusiasm :-

The 'Sundays on Cycle' initiative by Fit India saw a strong revival in Delhi, with over 1,000 participants, including young leaders. Led by Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, the event aimed to promote physical fitness and community spirit. The 56th edition included yoga and Zumba sessions, with sports icons like Leander Paes participating. This initiative underscores the importance of a healthy lifestyle in nation-building and leadership, aligning with the broader Fit India movement.



Under-19 Cricket World Cup Commences in Zimbabwe and Namibia :-

The ICC Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup was kicked off in Zimbabwe and Namibia, with India faced the United States in their opening match. India, led by Ayush Mhatre, aims to secure its sixth title, having been placed in Group B alongside New Zealand, the USA, and Bangladesh. The tournament, featuring 16 teams, serves as a platform for future cricket stars, with matches held in Harare, Bulawayo, and Windhoek. This event highlights the importance of nurturing young talent and fostering international cricket relations.



India-Pakistan T20 World Cup Ticket Demand Overwhelms Platform :-

The opening of ticket sales for the highly anticipated India-Pakistan match in the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup caused the ticketing platform to crash due to

overwhelming demand. Scheduled to be held in Colombo, the fixture is a marquee event in the tournament, drawing significant interest from cricket fans worldwide. The ticketing agent is working to resolve technical difficulties and ensure fans can secure seats for this high-profile clash. The tournament marks the return of the T20 World Cup to the subcontinent after a decade.



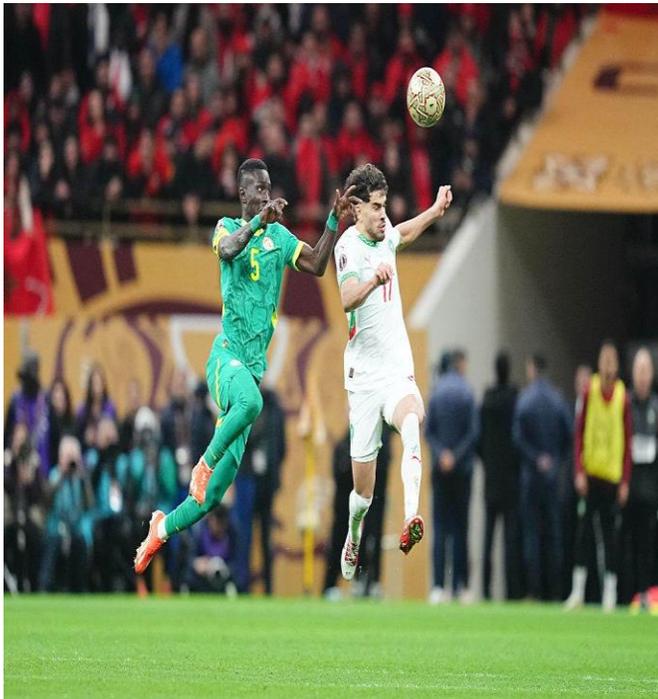
FIFA World Cup 2026: Record Ticket Demand for Global Event :-

FIFA has announced that the random selection draw phase for the 2026 World Cup tickets received over 500 million requests, highlighting the global interest in the 48-team tournament. Scheduled to be held across the United States, Mexico, and Canada, the event promises to be a significant sporting spectacle. The high demand reflects the tournament's popularity, with fans eagerly anticipating matches featuring top international teams. Successful applicants will be notified in February, with additional sales phases to follow.



Global Peloton Arrives in Pune for Inaugural Pune Grand Tour :-

International cycling teams have begun arriving in Pune for the inaugural Pune Grand Tour 2026, India's first UCI 2.2 multi-stage road race. The event, taking place from January 19-23, features 29 teams from 35 countries and spans 437 km. The race showcases Pune's diverse terrain and aims to position India as a major destination for professional cycling. The event highlights India's capability to host world-class sports competitions and promotes Pune's cultural heritage and tourism potential.



Senegal Wins Africa Cup of Nations Amid Controversial Penalty :-

Senegal claimed victory in the Africa Cup of Nations, defeating hosts Morocco 1-0 after extra time. The match was marked by controversy over a penalty awarded to Morocco, which was missed by Brahim Diaz. Senegal's Pape Gueye scored the decisive goal in extra time, securing the title for his team. The victory highlights Senegal's football prowess and adds to their recent successes in the tournament. The match underscores the intensity and unpredictability of African football, with fans celebrating Senegal's achievement.



Serum Institute CEO Poonawalla to Bid for IPL Team RCB

Adar Poonawalla, CEO of Serum Institute of India, announced his intention to bid for the IPL team Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB). The move follows United Spirits' strategic review of its investment in RCB. Poonawalla's interest in the 2025 IPL champions underlines the team's growing valuation and significance in the cricketing world, with Diageo seeking a valuation of around \$2 billion.



Ski Mountaineering Debuts at Winter Olympics in Milano Cortina :-

Ski mountaineering, the oldest form of skiing, will make its Olympic debut at the Milano Cortina Winter Games. The event will feature sprint versions of the endurance race, emphasizing speed and tactics. Originating as a military training exercise, the sport has evolved into a competitive discipline, marking a significant addition to the Winter Olympics lineup and showcasing the rich history of alpine sports.



Saina Nehwal Announces Retirement :-

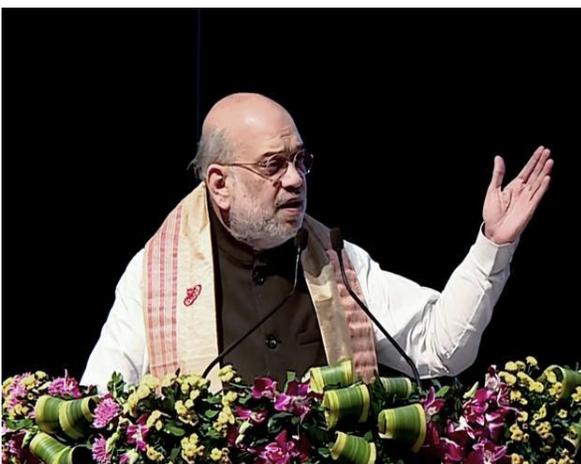
Saina Nehwal, former world No. 1 and Olympic medallist, confirmed her retirement from professional badminton. Saina's career is credited with transforming the sport in India, highlighted by her 2012 Olympic bronze and numerous international titles. Renowned athletes like PV Sindhu and Virat Kohli paid tribute, acknowledging her contributions to Indian badminton and her inspiring journey. Despite challenges in the latter half of her career due to injuries, Saina's legacy continues to inspire young athletes. Her retirement marks the end of an era for Indian badminton.



Ryan Rickelton and Tristan Stubbs Join South Africa's T20 World Cup Squad :-

South Africa's T20 World Cup squad has undergone changes with the inclusion of Ryan Rickelton and Tristan Stubbs as replacements for the injured Tony de Zorzi and Donovan Ferreira. The two players, known for their dynamic performances, are expected to strengthen the team's batting lineup. As South Africa prepares for the World Cup, these additions aim to bolster their chances in the tournament, with the team set to face challenging opponents in their pool matches.

17: State



Amit Shah Inaugurates Major Infrastructure Projects in Assam :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the Jyoti-Vishnu International Art Centre and key policing infrastructure in Assam, focusing on cultural and security

development. The new facilities include a modern Police Commissioner's Office and an Integrated Command and Control Centre. Shah emphasized Assam's progress in overcoming past unrest, highlighting efforts to preserve cultural heritage and enhance law enforcement capabilities.



President Murmu Launches #SkilltheNation AI Challenge in Odisha :-

President Droupadi Murmu launched the #SkilltheNation AI Challenge and inaugurated IGNOU Regional and Skill Centres in Odisha, focusing on preparing India's workforce for an AI-driven future. The initiative, part of the Ministry of Skill Development's efforts, aims to equip students with future-ready skills and promote AI's responsible use. Murmu emphasized AI's potential to transform India's economy and society, encouraging inclusive technological advancement. The launch aligns with the National Education Policy's goals of fostering a knowledge-driven and technologically advanced nation.



Gujarat Fast-Tracks Development of Satellite Cities :-

The Gujarat government, under Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, is accelerating the development of satellite cities as part of the Gujarat@2047 Vision. The initiative aims to create economically vibrant urban centers with metropolitan-level infrastructure, reducing pressure on major cities. Sanand, Savli, Kalol, Bardoli, and Hirasar are identified for development with integrated planning for transport, industry, and healthcare. This effort aligns with Prime Minister Modi's vision of balanced urbanization and economic growth.



Gujarat Records Increase in Rabi Crop Sowing :-

Gujarat has witnessed a significant rise in rabi crop sowing, with farmers expanding cultivation of wheat, gram, and maize. Encouraged by favorable prices, the total rabi acreage has reached 44.74 lakh hectares, with wheat dominating cultivation. Pulses, including gram, have also shown strong growth. The increase in sowing is expected to boost agricultural output, reinforcing Gujarat's role as a key contributor to India's food grain and horticultural production.



Rajiv Ranjan Singh Inaugurates Smart Green Aquaculture Facility in Telangana :-

Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh inaugurated India's first commercial-scale RAS-based Rainbow Trout Aquaculture Farm in Telangana. The facility showcases advanced aquaculture technology, enabling year-round farming of high-value species in tropical climates. This initiative marks a milestone in India's aquaculture sector, promoting sustainable practices and offering training opportunities to strengthen manpower in fisheries.



India Energy Week 2026 to Focus on Global Energy Dialogue :-

India Energy Week 2026, scheduled in Goa, will gather global energy leaders to discuss energy security, investment, and decarbonization. The event aims to strengthen cooperation on building resilient, sustainable energy systems amid rising demand and climate commitments. It will highlight India's role in the global energy landscape, showcasing legislative reforms and clean energy initiatives. Participants will engage in discussions on hydrogen economies, green finance, and sustainable fuels, reinforcing India's position as a key player in the energy sector.



Gujarat CM Launches Mobile Cancer Screening 'Asha Van' :-

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel inaugurated 'Asha Van,' a mobile cancer screening unit, in Gandhinagar. Equipped with advanced diagnostics, it aims to detect various cancers early, including lung, breast, and cervical cancer. The initiative aligns with Prime Minister Modi's vision of 'Health and Wellness for All,' focusing on rural healthcare access. The van will

serve the Bhavnagar region under the Indian Red Cross Society, contributing to cancer awareness and prevention.



PM Modi to meet German Chancellor during Gujarat visit :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will welcome German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in Ahmedabad on January 12, 2026. The visit aims to deepen the India-Germany Strategic Partnership, focusing on trade, technology, and defense cooperation. The leaders will engage in bilateral talks and participate in cultural events, strengthening diplomatic ties between the two nations.



100 Students Pledge to Become Job Creators in Ghaziabad :-

In a significant initiative, 100 students in Ghaziabad have pledged to become future job creators, participating in the Ghaziabad Entrepreneurship Mission. Launched by the Ghaziabad Management Association, this program aims to empower youth and support India's vision of Viksit Bharat. Participants will undergo training and mentorship to develop startup ideas, fostering self-reliance and entrepreneurship at the district level.



Amit Shah Lays Foundation for India's Second BSL-4 Facility :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone for a BSL-4 Bio-Containment Facility at the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre in Gandhinagar. The facility, costing ₹362 crore, will be India's second BSL-4 lab, enabling research on highly infectious viruses. Shah emphasized the project's alignment with India's One Health Mission and its role in reducing dependence on foreign laboratories. The facility will advance India's bio-safety ecosystem and support studies on zoonotic diseases.



Second nationwide dolphin survey starts in Uttar Pradesh :-

India has launched its second nationwide dolphin population survey under Project Dolphin, starting from Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh. Coordinated by the Wildlife Institute of India, the survey aims to update population figures, assess habitat conditions, and identify threats to dolphin species. The initiative highlights India's commitment to conserving its riverine ecosystems, with the survey covering major river systems including the Ganga and Brahmaputra.



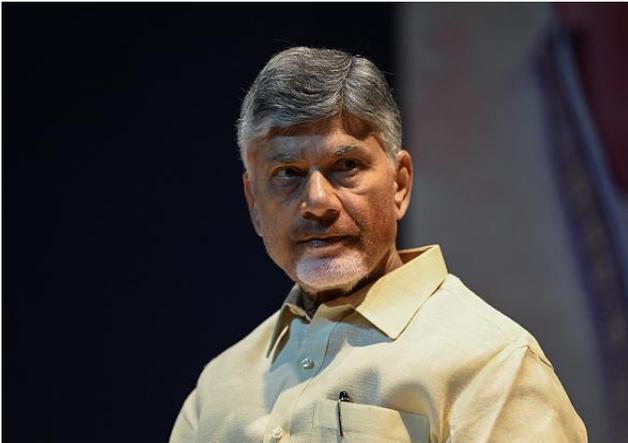
Rajkot's Atal Sarovar Becomes a Major Urban Attraction :-

Atal Sarovar in Rajkot, developed under the Rajkot Smart City project, has become a popular urban attraction, drawing over 1.4 million visitors since its opening. The lake offers a range of recreational and cultural activities, including gardens, a Ferris wheel, and boating facilities. The project, which emphasizes sustainability, reflects Gujarat's commitment to urban development and enhancing public infrastructure. Atal Sarovar serves as a model for future urban projects, showcasing the integration of environmental and recreational elements in city planning.



Punjab's Tableau Pays Tribute to Guru Tegh Bahadur :-

At the Republic Day Parade, Punjab's tableau commemorated the 350th martyrdom anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur. The display highlighted his ideals of courage, religious freedom, and compassion, symbolized by a divine hand and the phrase 'Ek Onkar.' It featured elements like Shabad Kirtan and replicas of Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib, honoring his companions Bhai Mati Dass, Bhai Sati Dass, and Bhai Dyala. This tribute underscored Guru Tegh Bahadur's enduring message of justice and tolerance, inspiring generations worldwide.



Andhra Pradesh to Develop Horticulture Clusters in 10 Districts :-

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has announced plans to transform the Rayalaseema region, Prakasam, and Markapuram districts into horticultural hubs. The initiative aims to boost horticulture production to meet global market demands, with DP World of Dubai collaborating on the project. The development is expected to mobilize private investments and leverage the Purvodaya scheme, enhancing infrastructure and irrigation in these areas.

18: Summits & Conferences



9th Siddha Day Celebrations Inaugurated by Ayush Ministry :-

The Ministry of Ayush inaugurated the 9th Siddha Day celebrations in Chennai on January 3, 2026. The event, themed 'Siddha for Global Health,' highlights the relevance of Siddha medicine in addressing global health challenges. The celebrations, attended by Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan and other dignitaries, aim to promote Siddha's integration into healthcare and celebrate its contributions to preventive care and wellness.

Panel Discussion on Buddhist Philosophy Held in New Delhi :-

A panel discussion on 'Buddhist Philosophy' was held in New Delhi, following the inauguration of the Piprahwa Relics exhibition by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The session, chaired by Prof. Siddharth Singh, explored the philosophical, ethical, and civilisational significance of Buddhism. Scholars emphasized Buddhism's role in promoting peace, ethical governance, and social harmony. The discussion underscored India's cultural heritage and the global relevance of Buddhist teachings in fostering dialogue and understanding.



IIT-Guwahati Hosts Human Capital Meeting for India AI Impact Summit 2026 :-

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, along with the IndiaAI Mission, organized a Human Capital Working Group meeting at IIT-Guwahati. The two-day event focused on education reform and workforce transition in the AI era. Discussions led by Prof. T. G. Sitharam emphasized human-centric AI adoption and lifelong learning models. The outcomes will inform the India AI Impact Summit 2026, scheduled for February in New Delhi, aiming to align national policies with global AI trends.



Third International AYUSH Conference to be Held in Dubai :-

Dubai will host the third international AYUSH conference in February 2026, focusing on evidence-based interventions in mind-body health. The event aims to promote AYUSH as a recognized healthcare system, fostering collaboration and showcasing India's traditional medicine practices to a global audience.



Prime Minister Modi to Meet German Chancellor in Ahmedabad :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in Ahmedabad on January 12, 2026, marking Merz's first official visit to India. The leaders will review progress in the India-Germany Strategic Partnership, which celebrated its 25th anniversary recently. Discussions will focus on enhancing cooperation in trade, technology, defense, and sustainable development. This visit will also feature cultural engagements, including a visit to the Sabarmati Ashram and participation in the International Kite Festival.



New Delhi World Book Fair 2026 inaugurated at Bharat Mandapam :-

The New Delhi World Book Fair 2026, a significant literary event, commenced at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Organized by the National Book Trust under the Ministry of Education, the fair aims to foster a stronger reading culture in India. This year's theme, 'Indian Military History: Valour Wisdom @ 75', highlights the contributions of India's defense forces. The event

features over 1,000 publishers and participation from 35 countries, making it a global literary gathering.



Ashwini Vaishnaw Participates in US-led Critical Minerals Meeting :-

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw attended a high-level meeting in Washington focused on securing critical minerals supply chains. Hosted by US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, the meeting addressed vulnerabilities in rare-earth elements crucial for advanced manufacturing. Participants emphasized coordinated international action to enhance supply chain resilience. India's involvement underscores its commitment to strengthening manufacturing capabilities and securing materials vital for the electronics sector, reflecting global efforts to mitigate geopolitical and economic risks.



PM Modi Inaugurates 28th CSPOC in New Delhi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) at the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan in New Delhi. The event, chaired by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, saw participation from 61 Speakers and Presiding Officers representing 42 Commonwealth countries. The conference will discuss key parliamentary issues, including the role of Speakers

in strengthening democratic institutions, the use of AI in parliamentary functioning, and enhancing public understanding of Parliament.



Intersec 2026 in Dubai Showcases Cutting-Edge Security Innovations :-

Intersec 2026, the premier global trade fair for security, safety, and fire protection, concluded in Dubai, featuring innovative technologies like firefighting robots and AI-driven solutions. The event attracted over 50,000 visitors and 1,200 exhibitors from 60 countries, highlighting advancements in cybersecurity, commercial security, and emergency response. The exhibition reinforced Dubai's position as a leader in safety innovation, addressing evolving security challenges and the role of technology in enhancing protective services.



Second Global Buddhist Summit to be held in Delhi :-

New Delhi is set to host the 2nd Global Buddhist Summit on January 24-25, 2026. Organized by the International Buddhist Confederation in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Culture, the summit will see participation from global Buddhist leaders, scholars, and policymakers. The event aims to address contemporary challenges through the lens of Buddha Dhamma, emphasizing ethical leadership, social harmony, and sustainable living. Key highlights include thematic

sessions and the introduction of NORBU, a language model based on Buddhist texts.



PM Modi addresses Bagurumba Dwhou 2026, celebrates Bodo culture :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Bagurumba Dwhou 2026 festival in Guwahati, celebrating Bodo heritage and Assam's cultural resurgence. Modi highlighted the government's efforts to promote Assamese and Bodo culture, including recognizing the Bodo language as an official language. The event reflects Assam's journey from conflict to cultural pride, with Bagurumba Dwhou serving as a tribute to the state's rich traditions.



Election Commission of India to Host Global Conference on Democracy :-

The Election Commission of India is set to host the inaugural India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management from January 21-23. The event will feature over 100 international delegates from 70 countries and focus on global electoral challenges and innovations. The conference aims to enhance dialogue and cooperation among Election Management Bodies, promoting international electoral standards. It will also launch ECINET, a digital platform for comprehensive election-related information.



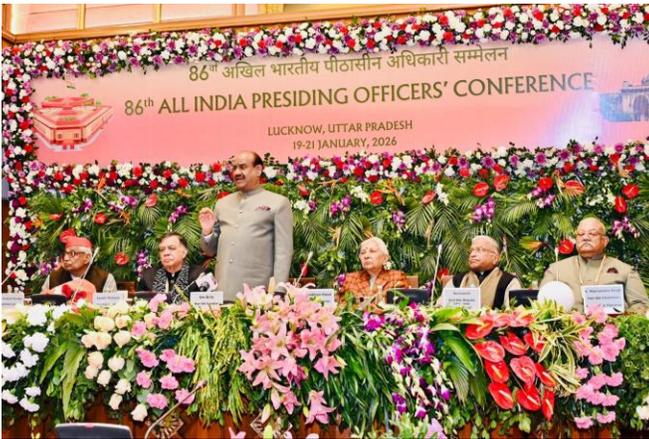
World Leaders Gather at Davos 2026 to Address Global Challenges :-

The World Economic Forum 2026 in Davos brings together global leaders to discuss key challenges, including economic growth, innovation, and resilience. India's participation is notable, with Union Ministers and CEOs promoting investment opportunities. The forum aims to foster public-private cooperation to tackle global issues amid rising geopolitical tensions. Discussions on artificial intelligence, trade, and sustainability are expected to shape policy directions.



GSI Hosts 65th CGPB Meeting to Set Geoscience Priorities :-

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) is hosting the 65th Central Geological Programming Board (CGPB) meeting in Delhi, bringing together central ministries, state governments, and industry leaders. The meeting focuses on critical mineral exploration strategies, including lithium and rare earth elements, supporting India's clean energy transition and self-reliance goals. Modern exploration technologies and collaborative data-sharing frameworks are also highlighted. The event will help align geoscientific initiatives with national development goals.



86th All India Presiding Officers' Conference Opens in Lucknow :-

The 86th All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC) commenced in Lucknow, focusing on strengthening legislative practices and democratic institutions. Inaugurated by Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, the event features discussions on technology in legislative processes and legislative accountability. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla emphasized impartial conduct and the importance of legislative credibility in an era of rapid information flow. The conference aims to enhance cooperation among democratic institutions and promote effective governance across India.



India Showcases Agri-Food Strength at Gulfood 2026 :-

India has made its largest-ever participation at Gulfood 2026, with 161 exhibitors, marking its debut as a Partner Country. The event highlights India's role as a reliable sourcing hub in the global food industry. Organized by APEDA, the Indian Pavilion showcases a variety of agri-products from 25 states, enhancing India's export prospects under the India-UAE CEPA. The initiative aims to strengthen buyer-seller linkages and boost export-oriented startups.



India and UAE to Co-Chair 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting :-

India is set to host the second India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi, co-chaired by the United Arab Emirates. This high-level diplomatic dialogue revives engagement with the Arab world after nearly a decade. The meeting focuses on strengthening cooperation across economy, energy, education, media, and culture. Participants include foreign ministers from the League of Arab States and the Secretary-General of the Arab League. This initiative aims to deepen strategic partnerships and enhance India's longstanding ties with the Arab region.



Shakti Samvaad: NCW Hosts Meeting with State Women's Commissions :-

The National Commission for Women (NCW) is organizing 'Shakti Samvaad' in New Delhi, an interactive meeting to strengthen institutional coordination with State Women's Commissions. The event focuses on enhancing mechanisms for handling complaints, refining management systems, and improving collaboration on legislative matters. Discussions include national initiatives like 'Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat' and district-level Jan Sunwai. NCW chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar emphasized the importance of shared resolve in ensuring women-centric laws reach the last woman standing.

SECTION 2

Practice Questions with Answers



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1) Which two Indian Grandmasters won bronze medals at the 2025 FIDE World Rapid Chess Championship in Doha?

- A) Viswanathan Anand and D. Harika
- B) Arjun Erigaisi and Koneru Humpy
- C) Vidit Gujrathi and P. Harikrishna
- D) Nihal Sarin and R. Vaishali

2) Which smartphone became the highest-selling in India in the first 11 months of 2025?

- A) Samsung Galaxy S25
- B) Xiaomi Redmi Note 13
- C) Apple iPhone 16
- D) OnePlus 13

3) Which country recently became the first to administer ITVISMA gene therapy for spinal muscular atrophy?

- A) United States
- B) United Kingdom
- C) India
- D) United Arab Emirates

4) What was the total value of defence procurement proposals cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) in December 2025?

- A) ₹50,000 crore
- B) ₹79,000 crore
- C) ₹1,00,000 crore
- D) ₹35,000 crore

5) In 2025, which country pledged \$2 billion in humanitarian support to the United Nations following major aid cuts?

- A) Germany
- B) United Kingdom
- C) United States
- D) Japan

6) Which country recently agreed with India to implement a biennial action plan to expand cooperation in the agriculture sector?

- A) Bangladesh

- B) Nepal
- C) Sri Lanka
- D) Bhutan

7) What is the newly tested maximum strike range of the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket (LRGR) system by DRDO?

- A) 60 km
- B) 80 km
- C) 120 km
- D) 200 km

8) According to a recent EY report, by which year is India projected to become a \$26 trillion economy?

- A) 2030
- B) 2040
- C) 2047–48
- D) 2055

9) Which ship, built using the ancient Indian stitched-ship technique, recently began its maiden voyage from Porbandar to Oman?

- A) INSV Tarini
- B) INS Vikrant
- C) INSV Kaundinya
- D) INS Sudarshini

10) India recorded its highest-ever renewable energy capacity addition in 2025. What was the amount added?

- A) 24.72 GW
- B) 34.98 GW
- C) 44.5 GW
- D) 53.99 GW

11) Which Indian state government recently approved a bill to decriminalise minor offences and promote ease of doing business?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Delhi
- C) Gujarat
- D) Tamil Nadu

12) What is the qualification date for the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Uttar Pradesh as per the latest ECI schedule?

- A) December 31, 2025
- B) January 1, 2026
- C) February 2, 2026
- D) March 1, 2026

13) Who represented India at the funeral of former Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia?

- A) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- B) President Droupadi Murmu
- C) EAM S. Jaishankar
- D) Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar

14) Which new service authorisation has TRAI recommended for regulating the sale of foreign SIM and eSIM cards for export-only IoT devices?

- A) National IoT Licence
- B) M2M Export Licence
- C) International M2M SIM Service Authorisation
- D) Global Telecom Export Licence

15) Which major procurement contract did the Indian Ministry of Defence sign in December 2025 to strengthen Army and Navy capabilities?

- A) Rafale Fighter Jets
- B) CQB Carbines and Heavy Weight Torpedoes
- C) Apache Helicopters
- D) BrahMos Missiles

16) Which platform, chaired by the Prime Minister, has been credited with fast-tracking infrastructure projects worth over ₹85 lakh crore in India during the past decade?

- A) SWAGAT
- B) PRAGATI
- C) GatiShakti
- D) PM SVANidhi

17) What is the main theme of the Government of India Calendar 2026, unveiled by Dr L Murugan?

- A) Digital India
- B) Bharat@2026: Sewa, Sushasan and Samridhhi

- C) Make in India
- D) Swachh Bharat Mission

18) Which major infrastructure project, costing ₹19,142 crore, was recently approved to connect Nashik, Solapur, and Akkalkot?

- A) Samruddhi Mahamarg
- B) Delhi-Mumbai Expressway
- C) Nashik-Solapur-Akkalkot Greenfield corridor
- D) Pune-Nashik Highway

19) Which newly developed Indian train completed its CRS high-speed trial at 180 kmph, marking a milestone in indigenous rail technology?

- A) Tejas Express
- B) Shatabdi Express
- C) Vande Bharat Sleeper Train
- D) Garib Rath

20) Who succeeded Warren Buffett as the CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, effective January 1, 2026?

- A) Ajit Jain
- B) Charlie Munger
- C) Greg Abel
- D) Ted Weschler

21) Who was appointed as the new Chief Justice of Kerala High Court in January 2026?

- A) Justice Sangam Kumar Sahoo
- B) Justice Revati Prashant Mohite Dere
- C) Justice Soumen Sen
- D) Justice Manoj Kumar Gupta

22) Which Indian Air Force officer assumed charge as Vice Chief of the Air Staff on January 1, 2026?

- A) Air Marshal Tejinder Singh
- B) Air Marshal S. Shrinivas
- C) Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor
- D) Air Marshal Narmadeshwar Tiwari

23) What is the main public benefit of NHA discontinuing the KYV process for new car FASTags from February 1, 2026?

- A) Lower toll charges
- B) No need for vehicle documents
- C) Simplified activation and fewer post-activation issues

D) Unlimited FASTag validity

24) Which two countries exchanged lists of nuclear installations for the 35th consecutive year on January 1, 2026?

- A) India and China
- B) India and Pakistan
- C) India and Bangladesh
- D) India and Sri Lanka

25) What milestone did Maruti Suzuki achieve in 2025 regarding vehicle exports?

- A) Exported 2 lakh vehicles
- B) First export of electric vehicles
- C) Exported highest-ever 3.95 lakh vehicles
- D) Became the second largest exporter

26) Which Indian state government recently accelerated the development of five satellite towns?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Gujarat
- C) Karnataka
- D) Tamil Nadu

27) Which city hosted the international flower show that set two Guinness World Records in 2026?

- A) Chennai
- B) Kolkata
- C) Ahmedabad
- D) Hyderabad

28) Which country's pharmacopoeia 2026 edition was recently launched, taking its global pharmacovigilance contribution rank to 8th position?

- A) China
- B) Japan
- C) India
- D) France

29) Which recent infrastructure project achieved its first mountain tunnel breakthrough in Maharashtra?

- A) Mumbai Metro

B) Delhi-Mumbai Expressway

C) Mumbai–Ahmedabad Bullet Train

D) Western Dedicated Freight Corridor

30) Who has been reappointed as chief coach of the Indian women's hockey team in January 2026?

- A) Wayne Lombard
- B) Matias Vila
- C) Sjoerd Marijne
- D) Dilip Tirkey

31) Who was recently deposed and captured in Venezuela following U.S. military intervention, as announced by President Donald Trump in January 2026?

- A) Juan Guaidó
- B) Maria Corina Machado
- C) Nicolas Maduro
- D) Delcy Rodriguez

32) Which app did the Election Commission of India invite public suggestions for improvement until January 10, 2026?

- A) Voter Helpline App
- B) ECINet App
- C) cVIGIL
- D) Polling Trends App

33) Which Indian queen is recognized as the first to wage an organized armed struggle against the British East India Company, recently honored by PM Modi on her birth anniversary?

- A) Rani Lakshmbai
- B) Rani Velu Nachiyar
- C) Rani Durgavati
- D) Rani Chennamma

34) What is the main focus of the Centre's recent efforts under the Blue Revolution strategy in Indian fisheries?

- A) Promoting exotic shrimp
- B) Increasing export of tuna
- C) Promoting indigenous fish species
- D) Deep-sea fishing only

35) Which city hosted the 72nd National Volleyball Tournament inaugurated by PM Modi via video conferencing in January 2026?

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Lucknow
- C) Varanasi
- D) Chennai

36) Which company recorded its highest-ever December sales with a 37% year-on-year growth in December 2025?

- A) Tata Steel
- B) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)
- C) JSW Steel
- D) Hindalco

37) What major advisory did India's Ministry of External Affairs issue regarding travel to Iran in January 2026?

- A) Travel to Iran is now visa-free
- B) Travel to Iran is mandatory for business delegations
- C) Avoid non-essential travel to Iran
- D) No restrictions on travel to Iran

38) Which milestone did Indian Railways achieve in budget utilisation by December 2025 for FY26?

- A) 50% of budget utilised
- B) 60% of budget utilised
- C) 80.54% of budget utilised
- D) 100% of budget utilised

39) What export value did India's pharmaceutical sector achieve in FY 2024–25?

- A) \$10.47 billion
- B) \$20.47 billion
- C) \$30.47 billion
- D) \$40.47 billion

40) Which new publication was released by Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in January 2026?

- A) Hindi translation of PM's speeches
- B) Urdu compilation of PM Modi's Independence Day speeches
- C) English version of National Education Policy

D) Sanskrit treatise on Indian culture

41) What is the key highlight of the PRAGATI governance mechanism, which recently completed 50 high-level reviews?

- A) Focuses only on citizen grievances
- B) Integrates project monitoring and grievance redressal on a single platform
- C) Deals exclusively with central government projects
- D) Functions as a legislative review body

42) The Human Capital Working Group meeting at IIT Guwahati, preceding the India AI Impact Summit 2026, focused mainly on:

- A) Space technology development
- B) Building future-ready human capital for AI
- C) Traditional skill training for manufacturing
- D) Expansion of rural banking

43) Which state will host the India Energy Week 2026 event from January 27 to 30?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Goa
- C) Gujarat
- D) Karnataka

44) Which Indian film, shortlisted for the 2026 Oscars International Feature Film category, received praise from Martin Scorsese?

- A) RRR
- B) Homebound
- C) Sirât
- D) Gully Boy

45) Which country's Chancellor, Friedrich Merz, is scheduled for an official visit to India in January 2026?

- A) France
- B) Germany
- C) Luxembourg
- D) Italy

46) Which upcoming bill aims to replace the Insecticides Act, 1968, to improve pesticide management for Indian farmers?

- A) Fertilizer Control Bill, 2026

- B) Farm Inputs Reform Bill, 2025
- C) Pesticides Management Bill, 2025
- D) Agricultural Safety Bill, 2026

47) What is the projected real GDP growth rate for India in FY 2025–26 according to the National Statistics Office?

- A) 5.6%
- B) 6.5%
- C) 7.4%
- D) 8.2%

48) Which expressway project in Andhra Pradesh recently set two Guinness World Records for continuous road construction?

- A) Delhi–Mumbai Expressway
- B) Bengaluru–Chennai Expressway
- C) Bengaluru–Kadapa–Vijayawada Expressway
- D) Amritsar–Jamnagar Expressway

49) Which Indian state government has launched a pilot of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) in Kendujhar district?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Odisha
- C) Uttar Pradesh
- D) Gujarat

50) What percentage of India's broad-gauge railway network was electrified by November 2025?

- A) 75%
- B) 82%
- C) 99.2%
- D) 100%

51) Which Indian laboratory recently inaugurated two apex calibration facilities to boost quality infrastructure, including solar cell and environmental standard labs?

- A) ISRO
- B) CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL)
- C) DRDO
- D) BARC

52) Which newly launched portal aims to streamline CSR partnerships for women and child welfare in India?

- A) PRAGATI
- B) PANKHUDI
- C) Shakti
- D) Saksham

53) Who was appointed as the batting coach for Sri Lanka ahead of the T20 World Cup 2026?

- A) Rahul Dravid
- B) Mahela Jayawardene
- C) Vikram Rathour
- D) Sanath Jayasuriya

54) Which new feature did OpenAI launch to help users securely connect medical records and wellness apps?

- A) ChatGPT Health
- B) MedAI
- C) HealthConnect
- D) CareBot

55) What is the main objective of the Somnath Swabhiman Parv being observed in Gujarat?

- A) Promote tourism
- B) Mark 1,000 years since the first recorded attack on Somnath Temple
- C) Celebrate a new temple renovation
- D) Launch a new pilgrimage route

56) What is the main objective of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue 2.0 held in January 2026?

- A) Promote agricultural exports
- B) Engage youth in national policy dialogue
- C) Launch a new education policy
- D) Celebrate international sports achievements

57) Which two countries agreed to extend their agriculture cooperation MoU for another five years in January 2026?

- A) India and Bangladesh
- B) India and Sri Lanka
- C) India and Fiji
- D) India and Nepal

58) What is the significance of the 70th Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar to be conferred by Indian Railways in 2025?

- A) Recognizing top-performing passengers
- B) Awarding innovative railway zones only
- C) Honoring 100 exemplary railway employees
- D) Launching a new railway route

59) What new initiative did Prasar Bharati launch in January 2026 to promote India's digital creator economy?

- A) Digital India Summit
- B) Creator's Corner on DD News
- C) National Podcast Series
- D) Online Newsroom Fellowship

60) What is the key function of the newly inaugurated National IED Data Management System (NIDMS)?

- A) Monitoring railway safety
- B) Centralizing data on IED and explosion incidents
- C) Tracking agricultural exports
- D) Managing sports events

61) What is the main benefit for India under the recently signed India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)?

- A) 100% duty-free access in India for Omani goods
- B) 100% duty-free market access in Oman for Indian exports
- C) Unrestricted movement of Indian workers to Oman
- D) No tariffs for all agricultural products

62) What is the central theme of the New Delhi World Book Fair 2026?

- A) Global Literature Exchange
- B) Indian Military History: Valour & Wisdom @ 75
- C) Children's Literature Fest
- D) Digital Publishing Innovations

63) Which high-level event did Prime Minister Narendra Modi attend on National Youth Day, 12 January 2026?

- A) Digital India Summit
- B) Somnath Swabhiman Parv

- C) Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue Finale
- D) Startup India Conclave

64) Which Indian organization recently achieved a breakthrough in hypersonic missile technology by successfully testing a scramjet engine?

- A) ISRO
- B) HAL
- C) DRDO
- D) BHEL

65) What record did Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026 recently break?

- A) Most schools visited by a minister
- B) Highest number of exam toppers
- C) Largest number of registrations, surpassing 4 crore
- D) Longest educational TV broadcast

66) Which two countries recently celebrated 75 years of diplomatic relations and held high-level talks to strengthen their strategic partnership?

- A) India and France
- B) India and Russia
- C) India and Germany
- D) India and Japan

67) Why did gold and silver prices hit record highs in January 2026?

- A) Strong US job growth
- B) Rising geopolitical tensions and weak US employment data
- C) Decrease in oil prices
- D) Increase in global supply

68) Which Indian minister is visiting Israel to enhance collaboration in fisheries and aquaculture?

- A) Narendra Singh Tomar
- B) Piyush Goyal
- C) Rajiv Ranjan Singh
- D) Amit Shah

69) Which Indian cricketer became the second-highest run scorer in international cricket during the first ODI against New Zealand in 2026?

- A) Rohit Sharma

- B) Shubman Gill
- C) Virat Kohli
- D) KL Rahul

70) Which AI chatbot, launched by Elon Musk's xAI, limited its image generation feature after global backlash?

- A) ChatGPT
- B) Gemini
- C) Grok
- D) Bard

71) What milestone did AIIMS Raipur achieve within four months of launching its robotic surgery programme in 2025?

- A) 500 robotic surgeries
- B) 100 robotic surgeries
- C) 50 robotic surgeries
- D) 1,000 robotic surgeries

72) Which state emerged as the largest electric vehicle (EV) market in India in 2025, according to Vahan Portal data?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Delhi
- C) Karnataka
- D) Uttar Pradesh

73) Which Indian government organisation successfully tested a man-portable anti-tank guided missile (MPATGM) with top-attack capability in January 2026?

- A) ISRO
- B) BHEL
- C) DRDO
- D) HAL

74) Which sector saw a record of four Guinness World Records set by NHAI in January 2026?

- A) Railways
- B) Aviation
- C) Highway construction
- D) Ports

75) What was the projected retail inflation (CPI) rate for India in December 2025?

- A) 2.6%
- B) 0.71%
- C) 1.33%
- D) 5.25%

76) Which two nations reaffirmed their strategic partnership during the 38th Strategic Dialogue in New Delhi in January 2026?

- A) India and Russia
- B) India and France
- C) India and Germany
- D) India and United Kingdom

77) Which Indian state is setting up the country's second BSL-4 Bio-Containment Facility, as announced in January 2026?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Karnataka
- C) Gujarat
- D) Andhra Pradesh

78) What significant step did India take in January 2026 to democratise artificial intelligence (AI) knowledge among its youth?

- A) Launched the 'AI for Farmers' scheme
- B) Started the National AI Literacy Program with YUVA AI FOR ALL course
- C) Mandated AI education in all colleges
- D) Signed an AI pact with Google

79) Which Indian city hosted the Steelfab 2026 event, showcasing the 'Make in India' drive in the metalworking industry?

- A) Mumbai
- B) New Delhi
- C) Sharjah
- D) Chennai

80) Which major health-focused kite festival was organised in Gujarat during Makar Sankranti 2026?

- A) Kite for Cleanliness
- B) Poshan Udaan 2026
- C) Swachh Bharat Udaan

D) Anna Suraksha Abhiyan

81) Who inaugurated the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) in January 2026?

- A) President Droupadi Murmu
- B) Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla
- C) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- D) Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar

82) Which state was recently declared the 'Ginger Capital of India' by NITI Aayog?

- A) Assam
- B) Kerala
- C) Mizoram
- D) Meghalaya

83) What is the primary focus of the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024 released by NITI Aayog?

- A) Measuring FDI inflow
- B) Assessing states' export readiness
- C) Evaluating agricultural output
- D) Tracking GST collections

84) Which Indian naval vessel recently completed a historic voyage using ancient shipbuilding techniques to Oman?

- A) INS Tarangini
- B) INSV Kaundinya
- C) INS Sudarshini
- D) INSV Mhadei

85) Which campaign was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development to promote women-led rural enterprises in January 2026?

- A) Digital India
- B) Lakhpati Didi
- C) National Entrepreneurship Campaign
- D) Stand Up India

86) Which milestone was celebrated on National StartUp Day 2026 in India?

- A) Launch of Digital India
- B) 10th anniversary of StartUp India
- C) Introduction of Atal Innovation Mission

D) 100th unicorn startup

87) Which event marked the deployment of 200 Automatic Weather Stations in four metros, as announced by the Union Minister for Science and Technology in 2026?

- A) IMD's Foundation Day
- B) National Disaster Awareness Week
- C) World Meteorological Day
- D) National Science Day

88) Who are the Chief Guests for India's 77th Republic Day celebrations in 2026?

- A) US President and UK Prime Minister
- B) European Council and European Commission Presidents
- C) ASEAN Leaders
- D) African Union Chairperson

89) Which Indian state recently achieved 'Naxal-free' status ahead of schedule, as highlighted by its Chief Minister?

- A) Jharkhand
- B) Odisha
- C) Chhattisgarh
- D) Madhya Pradesh

90) What major step has India taken to strengthen its ties with Uruguay in 2026?

- A) Signed a Free Trade Agreement
- B) Opened an embassy in Montevideo
- C) Launched a joint satellite mission
- D) Hosted Uruguay as Republic Day guest

91) Which law is set to replace India's decades-old Seed Act of 1966 to enhance seed quality and protect farmers?

- A) Seed Regulation Bill, 2025
- B) Agriculture Modernization Act, 2026
- C) Seed Act, 2026
- D) Farmers' Protection Act, 2025

92) Which city is hosting India's first-ever UCI 2.2 category multi-stage cycling race in January 2026?

- A) Chennai
- B) Pune

- C) Delhi
D) Kolkata

93) Which two countries signed a Joint Declaration of Intent on Telecommunications Cooperation in January 2026?

- A) India and France
B) India and USA
C) India and Germany
D) India and Japan

94) What historic infrastructure project did PM Modi launch in Assam in January 2026 to protect wildlife and improve connectivity?

- A) Brahmaputra River Bridge
B) Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project
C) Assam Expressway
D) Tezpur Wildlife Flyover

95) Who won the Maharashtra civic polls held on January 15, 2026, according to recent news?

- A) Congress-INC
B) BJP-Shiv Sena (NDA)
C) NCP
D) Aam Aadmi Party

96) Which city hosted the PM Vishwakarma Haat 2026, showcasing traditional Indian crafts under the PM Vishwakarma Scheme?

- A) Ahmedabad
B) New Delhi
C) Mumbai
D) Kolkata

97) What major infrastructure milestone was achieved in Malda, West Bengal, in January 2026?

- A) Inauguration of India's first Bullet Train
B) Flagging off India's first Vande Bharat Sleeper train
C) Opening of the Howrah Bridge extension
D) Launch of East-West Metro corridor

98) Which annual event's 2026 edition is themed around the 150th anniversary of 'Vande Mataram'?

- A) National Youth Festival
B) Republic Day Parade
C) Independence Day Parade
D) Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

99) What is the main objective of the PM-SETU initiative announced in January 2026?

- A) Modernizing government ITIs
B) Providing free Wi-Fi in schools
C) Launching new engineering colleges
D) Expanding digital banking services

100) Which Indian state became the first to conceptualize Gross Environmental Product alongside Gross Domestic Product?

- A) Kerala
B) Assam
C) Uttarakhand
D) Madhya Pradesh

101) Which facility did Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurate in Nagpur to boost India's self-reliance in defence manufacturing?

- A) Light Combat Aircraft Facility
B) Medium Calibre Ammunition Manufacturing Facility
C) Submarine Assembly Facility
D) Ballistic Missile Facility

102) What important global treaty entered into force in January 2026 aiming to protect 30% of the world's oceans by 2030?

- A) Paris Agreement
B) BBNJ (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction) Treaty
C) Kyoto Protocol
D) Montreal Protocol

103) Which Indian state hosted the launch of the country's first open-sea marine fish farming project in January 2026?

- A) Kerala
B) Gujarat
C) Andaman and Nicobar Islands
D) Maharashtra

104) Who arrived India on January 19, 2026, to further strengthen bilateral relations?

- A) President of France
B) Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of UAE

- C) Prime Minister of Japan
D) President of Russia

105) Which ship was flagged off from Kochi for the fifth edition of India's 'Sagar Maitri' oceanographic initiative?

- A) INS Sindhughosh
B) INS Sagardhwani
C) INS Shardul
D) INS Vikrant

106) India and UAE have set a new bilateral trade target for 2032. What is the value of this target?

- A) USD 100 billion
B) USD 150 billion
C) USD 200 billion
D) USD 250 billion

107) What is the name of the Indian Navy's 10-month transoceanic expedition starting January 20, 2026?

- A) Sagar Maitri
B) Lokayan 26
C) Vasudhaiva 26
D) Sudarshini Samudra

108) Which city hosted the Coffees of India Pavilion at the World of Coffee event in 2025?

- A) London
B) New York
C) Dubai
D) Singapore

109) Who was declared the sole candidate for BJP's National President in January 2026?

- A) J.P. Nadda
B) Amit Shah
C) Nitin Nabin
D) K. Laxman

110) Which initiative is set to begin funding industry-backed research projects by January-end 2026?

- A) Startup India Fund
B) Technology Incubation Fund
C) Research Development Innovation (RDI) Fund
D) Skill India Innovation Fund

111) What is a major focus of the Indian Navy's tableau for Republic Day Parade 2026?

- A) Space exploration
B) Women empowerment in the Army
C) India's maritime journey and technological advancement
D) Air Force modernization

112) Which rare manuscript was recently gifted to the Ram Katha Museum in Ayodhya?

- A) Bhagavad Gita manuscript
B) Rigveda manuscript
C) 233-year-old Valmiki Ramayana manuscript
D) Mahabharata manuscript

113) Which core sector industry showed the highest growth in India in December 2025?

- A) Electricity
B) Steel
C) Cement
D) Coal

114) Which Indian state signed MoUs worth Rs 14.5 lakh crore on the opening day of the 2026 World Economic Forum summit?

- A) Gujarat
B) Karnataka
C) Maharashtra
D) Tamil Nadu

115) What was a key highlight of India's clean energy achievements as shared at the 2026 World Economic Forum?

- A) 100% fossil fuel capacity
B) 267 GW non-fossil fuel capacity by Dec 2025
C) Abandoning renewable energy targets
D) No international cooperation

116) Which Indian state government recently announced a monthly financial assistance scheme for research scholars named 'Atal Vichal Agragami Assam'?

- A) West Bengal
B) Assam
C) Odisha

D) Meghalaya

117) Which summit, inaugurated by Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in January 2026, focuses on inclusive education in India?

- A) India-AI Impact Summit
- B) Inclusive Education Summit 2026
- C) India Education Forum
- D) National Literacy Conclave

118) Who became the top-ranked T20 batsman in the world after scoring 84 runs against New Zealand in January 2026?

- A) Sanju Samson
- B) Suryakumar Yadav
- C) Abhishek Sharma
- D) Rinku Singh

119) Which two Indian states recently signed an MoU to exchange best practices in Early Childhood Care and Development?

- A) Odisha and Meghalaya
- B) Assam and Tripura
- C) Kerala and Tamil Nadu
- D) Punjab and Haryana

120) At the WEF 2026, which Indian state announced a new medtech roadmap to make healthcare more affordable?

- A) Tamil Nadu
- B) Gujarat
- C) Maharashtra
- D) Karnataka

121) Which missile system will DRDO showcase at the 77th Republic Day Parade, highlighting India's indigenous hypersonic capability?

- A) BrahMos-II
- B) LR-AShM
- C) Nag Missile
- D) Agni VI

122) What is a key feature of the Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2026, making it the largest theatre festival globally?

- A) Only Indian languages featured

B) Held in one city only

C) Spans all seven continents

D) Restricted to classical plays

123) Which new technology will Delhi Police deploy for the first time during Republic Day 2026 to enhance security?

- A) Drone surveillance
- B) AI-enabled smart glasses
- C) Biometric entry gates
- D) RFID tagging

124) Which sectors were newly brought under India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) in January 2026?

- A) Automobiles and Cement
- B) Textiles and Petrochemicals
- C) Telecom and IT
- D) Banking and Insurance

125) Under which scheme did the Centre sanction over 10,000 km of rural roads in January 2026?

- A) PMGSY-IV
- B) Bharatmala
- C) AMRUT
- D) Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

126) What is the name of the humanoid robot deployed by Indian Railways at Visakhapatnam Railway Station in January 2026?

- A) AI Suraksha
- B) ASC ARJUN
- C) Vigyan Bot
- D) RPF Guard

127) Which event was celebrated as 'Parakram Diwas' in India?

- A) Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi
- B) Birth anniversary of Sardar Patel
- C) Birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
- D) Republic Day

128) Who among the following confirmed her retirement from professional badminton in January 2026?

- A) PV Sindhu

- B) Ashwini Ponnappa
- C) Saina Nehwal
- D) Carolina Marin

129) What is the new initiative launched at Rashtrapati Bhavan to preserve India's classical language heritage?

- A) Bharat Pustak Bhavan
- B) Sanskrit Kutir
- C) Granth Kutir
- D) Veda Mandap

130) Which two Indian states clinched gold in long-track ice skating at the Khelo India Winter Games 2026?

- A) Ladakh and Haryana
- B) Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh
- C) Kerala and Punjab
- D) Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

131) Which railway station became the first in India to deploy the indigenously developed humanoid robot 'ASC ARJUN' for passenger safety and service?

- A) Mumbai Central
- B) Chennai Central
- C) Visakhapatnam
- D) Howrah

132) The newly inaugurated 'Granth Kutir' at Rashtrapati Bhavan showcases manuscripts in how many classical Indian languages as of January 2026?

- A) 6
- B) 8
- C) 11
- D) 14

133) Which country is Gulfood, the world's largest annual food and beverage event, hosting as a partner country for the first time in 2026?

- A) China
- B) India
- C) USA
- D) Brazil

134) Which Indian city emerged as a model for sustainable urban development with its Atal Sarovar project attracting over 1.4 million visitors since May 2024?

- A) Surat
- B) Rajkot
- C) Vadodara
- D) Ahmedabad

135) Which international border crossing, vital for Gaza's humanitarian access, was expected to reopen in late January 2026?

- A) Kerem Shalom
- B) Rafah
- C) Erez
- D) Allenby

136) Which newly formed district in Gujarat hosted the state-level 77th Republic Day celebrations in 2026?

- A) Chikhli
- B) Vav-Tharad
- C) Makarba
- D) Navsari

137) Who approved the conferment of 131 Padma Awards, including five Padma Vibhushans, on the eve of Republic Day 2026?

- A) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- B) Home Minister Amit Shah
- C) President Droupadi Murmu
- D) Vice President Radhakrishnan

138) Which major aviation event, set to be held in Hyderabad in January 2026, aims to showcase India's rise as a global aviation hub?

- A) India Aviation Expo
- B) Wings India 2026
- C) Aero India Summit
- D) Global Air Show

139) What theme did the 2026 National Voters' Day celebrations in India focus on?

- A) Empowering Women Voters

- B) My India, My Vote
- C) Vote for Progress
- D) Youth for Democracy

140) Which Indian state celebrated its Statehood Day on January 25, 2026, marking its formation as the 18th state of the Indian Union?

- A) Uttarakhand
- B) Himachal Pradesh
- C) Jharkhand
- D) Chhattisgarh

141) Who was conferred the Ashoka Chakra during the 77th Republic Day celebrations in 2026?

- A) Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair
- B) Squadron Leader Abhinandan Varthaman
- C) Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla
- D) Colonel Santosh Babu

142) At Gulfood 2026, which organization led India's participation as the partner country?

- A) FSSAI
- B) NABARD
- C) APEDA
- D) NITI Aayog

143) Which newly raised battalion made its first appearance at the 77th Republic Day Parade?

- A) Naga Regiment
- B) Bhairav Battalion
- C) Rashtriya Rifles
- D) Dogra Regiment

144) Which key international summit was scheduled in India immediately after the 2026 Republic Day celebrations?

- A) G20 Leaders' Summit
- B) 16th EU-India Summit
- C) BRICS Summit
- D) ASEAN-India Summit

145) What was the main theme of the Ministry of Ayush tableau at the 2026 Republic Day Parade?

- A) Digital India
- B) Ayush ka Tantra, Swasthya ka Mantra
- C) Swachh Bharat

- D) Make in India

146) Which state announced the Namolaxmi Scheme to provide Rs 1,250 crore in financial aid to over 12 lakh girls for secondary and higher secondary education in 2025-26?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Gujarat
- C) Karnataka
- D) Rajasthan

147) Which major academic achievement resulted from the CCRAS-Central Sanskrit University workshop in Kerala in January 2026?

- A) Digitization of modern medical textbooks
- B) Transliteration of five rare Ayurvedic manuscripts for research
- C) Establishment of a new Ayurveda hospital
- D) Launching a Yoga teacher training program

148) Which sector saw a 54% year-on-year growth in gross leasing volume in India during 2025, reaching a three-year high?

- A) Healthcare
- B) Retail
- C) Agriculture
- D) IT services

149) What milestone was achieved at the 16th India-EU Summit in January 2026?

- A) Signing of a trilateral agreement with China
- B) Conclusion of the largest FTA in India's history
- C) Formation of a single currency between India and EU
- D) Launch of a military alliance

150) Which Indian institution developed a predictive framework to identify 492 potential glacial lake locations in the Eastern Himalayas?

- A) IIT Bombay
- B) IISc Bangalore
- C) IIT Guwahati
- D) NIIT Rourkela

ANSWERS

1) Correct Answer: B

Arjun Erigaisi and Koneru Humpy won bronze medals at the 2025 FIDE World Rapid Chess Championship in Doha. Arjun became only the second Indian male to podium at this event after Anand, while Humpy added another medal to her career tally. Their achievements highlight India's growing strength in world chess. Success on such a stage inspires Indian youth and boosts India's international sporting reputation.

2) Correct Answer: C

Apple's iPhone 16 was the highest-selling smartphone in India during the first 11 months of 2025. Apple sold around 6.5 million units, outpacing Android rivals. The shift reflects growing demand for premium devices. This trend indicates India's rising consumer spending and Apple's expanding presence in the Indian market.

3) Correct Answer: D

Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Khalifa Medical City in the UAE became the first to administer ITVISMA gene therapy on December 28, 2025. ITVISMA is a breakthrough one-time gene therapy for spinal muscular atrophy. The UAE's approval and quick implementation mark a milestone in global precision medicine. Such advances can inspire similar progress in India's biotech and healthcare innovation.

4) Correct Answer: B

The DAC approved defence procurement proposals worth about ₹79,000 crore in December 2025. These clearances cover vital equipment for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Such large-scale approvals strengthen India's defence preparedness. Investing in modern systems enhances national security and indigenisation.

5) Correct Answer: C

The United States pledged \$2 billion in humanitarian aid to the UN in December 2025. This followed a sharp reduction in US overall aid that year. The pledge aims to address a global funding crunch for humanitarian needs. US support is crucial for the UN's global relief operations, including those affecting India's region.

6) Correct Answer: B

Nepal and India agreed to formulate and implement a biennial action plan to advance agricultural cooperation as of December 29, 2025. This was decided during the ninth meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Agriculture Working Group. The plan includes collaboration in universities, research, livestock, and technology transfer.

7) Correct Answer: C

DRDO successfully conducted the maiden flight test of the Pinaka LRGR with a maximum strike range of 120 km on December 29, 2025. The test marked a major milestone in Indian indigenous defense capability. The LRGR enhances the Indian Army's artillery reach and precision. This development is significant as it boosts India's self-reliance and export potential in the defense sector.

8) Correct Answer: C

India is projected to become a \$26 trillion economy by 2047-48, as per the EY report. The report highlights India's robust growth trajectory and the potential to become the world's third-largest economy by 2030. Key drivers include IT services, a digital economy, and policy reforms.

9) Correct Answer: C

INSV Kaundinya, constructed with the traditional Indian stitched-ship method, began its maiden voyage from Porbandar to Muscat, Oman, on December 29, 2025. The ship showcases India's maritime heritage and ancient navigation skills. Its journey retraces historical trade routes with West Asia.

10) Correct Answer: C

In 2025, India added a record 44.5 GW of renewable energy capacity, nearly double the previous year. Solar power led this expansion, with total installed renewable capacity reaching 253.96 GW by November 2025. This achievement puts India ahead in meeting its Paris Agreement targets.

11) Correct Answer: B

The Delhi Cabinet cleared the Delhi Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026. The bill seeks to decriminalise minor offences and simplify compliance. This move aligns with central government reforms and aims to reduce court burdens. It is significant for administrative efficiency and ease of business in the National Capital.

12) Correct Answer: B

The ECI has set January 1, 2026 as the qualification date for the Special Intensive Revision in Uttar Pradesh. This is part of a nationwide exercise to update electoral rolls. The process ensures accurate and up-to-date voter lists before upcoming elections.

13) Correct Answer: C

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar attended Khaleda Zia's funeral in Dhaka on behalf of India. Khaleda Zia was a key figure in Bangladesh and contributed to India-Bangladesh ties. The official representation underscores the importance of diplomatic relations. Such gestures reinforce regional cooperation and goodwill.

14) Correct Answer: C

TRAI proposed the 'International M2M SIM Service Authorisation' for export-only IoT and M2M devices. This recommendation addresses regulatory gaps affecting Indian exporters. The authorisation enables seamless global device operations and supports India's manufacturing competitiveness. It is a crucial step for India's position in global IoT markets.

15) Correct Answer: B

The Ministry of Defence signed contracts for over 4.25 lakh Close Quarter Battle (CQB) Carbines and 48 Heavy Weight Torpedoes. This procurement is aimed at upgrading Army and Navy operational abilities. It reflects the focus on indigenisation and modernisation. Such contracts boost defence preparedness and domestic industry.

16) Correct Answer: B

PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) has fast-tracked projects worth over ₹85 lakh crore in the last ten years. Chaired by PM Modi, it accelerates large-scale infrastructure and governance

outcomes. Since 2014, 377 projects have been reviewed, resolving nearly 94% of identified issues.

17) Correct Answer: B

The Government of India Calendar 2026 carries the theme 'Bharat@2026: Sewa, Sushasan and Samridhi'. This reflects India's focus on service, good governance, and inclusive prosperity. The Calendar serves as a public communication tool, highlighting national confidence and key reforms. It aligns with the vision of a developed India by 2047.

18) Correct Answer: C

The Cabinet approved the Nashik-Solapur-Akkalkot six-lane Greenfield corridor at a cost of ₹19,142 crore. This 374-km project aims to significantly reduce travel time and enhance logistics efficiency. It is part of the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, boosting regional connectivity and economic development in Maharashtra.

19) Correct Answer: C

The Vande Bharat Sleeper Train successfully completed its CRS high-speed trial at 180 kmph. This indigenously developed train features advanced safety, comfort, and technology, supporting India's Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative. Its successful trial paves the way for modern, comfortable overnight journeys on Indian Railways.

20) Correct Answer: C

Greg Abel became CEO of Berkshire Hathaway on January 1, 2026, succeeding Warren Buffett. Abel, currently vice chairman, has overseen non-insurance operations and is regarded as Buffett's chosen successor. This transition marks the end of Buffett's six-decade legendary leadership, ensuring continuity in the company's value-investing approach.

21) Correct Answer: C

Justice Soumen Sen has been transferred as the Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court as per the January 2026 notification. The decision was made by the President on the recommendation of the Supreme Court Collegium. This follows routine elevations and transfers to strengthen the judiciary.

22) Correct Answer: C

Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor took over as Vice Chief of the Air Staff on January 1, 2026. He is a decorated officer with over 39 years of service and extensive flying and command experience. His appointment ensures operational continuity at the highest level of the Indian Air Force.

23) Correct Answer: C

The NHAI has dropped the Know Your Vehicle (KYV) requirement for new car FASTag issuances to simplify activation and eliminate follow-up hassles. This change takes effect from February 1, 2026. Now, only upfront vehicle verification is needed, making the process more user-friendly.

24) Correct Answer: B

India and Pakistan exchanged lists of nuclear installations on January 1, 2026, marking the 35th consecutive annual exchange under their 1988 agreement. This confidence-building measure reduces the risk of attacks on nuclear facilities. Such exchanges are essential for nuclear safety and regional stability in South Asia.

25) Correct Answer: C

Maruti Suzuki exported its highest-ever 3.95 lakh vehicles in 2025, a 21% rise from the previous year. This achievement cements its position as India's top car exporter for the fifth consecutive year. It highlights India's growing strength in automobile manufacturing and export competitiveness globally.

26) Correct Answer: B

Gujarat's government has fast-tracked the creation of five satellite towns as part of the Gujarat@2047 Vision. This initiative aims to develop Sanand, Savli, Kalol, Bardoli, and Hirasar as economic hubs. The master plans for these cities are being prepared to reduce pressure on major urban centers.

27) Correct Answer: C

The Ahmedabad International Flower Show 2026 achieved two Guinness World Records for the largest flower mandala and the largest flower portrait of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. This annual event is recognized for its creativity, sustainability, and global appeal. Such achievements showcase India's cultural heritage and boost tourism and city branding.

28) Correct Answer: C

India launched the 10th edition of its Pharmacopoeia in January 2026. The country now ranks 8th globally in WHO pharmacovigilance contributions. The new edition includes expanded coverage of critical medicines and blood component standards.

29) Correct Answer: C

The Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (Bullet Train) project achieved its first mountain tunnel breakthrough in Palghar, Maharashtra, in January 2026. The 1.5 km tunnel is a milestone in India's first bullet train corridor. This project will reduce Mumbai-Ahmedabad travel time and foster regional economic integration.

30) Correct Answer: C

Sjoerd Marijne returned as chief coach of the Indian women's hockey team in January 2026. He previously led the team to their first Olympic semifinals. His renewed appointment aims to prepare the squad for upcoming World Cup qualifiers and major tournaments, reflecting India's focus on global sports excellence.

31) Correct Answer: C

Nicolas Maduro, the long-serving President of Venezuela, was deposed and captured after a U.S. strike in January 2026. The operation, announced by President Trump, marked the first direct U.S. intervention in Latin America since Panama in 1989. Maduro was accused of running a 'narco-state' and rigging elections.

32) Correct Answer: B

The ECINet App is the unified digital platform for voter services and election information. The ECI invited feedback on this app until January 10, 2026, to enhance its features based on citizen input. The ECINet App integrates nearly 40 previous applications, improving efficiency and transparency.

33) Correct Answer: B

Rani Velu Nachiyar (1730–1796), queen of Sivaganga, was the first Indian ruler to organize an armed revolt against the British. Her leadership and military innovation set a precedent for future freedom fighters. Honoring her highlights the role of women in India's early resistance movements.

34) Correct Answer: C

The Centre is emphasizing the promotion of indigenous fish species in aquaculture to boost sustainability and biodiversity. This includes supporting native species like fringed-lipped carp and Asian seabass. Such initiatives help preserve aquatic ecosystems and enhance rural livelihoods.

35) Correct Answer: C

Varanasi was the venue for the 72nd National Volleyball Tournament, inaugurated on January 4, 2026. Over 1,000 players from across India participated. Hosting such national events in Varanasi boosts the city's profile as a sports hub and encourages athletic development.

36) Correct Answer: B

SAIL achieved its highest-ever December sales in 2025, posting a 37% year-on-year growth. The sales rose to 2.1 million tonnes, highlighting strong domestic and export performance. This record showcases SAIL's robust market position and operational efficiency.

37) Correct Answer: C

On January 5, 2026, the MEA advised Indian citizens to avoid non-essential travel to Iran. This was due to ongoing unrest and protests in Iran leading to security concerns. The advisory aims to ensure the safety of Indian nationals. Such advisories are crucial for protecting citizens abroad amid geopolitical instability.

38) Correct Answer: C

Indian Railways utilised 80.54% of its Gross Budgetary Support by December 2025. This reflects increased expenditure on safety, infrastructure, and passenger amenities. The high utilisation rate indicates effective fund management and project implementation.

39) Correct Answer: C

India's pharmaceutical exports reached \$30.47 billion in FY 2024–25. This figure represents a 9.4% year-on-year growth, reflecting robust global demand. The sector is the world's third-largest by volume, underscoring India's role as a global pharmacy.

40) Correct Answer: B

Dharmendra Pradhan released 'Khutbat-e-Modi: Lal Qila Ki Faseel Se', an Urdu compilation of PM Modi's Independence Day speeches. The book was published by

NCPUL to promote linguistic inclusivity. It makes national addresses accessible to Urdu-speaking citizens.

41) Correct Answer: B

PRAGATI integrates project monitoring, scheme implementation, and grievance redressal on a unified digital platform. Launched in 2015, it aims to fast-track infrastructure and welfare schemes by improving coordination across government levels. Over 3,300 projects worth ₹85 lakh crore have been monitored.

42) Correct Answer: B

The meeting at IIT Guwahati centered on building future-ready human capital in the age of artificial intelligence. It emphasized lifelong learning, inclusive AI adoption, and skilling for the cognitive age. The outcomes will inform national policy and the upcoming India AI Impact Summit. This is crucial for India's technological advancement and inclusive growth.

43) Correct Answer: B

India Energy Week 2026 will take place in Goa from January 27-30. The event gathers global leaders to discuss energy security, investment, and decarbonisation. Goa's hosting highlights India's prominent role in shaping the global energy landscape. Such events drive policy, investment, and innovation in India's energy sector.

44) Correct Answer: B

'Homebound' is the Indian entry shortlisted for the 2026 Oscars in the International Feature Film category. The film was praised by Martin Scorsese for its moving story of friendship and dignity. Its selection showcases India's cinematic talent on a global platform, enhancing the nation's cultural influence.

45) Correct Answer: B

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz will visit India on January 12-13, 2026. This visit marks the 25th anniversary of the India-Germany Strategic Partnership. Discussions will focus on trade, technology, and sustainable development, furthering bilateral cooperation between two major economies.

46) Correct Answer: C

The Pesticides Management Bill, 2025, is set to replace the Insecticides Act, 1968. It seeks to introduce reforms

for transparency, quality assurance, and stricter penalties in the pesticide sector. The government has invited public suggestions until February 4, 2026.

47) Correct Answer: C

India's real GDP growth rate is projected at 7.4% for FY 2025–26 by the National Statistics Office. This projection is an increase from 6.5% in FY 2024–25, reflecting strong momentum in the services and secondary sectors. These figures confirm India's position as the world's fastest-growing major economy.

48) Correct Answer: C

The Bengaluru–Kadapa–Vijayawada Expressway achieved two Guinness World Records by laying 28.95 lane-kilometres and 10,675 MT of bituminous concrete in 24 hours. Announced on January 7, 2026, this feat showcases India's advancing infrastructure capabilities.

49) Correct Answer: B

Odisha has launched the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission as a pilot in Kendujhar district. This digital health initiative aims to streamline appointments, referrals, and patient data through digital platforms. The move is expected to improve healthcare efficiency and access.

50) Correct Answer: C

By November 2025, 99.2% of India's broad-gauge railway network had been electrified. This achievement is part of the Mission 100% Electrification drive. It reduces carbon emissions, lowers costs, and enhances energy security.

51) Correct Answer: B

CSIR-NPL launched the National Primary Standard Facility for Solar Cell Calibration and the National Environmental Standard Laboratory. These facilities support India's measurement, certification, and quality assurance, crucial for solar manufacturing and environmental monitoring.

52) Correct Answer: B

PANKHUDI is a digital portal launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development on January 8, 2026. It coordinates CSR and partnership efforts in nutrition, health, and women's empowerment. By enhancing transparency and participation, it supports flagship missions and improves service delivery nationwide.

53) Correct Answer: C

Vikram Rathour, former batting coach of India, was appointed as Sri Lanka's batting coach for the T20 World Cup 2026. His experience with India, including their 2024 T20 World Cup win, is expected to strengthen Sri Lanka's preparations for the global tournament.

54) Correct Answer: A

OpenAI launched ChatGPT Health, enabling secure integration of medical records and wellness apps. Designed with input from over 260 physicians, it helps users understand and manage health information, reflecting increasing demand for AI-driven health support globally.

55) Correct Answer: B

The Somnath Swabhiman Parv commemorates 1,000 years since the first attack on the Somnath Temple. It highlights the temple's resilience and the enduring nature of Sanatan culture, emphasizing India's spiritual and cultural heritage.

56) Correct Answer: B

The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue 2.0, held from January 10–12, 2026, aims to engage youth leaders from across India in dialogue with PM Modi. The event coincides with National Youth Day, commemorating Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary.

57) Correct Answer: C

On January 10, 2026, India and Fiji agreed to extend their Memorandum of Understanding on agriculture cooperation for five more years. The agreement includes forming a Joint Working Group, enhancing research, technology exchange, and capacity building.

58) Correct Answer: C

The 70th Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar, to be awarded in January 2025, honors 100 railway employees for outstanding service. The award acknowledges innovation, courage, operational excellence, and revenue protection in Indian Railways.

59) Correct Answer: B

On January 9, 2026, Prasar Bharati launched 'Creator's Corner' on DD News to spotlight digital talent across India. This initiative aims to provide emerging creators with a national platform and aligns with reforms in broadcasting.

60) Correct Answer: B

In January 2026, Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated NIDMS to centralize and analyze data on IEDs and explosions. The system integrates datasets for investigation and counter-terror strategies, accessible to various security agencies.

61) Correct Answer: B

India secured 100% duty-free market access in Oman for 98.08% of tariff lines. This provides a major boost for Indian exports across key sectors. The concessions are effective from the first day of implementation. This is significant as it enhances India's export competitiveness and deepens bilateral economic ties.

62) Correct Answer: B

The 2026 NDWBF's theme is 'Indian Military History: Valour & Wisdom @ 75.' This theme commemorates 75 years of India's armed forces and their contributions. It brings focus to significant historical milestones and defence narratives. Such a theme highlights India's military legacy and educates the public on national defence.

63) Correct Answer: C

On January 12, 2026, PM Modi attended the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue Finale. This event marked National Youth Day and Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary. The dialogue brought together 3,000 young leaders for direct interaction with the PM.

64) Correct Answer: C

DRDO conducted a successful long-duration test of a scramjet engine in January 2026. The test lasted over 12 minutes, marking a significant step in India's hypersonic missile programme. This positions India among a select group with advanced hypersonic capabilities.

65) Correct Answer: C

Pariksha Pe Charcha 2026 surpassed 4 crore registrations, breaking its previous Guinness World Record. The programme is led by the PM to promote stress-free exams. It includes students, parents, and teachers nationwide.

66) Correct Answer: C

India and Germany marked 75 years of diplomatic relations in January 2026. PM Modi and German

Chancellor Friedrich Merz held delegation-level talks to deepen cooperation across sectors. The meeting focused on trade, technology, education, and green development. This partnership is significant for India's global alliances and technological growth.

67) Correct Answer: B

Gold and silver surged to record highs due to rising geopolitical risks and weaker-than-expected US employment data in January 2026. These factors increased safe-haven demand amid uncertainty. This trend shows how global events impact commodity markets.

68) Correct Answer: C

Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Union Minister of Fisheries, is visiting Israel from January 13–15, 2026. The visit aims to reinforce India-Israel ties in fisheries and aquaculture. Discussions will focus on sustainable management and advanced technologies. Such cooperation supports India's blue economy and food security.

69) Correct Answer: C

Virat Kohli became the second-highest run scorer across all formats, surpassing Kumar Sangakkara, during the first ODI against New Zealand in January 2026. He scored 93 runs, reaching 28,068 career runs. Kohli's achievement underscores his consistency and importance in Indian cricket history.

70) Correct Answer: C

Grok, the AI chatbot from Elon Musk's xAI, restricted image generation in January 2026 due to misuse for producing sexualized content. The move followed global criticism and regulatory scrutiny. This incident highlights ongoing challenges in AI content moderation and digital safety worldwide.

71) Correct Answer: B

AIIMS Raipur completed 100 robotic-assisted surgeries in just four months after launching the programme in August 2025. This milestone reflects rapid adoption of advanced technology in Central India's healthcare sector. The achievement demonstrates improved care quality and access to minimally invasive surgeries.

72) Correct Answer: D

Uttar Pradesh led the nation with over 4 lakh EV units sold in 2025, accounting for 18% of India's total EV sales. This was reported by government Vahan Portal data. The state's leadership underscores strong adoption of green mobility.

73) Correct Answer: C

DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) successfully tested the MPATGM with top-attack capability on January 11, 2026. The missile features advanced technologies and is developed indigenously. This marks a step towards its induction into the Indian Army.

74) Correct Answer: C

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) set four Guinness World Records in highway construction on the Bengaluru–Kadapa–Vijayawada corridor in January 2026. Achievements included longest continuous bituminous laying and highest quantity paved. These records demonstrate India's growing infrastructure capabilities, essential for economic growth and connectivity.

75) Correct Answer: C

India's retail inflation (CPI) stood at 1.33% in December 2025. This was a slight increase from 0.71% in November. The rise was driven by certain food and personal care items. Low inflation supports economic stability and allows the Reserve Bank of India to support growth with accommodative policy.

76) Correct Answer: B

India and France reaffirmed their strategic partnership at the 38th Strategic Dialogue held in New Delhi on January 13, 2026. The dialogue covered security, defence, technology, and civil nuclear cooperation. It included discussions on Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives. This partnership is significant for advancing peace and stability in the global security environment.

77) Correct Answer: C

Gujarat is establishing India's second BSL-4 Bio-Containment Facility at the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre in Gandhinagar, with the foundation stone laid by Home Minister Amit Shah in January 2026.

This facility will boost India's health security and reduce dependence on foreign labs.

78) Correct Answer: B

On National Youth Day 2026, the government launched the National AI Literacy Program and its flagship course YUVA AI FOR ALL. This initiative aims to make AI literacy accessible as a core skill for youth, available in 11 Indian languages.

79) Correct Answer: C

SteelFab 2026 was held at the Sharjah Expo Centre in the UAE from January 12–15, 2026, with strong Indian participation. The India Pavilion highlighted the country's growing capabilities in steel fabrication and metalworking. The event boosts India's manufacturing exports and strengthens its global industrial footprint.

80) Correct Answer: B

Gujarat organised 'Poshan Udaan 2026' during Makar Sankranti to spread awareness about nutrition and health. The initiative used kite festivals to involve communities in promoting balanced diets and hygiene. It reflects the state's innovative approach to public health and nutrition awareness.

81) Correct Answer: C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 28th CSPOC on January 15, 2026. The event was held at the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan in Parliament House, New Delhi. It brought together delegates from 42 Commonwealth countries. This reflects India's growing stature in global parliamentary dialogue and democratic cooperation.

82) Correct Answer: C

Mizoram was officially declared as the 'Ginger Capital of India' by NITI Aayog in January 2026. The recognition is due to the state's significant increase in ginger production and high-quality output. Over 3.38 crore kg of ginger was procured in 2025. This designation boosts Mizoram's reputation in India's agricultural sector.

83) Correct Answer: B

The Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024, released by NITI Aayog, assesses the export readiness of Indian states and UTs. It evaluates export infrastructure, policy, and

performance. The Index helps identify gaps and strengths at the subnational level.

84) Correct Answer: B

INSV Kaundinya completed its maiden voyage from Porbandar, Gujarat to Muscat, Oman in January 2026. The vessel was built using ancient stitched-plank construction without nails or metal, reviving a 2,000-year-old tradition. This voyage celebrates India-Oman maritime heritage and showcases indigenous shipbuilding skills.

85) Correct Answer: C

The National Entrepreneurship Campaign was launched on January 12, 2026, by the Ministry of Rural Development. It aims to train 50,000 community cadres and provide entrepreneurship training to 50 lakh SHG women. The initiative supports the Lakhpati Didi mission.

86) Correct Answer: B

The 10th anniversary of StartUp India was celebrated on National StartUp Day 2026. The initiative began in 2016 to foster innovation and entrepreneurship. Over 2,00,000 startups have been recognized in this decade. This milestone highlights India's emergence as a leading global hub for startups and job creation.

87) Correct Answer: A

The announcement was made during IMD's 151st Foundation Day in January 2026. This involves installing 200 Automatic Weather Stations across Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Pune. The project aims to improve real-time weather forecasting and disaster preparedness.

88) Correct Answer: B

European Council President Antonio Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen are the Chief Guests for India's 77th Republic Day. Their visit includes co-chairing the India-EU Summit. This reflects growing India-EU strategic ties.

89) Correct Answer: D

Madhya Pradesh was declared 'Naxal-free' ahead of schedule by CM Mohan Yadav in January 2026. The achievement was shared during his meeting with PM Modi. This marks a significant step towards internal security and stability.

90) Correct Answer: B

India announced it would open an embassy in Montevideo, Uruguay, in June 2026. This move was welcomed by Uruguay's ambassador and marks a new phase in 75 years of bilateral relations. Establishing a direct diplomatic presence boosts cooperation.

91) Correct Answer: C

The Seed Act, 2026 is proposed to replace the Seed Act of 1966. It aims to ensure seed quality, traceability, and eliminate fake seeds through strict regulations. This includes QR-code-based tracking and heavy penalties for violations.

92) Correct Answer: B

Pune is hosting the Pune Grand Tour 2026, India's first UCI 2.2 category multi-stage road race. The event will feature 171 elite riders from 29 teams across 35 countries and marks a milestone for Indian sports tourism. This elevates India's global standing in professional cycling.

93) Correct Answer: C

India and Germany signed the Joint Declaration of Intent on Telecommunications Cooperation during Chancellor Friedrich Merz's visit in January 2026. The pact aims to deepen collaboration in telecom and digital technologies.

94) Correct Answer: B

The Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project, launched by PM Modi in January 2026, features a 35-km elevated road through Kaziranga National Park. It allows safe animal movement and boosts connectivity. This project is crucial for conservation and regional development in Assam.

95) Correct Answer: B

The NDA, led by BJP-Shiv Sena, achieved a decisive victory in the Maharashtra civic polls on January 15, 2026. This result reflects public support for the NDA's development-oriented governance. It further consolidates the alliance's political standing in the state.

96) Correct Answer: B

The PM Vishwakarma Haat 2026 was held at Dilli Haat, INA, New Delhi. The event celebrated traditional crafts and artisans from across India. Over 117 artisans participated, reflecting a pan-India representation. This

exhibition supports the government's commitment to empowering artisans and preserving craftsmanship.

97) Correct Answer: B

India's first Vande Bharat Sleeper train was flagged off from Malda, West Bengal, in January 2026. This modern train connects Howrah and Guwahati, improving long-distance travel. The sleeper train is part of Indian Railways' modernization and the 'Make in India' initiative.

98) Correct Answer: B

The 2026 Republic Day Parade at Kartavya Path is themed around the 150th anniversary of 'Vande Mataram.' The event will feature battle array displays and special tableaux. This theme honors Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's composition.

99) Correct Answer: A

PM-SETU aims to modernize 1,000 government ITIs across India using a hub-and-spoke model. The initiative focuses on advanced training infrastructure and industry partnerships. Announced as part of the Viksit Bharat vision, it targets a future-ready workforce.

100) Correct Answer: C

Uttarakhand is the first Indian state to conceptualize Gross Environmental Product (GEP) alongside GDP. This innovative step highlights the state's commitment to ecological responsibility. GEP measures ecological health and sustainability, complementing economic indicators.

101) Correct Answer: B

Rajnath Singh inaugurated the Medium Calibre Ammunition Manufacturing Facility in Nagpur on January 18, 2026. This facility will produce 30 mm ammunition crucial for the Indian Army and Navy. The event marks a significant step towards Aatmanirbharta and increased private sector participation in defence manufacturing.

102) Correct Answer: B

The UN's BBNJ (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction) Treaty entered into force on January 18, 2026. It establishes a legal framework to create marine protected areas and targets 30% ocean protection by 2030. This is a milestone for global ocean conservation, impacting international fisheries, biodiversity, and India's maritime interests.

103) Correct Answer: C

India's first open-sea marine fish farming project was launched in the Andaman Sea, near North Bay, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, in January 2026. The initiative combines advanced marine technology with local livelihood generation.

104) Correct Answer: B

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited India on January 19, 2026. This marks his third visit as UAE President, reflecting deepening strategic, economic, and political ties. The visit highlights India's growing global partnerships, especially in energy and trade sectors.

105) Correct Answer: B

INS Sagardhwani was flagged off from Kochi for the fifth edition of the Sagar Maitri initiative in January 2026. The mission enhances scientific cooperation with Indian Ocean Rim countries, supporting ocean research and maritime security.

106) Correct Answer: C

India and UAE agreed to double their trade to USD 200 billion by 2032 during Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's 2026 visit. The target follows robust growth since the 2022 CEPA agreement. Annual trade already reached USD 100 billion by FY 2024–25.

107) Correct Answer: B

INS Sudarshini will undertake 'Lokayan 26' starting January 20, 2026. The voyage will cover 18 ports in 13 countries, strengthening India's maritime heritage and naval diplomacy. It includes participation in major international tall-ship events.

108) Correct Answer: C

The Coffees of India Pavilion was showcased at World of Coffee Dubai 2025. It featured over 50 exhibitors and highlighted India's diverse coffee varieties and regions. This event marked a significant push for Indian coffee's global presence.

109) Correct Answer: C

Nitin Nabin was declared the sole candidate for BJP National President in January 2026. The nomination process saw no other contenders, ensuring his

unopposed election. He had strong backing from top party leaders.

110) Correct Answer: C

The Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund will start disbursing funds by January-end 2026. This ₹1 lakh crore initiative aims to boost collaboration between industry, startups, and public research bodies. It supports high-impact, industry-backed research projects.

111) Correct Answer: C

The Navy's 2026 Republic Day tableau is themed 'Strong Navy for a Strong Nation', depicting India's maritime journey from ancient times to a technologically advanced future. It features historical and modern naval vessels, symbolizing India's maritime prowess and commitment to self-reliance and innovation.

112) Correct Answer: C

A 233-year-old Valmiki Ramayana Sanskrit manuscript was gifted to the Ram Katha Museum in Ayodhya in January 2026. Authored by Valmiki with commentary, this rare Devanagari-script text enriches the museum's collection and helps preserve India's classical literary and spiritual heritage for global scholarship.

113) Correct Answer: C

Cement posted the highest growth among core industries at 13.5% in December 2025. This surge indicates robust construction and infrastructure activity, contributing to overall core sector growth of 3.7%, and highlighting the sector's vital role in India's economic expansion.

114) Correct Answer: C

Maharashtra signed MoUs worth Rs 14.5 lakh crore on the WEF's opening day in January 2026. These investments, spanning infrastructure and multiple sectors, align with the state's vision to become a \$5 trillion economy and are projected to generate over 15 lakh jobs.

115) Correct Answer: B

India achieved 267 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity as of December 2025, as shared at the 2026 WEF. This progress underlines India's commitment to its 2030

climate targets and its emergence as a global leader in sustainable energy transition.

116) Correct Answer: B

Assam launched the 'Atal Vichal Agragami Assam' scheme in January 2026. The scheme provides Rs 25,000 per month to research scholars and higher support for Divyang scholars. It aims to promote research and innovation in Assam.

117) Correct Answer: B

The Inclusive Education Summit 2026 was inaugurated by Dharmendra Pradhan in New Delhi. It emphasizes India's commitment to equitable, accessible, and inclusive education for all children. The summit aligns with NEP 2020 and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act. It is crucial for building a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

118) Correct Answer: C

Abhishek Sharma scored a blistering 84 runs in Nagpur, leading India to victory in the 1st T20I against New Zealand. He became the world's top-ranked T20 batsman following this performance. His aggressive batting is vital for India's T20 World Cup defense. It highlights the rise of new cricketing talent in India.

119) Correct Answer: A

Odisha and Meghalaya signed an MoU in January 2026 for mutual learning in Early Childhood Care and Development. The agreement focuses on nutrition, health, learning, and community engagement. Such collaboration aims to improve foundational outcomes for children.

120) Correct Answer: C

Maharashtra, led by CM Devendra Fadnavis, unveiled a medtech roadmap at Davos 2026. The plan aims to leverage advanced technology for accessible healthcare. Partnerships with global companies and universities were highlighted. This positions Maharashtra as a leader in healthcare innovation in India.

121) Correct Answer: B

The DRDO will display the Long Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Missile (LR-ASHM) during the 77th Republic Day Parade. This missile is capable of reaching speeds up to Mach 10 and is designed for coastal defence. It features indigenous avionics and advanced sensor

packages. The LR-AShM showcases India's significant advancement in hypersonic missile technology and self-reliance.

122) Correct Answer: C

Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2026 will be held across 40 locations in India and feature at least one production from each of the seven continents. This unprecedented scale expands its global cultural reach. The festival's linguistic and cultural diversity demonstrates India's commitment to inclusivity in arts. Such large-scale festivals promote India's soft power worldwide.

123) Correct Answer: B

Delhi Police will use AI-enabled smart glasses and advanced facial recognition systems for the first time at Republic Day 2026. The glasses will assist in real-time crowd monitoring and threat detection. This marks a leap in police use of wearable surveillance technology.

124) Correct Answer: B

In January 2026, the government notified Greenhouse Gas Emission Intensity (GEI) targets for 208 additional entities, including Textiles and Petrochemicals. These sectors now fall under the CCTS compliance mechanism. This move broadens India's carbon market to more emission-intensive industries.

125) Correct Answer: A

More than 10,000 km of rural roads were sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-IV (PMGSY-IV) in January 2026. This aims to connect nearly 3,270 previously unconnected habitations. The initiative supports last-mile connectivity and inclusive rural development. Rural infrastructure is crucial to India's vision of 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India).

126) Correct Answer: B

ASC ARJUN is the humanoid robot deployed by Indian Railways at Visakhapatnam in January 2026. It was designed and developed indigenously to enhance passenger safety and service delivery. The robot features AI-based crowd monitoring and can make announcements in multiple languages.

127) Correct Answer: C

Parakram Diwas marks the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The day is celebrated on January

23 to honor Netaji's courage and his role in India's freedom struggle. The Government of India declared this observance in 2021. It serves as a national inspiration for bravery and selfless service.

128) Correct Answer: C

Saina Nehwal, former world No. 1 and Olympic medallist, confirmed her retirement in January 2026. She played a historic role in popularizing badminton in India and won multiple international medals. Her achievements inspired a generation of Indian shuttlers. Her retirement marks the end of an era in Indian sports.

129) Correct Answer: C

Granth Kutir was inaugurated at Rashtrapati Bhavan to showcase books and manuscripts in 11 classical languages. It aims to preserve and promote India's vast literary and intellectual heritage. The initiative includes rare manuscripts and digital access for researchers.

130) Correct Answer: B

Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh won gold in the men's and women's 500m long-track ice skating events, respectively, at Khelo India Winter Games 2026. This achievement highlights the expanding reach of winter sports beyond traditional regions. It reflects India's growing sporting diversity and talent pool.

131) Correct Answer: C

ASC ARJUN, a humanoid robot, was deployed at Visakhapatnam Railway Station on January 23, 2026. It marks Indian Railways' first use of such technology for passenger safety and security. The robot was designed and developed entirely in Visakhapatnam using indigenous technology.

132) Correct Answer: C

Granth Kutir, inaugurated by President Murmu on January 23, 2026, houses manuscripts in 11 classical Indian languages. Five languages were accorded classical status in October 2024, expanding the previous list. The Kutir promotes India's literary and cultural heritage.

133) Correct Answer: B

Gulfood 2026 in Dubai is hosting India as its partner country for the first time. The event highlights India's expanding agri-food exports and global demand for

Indian products. Over 160 Indian exhibitors are participating, showcasing the country's food innovation.

134) Correct Answer: B

Rajkot's Atal Sarovar, opened to the public in May 2024, attracted more than 1.4 million visitors by January 2026. The project integrates sustainability, recreation, and civic amenities. Atal Sarovar sets an example for future urban infrastructure across India.

135) Correct Answer: B

The Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt was expected to reopen within days as of January 23, 2026. Rafah is crucial for humanitarian aid and movement in and out of Gaza. Its reopening is part of recovery efforts after the war.

136) Correct Answer: B

The 77th Republic Day state-level event in Gujarat was held in the newly constituted Vav–Tharad district. This marked the district's first time hosting such a major event since its creation. The ceremony featured the Governor and Chief Minister and underscored decentralisation in state celebrations.

137) Correct Answer: C

President Droupadi Murmu approved the conferment of 131 Padma Awards for 2026. The Padma Awards are among India's highest civilian honours, announced annually on Republic Day. The awards recognise contributions across diverse fields including art, public affairs, and sports.

138) Correct Answer: B

Wings India 2026 is Asia's largest civil aviation event, scheduled for Hyderabad. It will feature international exhibitors, aircraft displays, and policy discussions. The event demonstrates India's growth in connectivity, manufacturing, and sustainability. It highlights India's emergence as a major player in global aviation.

139) Correct Answer: B

The 2026 National Voters' Day was themed 'My India, My Vote'. The event aimed at deepening democratic values and encouraging youth participation. It marked the 75th anniversary of India's first general election. The theme emphasizes the role of every citizen in shaping the nation's future.

140) Correct Answer: B

Himachal Pradesh celebrated its Statehood Day on January 25, 2026. It became the 18th state of India in 1971, after transitioning from a Union Territory. The occasion was marked by greetings from the President and Prime Minister. Statehood Day highlights regional identity and India's federal structure.

141) Correct Answer: C

Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla of the Indian Air Force received the Ashoka Chakra in 2026. He became the second Indian to travel to space as part of the Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station. His courage and leadership during the mission, including scientific and agricultural experiments in microgravity, were highlighted.

142) Correct Answer: C

APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) led India's representation at Gulfood 2026. The pavilion highlighted India's agri-food strength with 161 exhibitors from 25 states. This strengthens India's global agri-food trade position and enhances ties with the UAE, especially after the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

143) Correct Answer: B

The Bhairav Battalion, raised in October 2025, debuted during the 2026 parade. It aims to bridge operational gaps between infantry and special forces for swift, high-intensity missions. Its induction signals modernization and adaptability in the Indian Army, reflecting evolving combat doctrines for future challenges.

144) Correct Answer: B

The 16th EU–India Summit was scheduled for January 27, 2026, following the Republic Day. It focused on strengthening strategic cooperation in areas like trade, security, technology, and connectivity. This summit underscores the growing partnership between India and the European Union, impacting regional and global affairs.

145) Correct Answer: B

The Ministry of Ayush themed its tableau 'Ayush ka Tantra, Swasthya ka Mantra.' It focused on integrating traditional healthcare systems with technology for

holistic wellness. The display highlighted the National Ayush Mission, emphasizing research, accessibility, and India's leadership in wellness. This promotes preventive healthcare and self-reliance.

146) Correct Answer: B

Gujarat announced the Namo Laxmi Scheme for girls' education. The scheme offers Rs 1,250 crore aid to over 12 lakh girls in classes 9–12 in the 2025-26 academic year. It aims to remove financial barriers to girls' education and enhance adolescent nutrition. This initiative strengthens girls' empowerment and supports national educational goals.

147) Correct Answer: B

The workshop led by CCRAS and Central Sanskrit University resulted in the transliteration of five rare Ayurvedic manuscripts. This initiative enhances preservation and research-based revival of classical Indian medical knowledge. Scholars worked directly with palm-leaf manuscripts in multiple scripts. The effort supports evidence-based Ayurveda and national heritage preservation.

148) Correct Answer: B

India's retail sector achieved a 54% growth in gross leasing volume in 2025. The sector reached a three-year high with 12.5 million square feet leased. This surge reflects retailer confidence and increased expansion, especially in shopping malls and high streets. The robust growth highlights India's economic resilience and rising consumer demand.

149) Correct Answer: B

At the 16th India–EU Summit, the largest Free Trade Agreement in India's history was concluded. The FTA enhances trade, mobility, and strategic partnership between India and the EU. It grants substantial market access and supports economic growth. This marks a new era in India-EU relations with global implications.

150) Correct Answer: C

IIT Guwahati researchers developed the framework to monitor glacial lake hazards. Their model identified 492 high-risk locations using advanced machine learning and satellite data. This helps with early warning and water-resource planning in mountain regions. The research strengthens India's disaster-risk management and climate resilience.

SECTION 3

Detailed Analysis of Important Events



Economics

Indian Railways Becomes World's Largest Electrified Rail

Why in the News?

Indian Railways has emerged as the **largest electrified rail network in the world**, with **about 99.2% of its broad gauge network electrified as of November 2025**. This historic milestone marks a decisive shift in India's transport infrastructure towards **clean energy, operational efficiency, and climate sustainability**, placing Indian Railways at the forefront of global railway electrification.



About Indian Railways' Electrification Achievement

Indian Railways is India's national transporter and one of the **largest railway networks in the world**, carrying millions of passengers and vast freight volumes daily. Achieving near-total electrification of its **broad gauge routes** represents a transformational leap in railway operations and energy use.

This milestone has been accomplished under the ambitious **Mission 100 Percent Railway Electrification**, implemented in a focused mission mode over the past decade.

Background

- Railway electrification in India began in **1925**, with the first electric train running in the Mumbai suburban section.
- For several decades, progress remained gradual due to high capital costs and dependence on diesel traction.

- A **mission-mode acceleration after 2014** significantly boosted electrification pace, making it one of the fastest infrastructure transitions globally.

Objectives of Mission 100 Percent Railway Electrification

The mission was designed with multiple strategic objectives:

- **Elimination of diesel traction**, reducing reliance on fossil fuels
- Transition to **clean electric traction**, enabling future integration with renewables
- Reduction of **carbon emissions and air pollution** from rail operations
- Lowering **fuel import dependence**, strengthening energy security
- Improving **speed, reliability, hauling capacity, and operational efficiency** of trains

Key Features and Latest Data

- **About 99.2%** of nearly **70,000 route kilometres** of broad gauge lines electrified
- Electrification speed increased dramatically:
 - **1.42 km per day** during **2004–2014**
 - **More than 15 km per day** during **2019–2025**
- **25 States and Union Territories** are now fully electrified
- Only **around 0.8% of the network** remains non-electrified, mostly in remote or strategically sensitive sections

This scale and speed of electrification are unmatched globally, making Indian Railways the **world leader in route-length electrification**.

Renewable Energy Integration

Electrification has been complemented by a major push towards renewable energy adoption:

- **Solar power capacity** increased from **3.68 MW in 2014** to **about 898 MW in 2025**
- Solar panels have been installed on:
 - Railway stations

- Workshops and service buildings
- Railway land parcels and rooftops

Significance

- Supports **cleaner electric traction**
- Reduces operational emissions and electricity costs
- Aligns Indian Railways with India's broader **renewable energy and climate commitments**

Technological Advancements in Electrification

The rapid rollout of electrification was enabled by modern construction and engineering techniques:

- Use of **Automatic Wiring Trains**, which significantly reduce installation time
- Enhanced safety through **reduced human exposure** to live wires and heavy equipment

These technologies ensured **faster, safer, and more standardised electrification**, even in challenging terrains and high-density corridors.

District Led Textiles Transformation (DLTT) Plan

Why in the News?

The **Ministry of Textiles** has launched the **District Led Textiles Transformation (DLTT) Plan**, a flagship reform initiative aimed at restructuring India's textile sector through a **district-centric growth model**. Under this plan, **100 high-potential districts** will be developed as **Global Export Champions**, while **100 Aspirational Districts** will be upgraded into **self-reliant textile hubs**, aligning with India's broader vision of inclusive growth, export expansion, and Atmanirbhar Bharat.



What is the DLTT Plan?

The **District Led Textiles Transformation (DLTT) Plan** is a **sector-specific, district-level transformation strategy** designed to unlock the full potential of India's textile ecosystem by shifting the focus from a centralised policy framework to **localised, data-driven execution**.

Key Features

- **District-based approach:** Recognises districts as the primary units of textile growth and policy implementation.
- **Data-driven categorisation:** Districts are grouped based on export readiness, infrastructure availability, workforce skills, and enterprise density.
- **Stage-wise coverage:**
 - Advanced districts with strong export orientation
 - Growth-stage districts requiring targeted infrastructure and skill support
 - Foundation-stage districts with latent potential, especially in traditional textiles

This differentiated approach allows customised interventions rather than a uniform, one-size-fits-all policy.

Objectives of the DLTT Plan

The DLTT Plan seeks to address structural challenges in India's textile sector while positioning districts as engines of growth.

Core Objectives

- **Promote inclusive, sustainable, and export-oriented growth** in textiles and apparel
- **Decentralise policy execution**, empowering district administrations and local institutions
- **Strengthen MSMEs** by improving access to finance, technology, and formal markets
- **Formalise the workforce**, enhancing job security, productivity, and social protection
- **Develop globally competitive textile clusters**, integrated with global value chains

Strategic Interventions Under DLTT

The plan envisages coordinated action across multiple dimensions:

- **Cluster development:** Upgradation of common infrastructure such as testing labs, design centres, and logistics hubs
- **Skill development:** District-specific skilling aligned with local textile specialisations (handlooms, technical textiles, garments, etc.)
- **MSME support:** Handholding for compliance, quality standards, branding, and export documentation
- **Market linkage:** Connecting district producers with global buyers, e-commerce platforms, and international trade fairs
- **Sustainability focus:** Encouraging resource-efficient processes, circular textiles, and adoption of eco-friendly materials

Significance of the DLTT Plan

The DLTT Plan marks a **structural shift in India's textile policy framework**, with long-term implications for exports, employment, and regional development.

Economic and Industrial Impact

- **Moves India up the textile value chain**, from low-value raw materials to high-value apparel, technical textiles, and design-led products
- **Diversifies India's export basket**, reducing dependence on a few clusters and product categories
- **Enhances global competitiveness** by improving quality, scale, and compliance with international standards

Social and Regional Impact

- **Strengthens MSMEs** and accelerates labour formalisation, particularly in informal textile hubs
- **Boosts women-led enterprises and Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**, given the high female participation in textiles
- **Accelerates development in Aspirational Districts**, especially in eastern and north-eastern India, where textiles are a key livelihood source

Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024

Why in the News?

NITI Aayog has released the **Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024**, an assessment of the export readiness of Indian **States and Union Territories (UTs)**. This is the **fourth edition** of the Index, first launched in **August 2020**, and it serves as a key policy tool to evaluate how well subnational governments are positioned to drive India's export growth.

The EPI 2024 is closely aligned with India's long-term trade ambition of achieving **USD 1 trillion in merchandise exports by 2030**, highlighting the critical role of States, UTs, and districts in achieving this national target.



About the Export Preparedness Index (EPI)

The Export Preparedness Index is an **evidence-based and data-driven framework** developed to assess the **strength, resilience, and inclusiveness** of export ecosystems at the subnational level. Unlike national-level trade indicators, the EPI focuses on how individual States and UTs contribute to and enable India's participation in global trade.

The Index recognises that exports are not driven solely by central policies but are deeply influenced by **state-level regulations, infrastructure, institutional capacity, and local industrial ecosystems**.

Core Objectives of the Index

The EPI is designed to:

- **Recognise the pivotal role of States and districts** in shaping India's export competitiveness
- **Identify structural challenges** that limit export performance, such as infrastructure gaps, logistics inefficiencies, or weak institutional support
- **Highlight growth levers**, including sectoral strengths, policy reforms, and innovation capabilities
- **Identify policy opportunities** for targeted interventions at the State and district levels
- Promote **competitive federalism** by encouraging States and UTs to benchmark their performance against peers

Focus on Districts as Engines of Export Growth

A key feature of EPI 2024 is its **strong emphasis on districts as the core units of export competitiveness**. This approach aligns with initiatives such as the Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) programme, which seeks to integrate local products and MSMEs into global value chains.

By shifting attention to districts, the Index acknowledges that:

- Export potential is often **highly localised**, linked to specific products, skills, or clusters
- Empowering districts can lead to **more inclusive and geographically balanced export growth**
- Local-level interventions can help small producers and MSMEs overcome entry barriers to international markets

Policy Significance

The EPI serves as a **diagnostic and policy guidance tool** for governments at both the Centre and State levels. Its findings help:

- States design **targeted export promotion policies**
- Improve coordination between trade, industry, logistics, and skill-development departments
- Strengthen institutional mechanisms for export facilitation
- Support data-backed decision-making to enhance India's global trade footprint

Chips to Start up (C2S) Programme



Why in the News?

The **Chips to Start-up (C2S) Programme** has reported significant outcomes, highlighting India's rapid progress in indigenous semiconductor design. As per the latest updates, the programme has enabled the **fabrication of 56 student-designed chips**, the **filing of over 75 patents**, and **large-scale national training in chip design**, reflecting the emergence of a robust domestic talent pipeline and innovation ecosystem in semiconductors.

About the Chips to Start-up (C2S) Programme

The Chips to Start-up (C2S) Programme is a **national capacity-building and innovation initiative** aimed at developing **industry-ready chip design talent** and strengthening India's **indigenous semiconductor ecosystem** through hands-on exposure to design, verification, and fabrication.

- **Launched in:** 2022
- **Implemented by:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)

The programme bridges the long-standing gap between academic learning and industry-grade semiconductor development by providing students and researchers direct access to advanced tools and fabrication facilities.

Objectives

- Create a **sustainable pipeline of skilled chip designers** for India's growing semiconductor sector
- Enable **hands-on chip fabrication** and real-world design experience for students
- Promote **start-ups, patents, and indigenous IP creation**

- Support **technological self-reliance** in semiconductors, a strategically sensitive sector

Key Features of the C2S Programme

Financial and Institutional Support

- **Total outlay:** ₹250 crore over 5 years
- Covers academic institutions, research centres, and innovation hubs across the country

Infrastructure and Advanced Tools

- Access to **shared Electronic Design Automation (EDA) tools**, which are otherwise prohibitively expensive
- Availability of **High-Performance Computing (HPC)** infrastructure for simulation and verification
- Use of **FPGA development boards** and **SMART laboratories** set up in participating institutions

Hands-on Fabrication Exposure

- **Shared wafer runs** provided through the **Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL), Mohali**, allowing students to see their designs translated into physical silicon
- Exposure to industry-standard fabrication workflows, packaging, and testing processes

Chip Design Enablement

- Establishment of the **National ChipIN Centre**, operated by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Bengaluru
- Acts as a central platform for design enablement, mentoring, tool access, and coordination

Innovation and Start-up Outcomes

- Development of **student-designed ASICs and System-on-Chips (SoCs)**
- Support for **start-up incubation, IP cores, patent filings, and chip prototypes**
- Encourages translation of academic research into commercially viable semiconductor products

Industry Collaboration

- Training partnerships with **global EDA vendors and semiconductor firms**
- Curriculum aligned with industry requirements, improving employability and job readiness

Significance of the C2S Programme

- **Addresses the global semiconductor skill gap:** Builds a domestic workforce capable of handling advanced VLSI and chip design tasks
- **Democratises chip design:** Provides nationwide access to cutting-edge tools and fabrication facilities, beyond elite institutions
- **Reduces dependence on foreign design ecosystems:** Strengthens India's position in the global semiconductor value chain
- **Boosts Atmanirbhar Bharat:** Reinforces self-reliance in a sector critical for national security, digital infrastructure, and emerging technologies such as AI, 5G/6G, and automotive electronics

India Fisheries and Seafood Export Ecosystem

Why in the News

India has reiterated its commitment to **sustainable fisheries management, resilient value chains, deep-sea resource development, regulatory cooperation, and scientific collaboration** during recent interactions involving key national and international institutions. These engagements, aligned with India's **Blue Economy vision**, underline the country's intent to balance economic growth from marine resources with ecological sustainability and inclusive livelihoods.

The discussions involved cooperation with the **Food and Agriculture Organization**, along with India's apex fisheries bodies — the **Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA)** and the **National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)**.



Key Institutions Involved

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

FAO plays a critical role in setting global norms for **responsible fisheries**, combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and promoting ecosystem-based fisheries management. India's engagement with FAO reflects its commitment to aligning domestic fisheries governance with global best practices, especially in areas such as stock assessment, climate-resilient fisheries, and sustainable aquaculture.

Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA)

MPEDA is responsible for the development and regulation of marine product exports from India. It focuses on **export promotion, quality assurance, traceability, value addition, and compliance with international sanitary and phytosanitary standards**. MPEDA's role has become increasingly important as major importing countries tighten food safety, sustainability, and traceability norms for seafood.

National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)

NFDB acts as the nodal agency for coordinating fisheries development programmes across states. It supports **inland fisheries, aquaculture expansion, capacity building, technology dissemination, and infrastructure creation**, thereby strengthening the domestic fisheries production base.

India's Fisheries Sector: Data Snapshot

India's fisheries sector has witnessed **remarkable growth over the last decade**, emerging as a key pillar of the rural economy and food security.

- **Total fish production:** Increased from about **95 lakh tonnes in 2013** to nearly **195 lakh tonnes in 2024**, reflecting policy support, aquaculture expansion, and productivity gains.
- **Inland fisheries and aquaculture:** Contribute **over 75%** of total fish production, highlighting India's shift from capture fisheries to culture-based systems.
- **Global standing:** India ranks among the **top three fish-producing nations** globally and is the **second-largest aquaculture producer** in the world.

- **Livelihood support:** Fisheries and aquaculture provide direct and indirect employment to **over 28 million people**, many of them small and marginal fishers, fish farmers, women, and workers in allied activities such as processing and marketing.

This growth aligns with national initiatives such as the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)**, which aims to modernise the fisheries sector and double fishers' incomes.

Seafood Export Performance

India's seafood exports continue to be a major contributor to agricultural exports and foreign exchange earnings.

- **FY 2023–24**
 - Export volume: **17.81 lakh metric tonnes**
 - Export value: about **₹60,500 crore** (approximately **US\$7.3 billion**)
- **FY 2024–25 (provisional)**
 - Export volume: around **17 lakh metric tonnes**
 - Export value: about **₹62,400 crore** (approximately **US\$7.45 billion**), indicating improved unit value realisation despite global trade uncertainties.

Export Composition

- **Top export item:** Frozen shrimp
 - Accounts for about **40% of export volume**
 - Contributes nearly **65% of total export earnings**, underlining India's strong position in farmed shrimp, particularly *Litopenaeus vannamei*.

Major Export Markets

- United States
- China
- European Union
- Japan
- Southeast Asia
- Middle East

These markets increasingly demand **traceable, sustainably produced, and certified seafood**, pushing India to strengthen regulatory compliance, cold-chain infrastructure, and quality assurance mechanisms.

Strategic Significance

India's renewed emphasis on sustainable fisheries and international cooperation reflects multiple strategic priorities:

- **Blue Economy development** with ecological safeguards
- **Food and nutritional security** through affordable animal protein
- **Export competitiveness** in a tightening global regulatory environment
- **Climate resilience**, as fisheries are highly vulnerable to warming oceans and extreme weather
- **Inclusive growth**, ensuring small fishers and coastal communities benefit from sectoral expansion

Equity Infusion into SIDBI



Why in the News?

The Union Cabinet has approved an equity infusion of **₹5,000 crore** into the **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** to strengthen institutional capital and significantly enhance the flow of credit to **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**. The decision reflects the government's continued focus on supporting MSMEs as a key driver of employment, entrepreneurship, exports, and inclusive economic growth.

Key Decision

- The proposal was approved by the Union Cabinet chaired by **Narendra Modi**.
- The capital support will be provided by the **Department of Financial Services (DFS)** under the Ministry of Finance.
- **Core objectives** of the equity infusion include:
 - Expanding SIDBI's MSME lending capacity
 - Improving its capital adequacy ratio
 - Enabling access to low-cost and long-term funding
 - Strengthening its balance sheet to support higher-risk, high-impact credit segments

Equity Infusion Details

- **Total amount:** ₹5,000 crore
- **Mode:** Equity infusion in **three tranches**
 - **₹3,000 crore in FY 2025–26**
 - At book value of **₹568.65 per share** (as on March 31, 2025)
 - **₹1,000 crore in FY 2026–27**
 - **₹1,000 crore in FY 2027–28**
- The book value for the later tranches will be calculated based on **March 31 of the immediately preceding financial year**.

Why is Capital Infusion Needed?

SIDBI's balance sheet has been expanding rapidly due to structural shifts in MSME financing and policy priorities:

- **Expansion of directed and priority sector credit** to MSMEs
- **Rapid growth of digital and collateral-free lending**, especially under fintech partnerships and government-backed credit guarantee frameworks
- **Rising venture debt and risk capital financing** for startups, innovation-led enterprises, and early-stage MSMEs

These segments carry **higher risk-weighted assets**, which increase capital requirements under prudential norms. Additional equity helps SIDBI:

- Maintain strong **capital adequacy ratios**

- Preserve its **credit rating**, keeping borrowing costs low
- Remain compliant with **RBI regulatory norms**
- Sustain long-term lending without constraining growth

About SIDBI

- **Established:** 1990
- **Role:** Apex financial institution for the promotion, financing, and development of MSMEs in India

Key functions include:

- **Direct lending** to MSMEs across manufacturing and services
- **Refinance support** to banks, NBFCs, and microfinance institutions
- **Promotion of entrepreneurship**, innovation, and startup financing
- **Implementation partner** for multiple government credit-linked schemes

- Support for **green finance, digital MSMEs, and women-led enterprises**

Over the years, SIDBI has emerged as a critical institution for channelising policy-driven credit to underserved and emerging segments of the MSME ecosystem.

Broader Significance

The ₹5,000 crore equity infusion is strategically important as MSMEs face challenges from global uncertainty, tighter financial conditions, and rising compliance costs. By strengthening SIDBI's capital base, the government aims to:

- Ensure **stable and affordable credit** for MSMEs
- Crowd in private and institutional finance
- Support job creation and regional development
- Reinforce MSMEs' role in India's **manufacturing, exports, and digital economy**

Overall, the decision underlines the government's long-term commitment to building a resilient and growth-oriented MSME financing architecture.

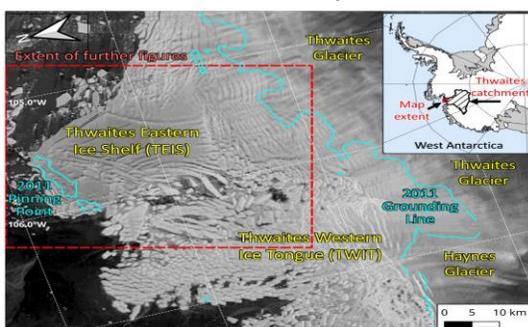
Environment & Diversity

Doomsday Glacier Destabilisation and the Future of Antarctic Ice Sheets

Why in the News?

A recent scientific study has reported **rapidly increasing fracturing within the Thwaites Glacier**, popularly known as the Doomsday Glacier, raising serious concerns about the long-term stability of the Antarctic ice sheets. The research, published in the **Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface**, provides new evidence that structural weakening in critical parts of the glacier could accelerate ice loss and contribute significantly to global sea-level rise.

Thwaites Glacier (Doomsday Glacier)



The **Thwaites Glacier** is a vast outlet glacier located in **West Antarctica**, draining a large portion of the **West Antarctic Ice Sheet (WAIS)** into the **Amundsen Sea**. It covers an area roughly comparable to that of Great Britain and is regarded as one of the **most rapidly changing and vulnerable glacier systems on Earth**.

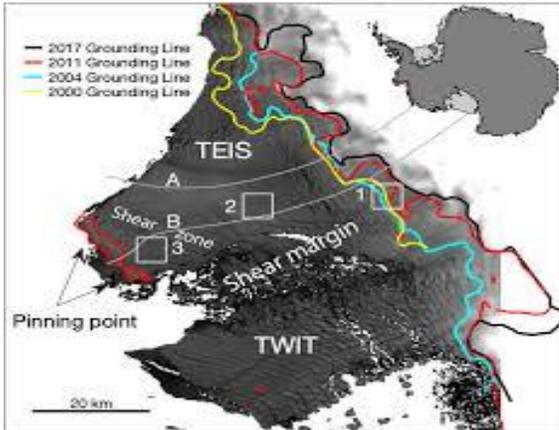
Due to its size and strategic position, changes in Thwaites have outsized consequences for the stability of the entire WAIS and for global sea levels.

Why It Is Called the “Doomsday Glacier”

Thwaites has earned its ominous nickname because of the **catastrophic implications of its potential collapse**:

- **Complete destabilisation could raise global sea levels by about 65 cm**, threatening low-lying coastal regions worldwide.
- It functions as a **gateway glacier**—its failure could allow neighbouring glaciers to accelerate, triggering a broader collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet.
- Scientists consider Thwaites a **tipping-point glacier**, beyond which ice loss may become irreversible on human timescales.

Focus Area: Thwaites Eastern Ice Shelf (TEIS)



The study concentrates on the **Thwaites Eastern Ice Shelf (TEIS)**, a floating extension of the glacier that plays a crucial role in slowing the flow of inland ice into the ocean.

Pinning Point and Shear Zone

- **Pinning point:**
TEIS is partially anchored to an underwater ridge on the seabed. This anchoring point helps restrain the glacier's forward motion by providing frictional resistance.
- **Shear zone:**
Upstream of the pinning point lies a shear zone, where ice experiences intense deformation due to differential movement between grounded and floating ice.

Fracture Patterns Observed in the Study

The researchers identified a **two-stage fracture process**, revealing how structural damage in TEIS is rapidly intensifying:

1. **Primary fractures**
 - Long fractures aligned **parallel to the direction of ice flow**
 - Indicate large-scale stretching and thinning of the ice shelf
2. **Secondary fractures**
 - Smaller cracks developing **perpendicular to ice flow**
 - Weaken the internal structure and promote fragmentation

Sharp Increase in Fracture Length

- **2002:** Total annual fracture length of about **165 km**

- **2022:** Total annual fracture length increased to about **335 km**

This near-doubling over two decades highlights how **mechanical weakening is accelerating**, likely driven by ocean warming, basal melting, and stress concentration near the pinning point.

Consequences of Accelerated Fracturing

The findings underline several critical risks:

- **Breakdown of the shear zone** reduces resistance to ice movement.
- **Faster ice flow** leads to increased discharge of ice into the ocean.
- **Enhanced mass loss** contributes directly to global sea-level rise.
- **Destabilisation of Thwaites** could initiate a chain reaction affecting the entire West Antarctic Ice Sheet.

Scientists warn that once key ice shelves like TEIS lose their structural integrity, the glacier's retreat may become **self-sustaining and difficult to halt**, even if global temperatures are stabilised.

Vulture Safe Zones in Tamil Nadu

Why in the News?

The **Tamil Nadu Forest Department** informed the **Madras High Court** that the process of establishing **Vulture Safe Zones (VSZs)** has commenced in the State. This submission was made as part of a status report responding to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) seeking urgent measures to protect critically endangered vulture species from toxic veterinary drugs that have driven their populations to the brink of extinction.



Background of the Case

- The matter was heard by a **Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava**.
- The status report was filed in response to a **PIL filed by K. Surya Kumar**, highlighting the alarming decline of vulture populations.
- The petitioner argued that despite existing bans, the continued availability of toxic veterinary drugs has led to repeated incidents of mass vulture deaths.
- The core objective of the litigation is to **prevent further mass mortality and avert the near extinction of vultures**, which play a vital ecological role as natural scavengers.

The Court has been monitoring whether State authorities are effectively implementing national conservation commitments and enforcing drug regulations on the ground.

What are Vulture Safe Zones (VSZs)?

Vulture Safe Zones are a key conservation intervention under India's vulture recovery strategy.

Key features of VSZs include:

- **Geographically defined areas**, usually spanning a radius of around 100 km, centred on existing vulture nesting and foraging sites.
- **Complete prohibition on the use of toxic veterinary Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)** such as diclofenac, aceclofenac, ketoprofen, and nimesulide.
- **Promotion of safe alternatives**, particularly meloxicam, which has been scientifically proven to be non-lethal to vultures.
- **Ensuring availability of safe carcasses** by working with veterinarians, livestock owners, and local communities.
- **Monitoring and awareness programmes** involving forest departments, animal husbandry officials, and civil society groups.

VSZs are designed not only to protect existing birds but also to **create conditions for natural population recovery** over the long term.

Major Threat Addressed: Toxic Veterinary NSAIDs

The catastrophic decline of vultures in India is closely linked to veterinary drug use:

- **Diclofenac**, widely used in the 1990s to treat cattle, remains the single biggest cause of vulture mortality.
- When livestock treated with diclofenac die, **drug residues persist in their carcasses**.
- Vultures feeding on these carcasses suffer **acute kidney failure**, leading to death within days.
- Scientific studies estimate that **over 95% of India's vulture population collapsed since the early 1990s**, one of the fastest population declines recorded for any bird group globally.

Despite a nationwide ban on veterinary diclofenac in 2006, illegal use and the misuse of human formulations for animals continue to pose serious risks.

Ecological and Public Health Importance of Vultures

Vultures provide essential ecosystem services:

- They **rapidly dispose of animal carcasses**, preventing the spread of diseases.
- Their decline has been linked to an increase in **feral dog populations**, which in turn raises the risk of rabies transmission to humans.
- Economically, vultures save significant public expenditure by reducing the need for carcass disposal and disease control.

Thus, vulture conservation is not only a wildlife issue but also a **public health and socio-economic concern**.

Second Range wide Dolphin Survey

Why in the News?

The **Second Range-wide Dolphin Survey** has been launched from **Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh**, under **Project Dolphin** to generate updated, scientifically robust estimates of dolphin populations across India. The survey also aims to assess habitat quality and identify emerging anthropogenic and ecological threats across major river systems, marking a significant step in strengthening evidence-based conservation of India's aquatic biodiversity.



About Project Dolphin

Project Dolphin is a flagship national conservation initiative of the Government of India focused on the protection of **riverine and oceanic dolphins** through a combination of habitat conservation, scientific monitoring, policy support, and community participation.

Key Details

- **Launched:** 15 August 2020
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)
- **Nature:** Long-term, science-driven conservation programme

Core Objectives

- Conserve and restore dolphin diversity in Indian waters
- Address major threats such as:
 - Water pollution and industrial effluents
 - Habitat fragmentation due to dams and barrages
 - Accidental by-catch in fishing gear
 - Altered river flows and declining prey base
- Promote stewardship by involving local communities, fishers, and river-dependent populations

Key Features of Project Dolphin

- **10-year initiative** with pan-India coverage
- Focus on both **riverine dolphins** (like Ganges and Indus river dolphins) and **oceanic dolphins**
- Periodic scientific surveys to track population trends

- Integration with **river ecosystem conservation**, freshwater biodiversity protection, and policy action under national water and wildlife frameworks

Second Range-wide Dolphin Survey

The Second Range-wide Dolphin Survey is a **nationwide scientific estimation exercise** designed to generate updated and comparable data after the first large-scale survey conducted between 2021 and 2023.

Main Objectives

- Estimate **current dolphin population size**
- Map **distribution patterns** across river basins
- Assess **habitat condition and water quality**
- Identify **anthropogenic pressures** (pollution, sand mining, fishing intensity) and ecological threats

The survey follows **standardised national protocols**, ensuring consistency across regions and enabling long-term trend analysis.

Implementation and Coverage

Phase I

- **Main stem of the Ganga:** From Bijnor (Uttar Pradesh) to **Ganga Sagar** (West Bengal)
- **Indus river system**, focusing on remaining dolphin habitats

Phase II

- **Brahmaputra river system**
- Major **Ganga tributaries**
- **Sundarbans delta**
- Riverine and estuarine systems of **Odisha**

Institutional Framework

- **Coordinating Agency:** Wildlife Institute of India
- Implemented in collaboration with:
 - State Forest Departments
 - Local research institutions
 - Conservation organisations and trained field teams

Methodology

- Visual surveys using boats and bank-based observations
- **Hydrophones** for acoustic monitoring, especially in turbid waters
- GPS-based habitat mapping and threat documentation

Oceanic Dolphins in Indian Waters

India's coastal waters in the **Arabian Sea** and **Bay of Bengal** host several oceanic dolphin species, including:

- Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*)
- Spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*)

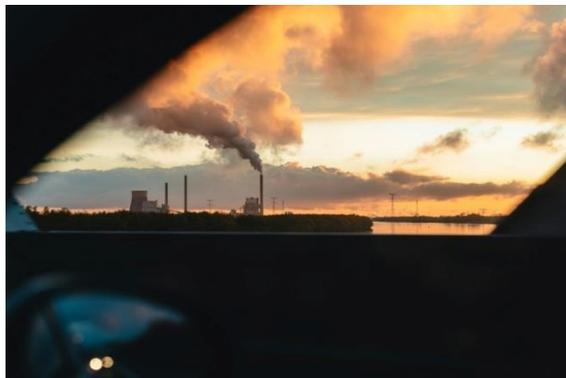
These species are commonly recorded along the **Gujarat, Kerala, and Odisha** coasts, and are included under Project Dolphin's broader conservation mandate.

Previous Survey Findings (2021–2023)

The first range-wide dolphin survey provided India's most comprehensive baseline data on riverine dolphins:

- **Approximately 6,327 riverine dolphins** recorded nationwide
- **Highest populations:** Uttar Pradesh and Bihar
- Followed by **West Bengal and Assam**
- A **small but significant population of Indus River Dolphin** documented in the **Beas river system**, highlighting the conservation importance of northern river stretches

Environmental (Protection) Fund



Environmental (Protection) Fund: Operationalisation through January 2026 Rules

Why in the News

In **January 2026**, the Union Government notified detailed rules to operationalise the **Environmental (Protection) Fund**, giving effect to a key reform introduced under the **Jan Vishwas Act, 2023**. These rules provide a clear institutional and financial framework to ensure that monetary penalties imposed for environmental violations are directly utilised for environmental restoration and regulatory strengthening.

About the Environmental (Protection) Fund

The Environmental (Protection) Fund is a **statutory fund of the Government of India** created to channel proceeds from environmental penalties into activities that improve environmental quality.

Unlike earlier arrangements where penalties largely merged with general revenues, the fund institutionalises the principle of **“polluter pays for restoration”**, converting monetary penalties into **direct environmental remediation and governance outcomes**. The fund supports pollution control, ecosystem restoration, environmental monitoring, scientific research, clean technology development, and capacity building of regulatory institutions.

Legal and Policy Basis

- **Statutory backing:** Provided under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- **Rules notified:** Detailed operational rules issued in **January 2026**, specifying governance, fund flow, and utilisation.
- **Reform linkage:** Strengthened by the **Jan Vishwas Act, 2023**, which decriminalised several minor environmental offences while **retaining and rationalising monetary penalties**.

This approach reflects a shift from criminal prosecution towards **compliance-based, outcome-oriented environmental regulation**.

Nodal Authority

The fund is administered by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** or any other authority notified by the Central Government. Dedicated **Project Management Units (PMUs)** are established at both Central and State levels to ensure professional project appraisal, implementation, and monitoring.

Objectives

- Ensure that environmental penalties are **recycled into environmental protection and restoration**
- Strengthen pollution monitoring and regulatory capacity
- Promote clean technologies and scientific research

- Improve transparency and accountability in environmental governance

Sources of Funds

The rules specify multiple revenue streams for the fund, including:

- Penalties collected under the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981**
- Penalties under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**
- Interest or returns from investment of the fund
- Any other sources prescribed by the Central Government

Permitted Uses of the Fund

The rules identify **11 broad categories of eligible activities**, including:

- Pollution prevention, mitigation, and abatement projects
- Remediation and restoration of contaminated or degraded sites
- Procurement of advanced environmental monitoring equipment
- Strengthening laboratory and testing infrastructure
- Research and innovation in clean and low-carbon technologies
- Development of IT-enabled compliance and regulatory systems
- Capacity building and training of pollution control authorities

This ensures that spending is **purpose-specific** and directly linked to environmental outcomes.

Revenue Sharing Mechanism

To balance federal and national interests, the rules prescribe a clear sharing formula:

- **75%** of penalty proceeds are credited to the **Consolidated Fund of the concerned State or Union Territory**
- **25%** is retained by the **Central Government**

This incentivises States to strengthen enforcement while ensuring national-level support for large-scale or cross-cutting environmental initiatives.

Oversight, Audit, and Transparency

- The fund is subject to audit by the **Comptroller and Auditor General of India**, ensuring financial propriety.
- A **centralised online portal**, developed by the **Central Pollution Control Board**, tracks collections, allocations, and utilisation of funds.
- Public disclosures and digital tracking improve transparency and reduce discretion in fund usage.

Satellite data show India's major deltas sinking

Why in the News

A global scientific study published in Nature on 14 January has revealed widespread land subsidence across the world's major river deltas, with India's key deltas among the most severely affected. The research, based on high-resolution Sentinel-1 satellite observations, shows that human-induced factors now dominate natural processes, causing many delta regions to sink faster than local or global sea-level rise, thereby sharply increasing flood and climate-risk exposure.



Study at a Glance

- **Data source:** Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar (InSAR) from **ESA's Sentinel-1 satellites**
- **Observation period:** 2014–2023
- **Spatial resolution:** ~75 metres (among the finest global delta-scale assessments)
- **Global coverage:** 40 major river deltas
- **Indian coverage:** 6 major deltas

- **Human relevance:** Deltas globally support **over 340 million people**, host megacities, fertile agricultural lands, ports, and industrial hubs

The use of InSAR allows scientists to detect **millimetre-scale vertical land motion**, making it possible to distinguish long-term subsidence trends from seasonal fluctuations.

Indian Deltas Confirmed to be Sinking

The study confirms **systematic land subsidence** across the following Indian river deltas:

- Ganges–Brahmaputra Delta
- Brahmani Delta
- Mahanadi Delta
- Godavari Delta
- Cauvery Delta
- Kabani Delta

Extent of Impact

- **More than 90% of the total delta area** is affected in the **Ganges–Brahmaputra, Brahmani, and Mahanadi deltas**, indicating near-universal land lowering rather than isolated hotspots.

Key Quantitative Findings

- **Brahmani Delta:**
 - **77% of the area** is subsiding at **rates exceeding 5 mm per year**
- **Mahanadi Delta:**
 - **69% of the area** sinking faster than **5 mm per year**
- **Subsidence vs Sea-Level Rise:**
 - In the **Ganges, Brahmani, Mahanadi, Godavari, and Kabani deltas**, **land subsidence rates exceed regional sea-level rise**, meaning relative sea level is rising faster than climate models alone would predict.
- **Godavari Delta (Extreme Risk):**
 - Even the **95th percentile subsidence rate** is **higher than projected global sea-level rise under worst-case climate scenarios**, making it one of the world's most vulnerable large deltas.
- **Urban Hotspots:**
 - **Kolkata** shows **subsidence rates equal to or exceeding the delta average**,

driven by dense construction, groundwater withdrawal, and infrastructure loading.

Major Human Drivers Identified

The study highlights that **anthropogenic pressures now outweigh natural sedimentary processes** in most Indian deltas.

1. Unsustainable Groundwater Extraction

- Dominant driver in the **Ganges–Brahmaputra and Cauvery deltas**
- Excessive pumping causes **aquifer compaction**, leading to irreversible land lowering.

2. Rapid Urbanisation

- Especially significant in the **Brahmani delta**
- Heavy buildings, transport corridors, and industrial zones increase **surface load**, accelerating compaction of soft deltaic sediments.

3. Reduced Sediment Flux

- Prominent in the **Mahanadi and Kabani deltas**
- Upstream dams and embankments trap sediments that would otherwise **replenish and elevate delta surfaces**, weakening natural resilience.

4. Population Pressure

- High population density intensifies:
 - Groundwater use
 - Construction load
 - Land-use change
- This compounds subsidence while simultaneously increasing **exposure to floods, storm surges, and salinity intrusion**.

Why This Matters

- **Hidden Climate Multiplier:** Subsidence silently amplifies sea-level rise impacts, often **doubling or tripling flood risk** compared to climate-only projections.
- **Food Security Threat:** Indian deltas are major rice-growing regions; land lowering increases **soil salinity and waterlogging**.
- **Urban Risk:** Coastal cities face higher chances of **chronic flooding**, infrastructure damage, and displacement.
- **Policy Implication:**

- Climate adaptation strategies must integrate **groundwater regulation, sediment management, and land-use**

planning, not just sea-walls and embankments.

Governance

PANKHUDI Portal

Why in the News?

The Union Minister for Women and Child Development has launched **PANKHUDI**, an integrated digital portal aimed at improving the **ease of living for women and children** by streamlining Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and voluntary partnerships. The portal is envisioned as a single national platform to bring together government programmes, corporates, civil society, and citizens to enhance the reach, efficiency, and impact of welfare interventions.



Women & Child

Welfare Programmes and Schemes in India



About the PANKHUDI Portal

PANKHUDI is a **single-window, integrated digital platform** designed to facilitate structured engagement between stakeholders contributing to women- and child-centric development initiatives. It enables seamless mobilisation and utilisation of CSR funds and voluntary contributions while ensuring accountability and outcome-based monitoring.

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Women and Child Development

- **Nature:** National-level digital governance platform
- **Coverage:** Women and child development programmes across India

The portal addresses long-standing challenges of fragmented coordination, limited transparency, and procedural delays in social sector partnerships.

Objectives of PANKHUDI

- **Strengthen coordination** among government agencies, citizens, Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and corporates
- **Improve transparency and accountability** in CSR and voluntary social investments
- **Enhance service delivery and measurable outcomes** for women and children nationwide
- **Promote convergence** of public welfare schemes with private and philanthropic resources

Key Features of the Portal

1. Unified CSR Interface

- A **single digital platform** for individuals, NRIs, NGOs, corporates, and government bodies
- Simplifies onboarding, collaboration, and alignment with government welfare programmes
- Reduces duplication of efforts and improves targeting of resources

2. Priority Focus Areas

PANKHUDI prioritises high-impact sectors critical to human development:

- Nutrition and food security
- Health and maternal care
- Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- Child welfare and protection
- Women's safety, empowerment, and rehabilitation

3. Support to Flagship Missions

The portal digitally strengthens implementation and resource mobilisation for major national missions, including:

- **Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0** – nutrition and early childhood development
- **Mission Vatsalya** – child protection and care services
- **Mission Shakti** – women’s safety, security, and empowerment

4. End-to-End Transparency

- Online registration of stakeholders and digital proposal submission
- Time-bound digital approvals and real-time tracking of project status
- Outcome monitoring through dashboards and reports
- **Non-cash contributions only**, ensuring full traceability and reducing misuse of funds

Scale of Impact

PANKHUDI has been designed to operate at a **national scale**, integrating a vast network of grassroots and institutional infrastructure:

- **Over 14 lakh Anganwadi Centres**, forming the backbone of early childhood nutrition and care
- **Around 5,000 Child Care Institutions**, supporting children in need of care and protection
- **Nearly 800 One Stop Centres**, providing integrated support to women affected by violence
- **About 500 Shakti Niwas**, offering safe accommodation and rehabilitation
- **Around 400 Shakti Sadan**, supporting women in distress with shelter and services

This wide coverage ensures that CSR and voluntary contributions are channelled to areas with the highest social impact.

Significance of PANKHUDI

- **Reduces procedural friction** in government–private partnerships by digitising workflows
- **Enhances monitoring and convergence** of welfare schemes across ministries and stakeholders

- **Improves measurable impact** of CSR and philanthropic funding through outcome-based tracking
- **Strengthens digital governance** in the social sector, aligning with India’s broader e-governance and transparency goals

Show Cause Notice on Bargi Dam

Why in the News?

The **National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)** has issued a **show cause notice** to the **Narmada Valley Development Authority (NVDA)** after identifying **serious safety and compliance lapses at the Bargi Dam** in Madhya Pradesh. The action has drawn national attention as it reflects the stricter enforcement of the **Dam Safety Act, 2021**, especially for large, ageing, and strategically important dams.

About Bargi Dam



The **Bargi Dam**, officially known as the **Rani Avantibai Lodhi Sagar Project**, is a **major multipurpose river valley project** located in **Jabalpur district, Madhya Pradesh**. It is constructed across the **Narmada River**, one of India’s most important west-flowing rivers.

Core Purposes

- **Irrigation** for large agricultural areas
- **Drinking water supply** to urban and rural settlements
- **Hydroelectric power generation**
- Support for **fisheries, tourism, and recreation**

Historical Background

- The dam was built under the **Narmada Valley Development Project**, a long-term basin-level development plan for Madhya Pradesh.
- It was the **first major completed dam** among the series of Narmada projects in the state. Its early completion made it a **benchmark project** for irrigation-led regional development in central India.

Key Features

Spillway and Flood Management

- **21 spillway gates** regulate excess inflows during monsoon seasons.
- These gates play a critical role in **flood moderation and dam safety**, especially during extreme rainfall events increasingly linked to climate variability.

Bargi Diversion Project

- An extensive **canal network** designed to supply irrigation water to **drought-prone and rain-fed regions** of Madhya Pradesh.
- Enhances cropping intensity and agricultural resilience.

Reservoir System

- The large reservoir supports:
 - **Urban drinking water supply**
 - **Hydropower generation**
 - **Inland fisheries**
 - **Tourism and eco-recreation activities**

Significance of Bargi Dam

- **Drinking Water Security:**
Supplies water to **Jabalpur city** and surrounding districts, supporting both domestic and industrial needs.
- **Agricultural Support:**
Provides **assured irrigation**, reducing farmers' dependence on monsoon rainfall.
- **Energy Generation:**
Contributes to **renewable hydropower**, supporting regional energy demand.
- **Regional Development:**
Promotes employment, fisheries-based livelihoods, and **eco-tourism** around the reservoir.

Institutional Context

National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)

- Established under the **Dam Safety Act, 2021**.
- Functions as the **apex technical and regulatory body** for dam safety in India.
- Responsible for:
 - Surveillance and inspection of specified dams
 - Enforcing safety standards and emergency action plans
 - Issuing directions, advisories, and show cause notices

Narmada Valley Development Authority (NVDA)

- State-level authority responsible for:
 - Planning, execution, and management of Narmada basin projects
 - **Operation, maintenance, and safety compliance** of dams like Bargi

The show cause notice highlights **institutional accountability** and underscores the shift towards **risk-based dam management**, especially as many large dams in India cross several decades of operation.

PFRDA forms high-level committee for assured payouts under NPS

Why in the News?

The **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** has constituted a high-level expert committee to design a comprehensive regulatory framework for **assured pension payouts** under the **National Pension System (NPS)**.



About the Committee

- **Chairperson: M. S. Sahoo**, former Chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India

(IBBI), known for institution-building and regulatory reforms.

- **Composition:** 15 members drawn from diverse domains including:
 - Law and regulation
 - Actuarial science
 - Insurance and pensions
 - Capital markets
 - Finance and economics
 - Academia
- **Flexibility:** The committee has the authority to invite external experts, intermediaries, annuity providers, and market participants as special invitees.
- **Nature:** A standing advisory committee focused on **structured and assured pension payout mechanisms** under the NPS framework.

This multidisciplinary structure is intended to balance financial innovation with prudential regulation and consumer protection.

Key Objectives and Terms of Reference

1. Assured Payout Framework

- Draft detailed regulations for **assured and structured pension payouts**, building on the PFRDA consultation paper issued on **30 September 2025**.
- Explore models that can provide **predictable post-retirement income**, addressing one of the main concerns of NPS subscribers.

2. Seamless Transition from Accumulation to Decumulation

- Design mechanisms for a smooth shift from the **accumulation phase** (working life contributions) to the **decumulation phase** (retirement payouts).
- Reduce operational friction and behavioural risks faced by retirees at the point of exit.

3. Market-Based Assurance Models

- Examine **novation and settlement mechanisms** that allow transfer of longevity and investment risks to regulated entities such as insurers or specialised pension providers.

- Ensure that any guarantees offered are **legally enforceable**, transparent, and backed by adequate capital.

4. Operational Design and Product Structure

- Define:
 - Lock-in periods and withdrawal limits
 - Pricing and annuity conversion mechanisms
 - Fee and charge structures to avoid excessive cost burdens
- Ensure products remain flexible while preserving long-term sustainability.

5. Risk Management, Capital and Legal Oversight

- Specify **capital adequacy and solvency norms** for entities offering assured payouts.
- Examine **tax implications** of in-system assured pension products to ensure clarity and neutrality.
- Align the framework with existing financial sector regulations to avoid regulatory arbitrage.

6. Consumer Protection and Transparency

- Develop a **standardised disclosure framework** to:
 - Prevent mis-selling
 - Clearly communicate risks, returns, and guarantees
 - Manage subscriber expectations regarding assured versus market-linked components
- Strengthen grievance redressal and oversight mechanisms.

Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)

Why in the News?

Shri **Praveen Vashista**, IPS (Bihar cadre, 1991 batch), has been appointed as a Vigilance Commissioner in the **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)**. He took the oath of office on **16 January 2026**, strengthening the leadership of India's apex anti-corruption institution at a time when transparency and integrity in public administration remain key governance priorities.



About the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)

The Central Vigilance Commission is the **apex integrity and vigilance institution of the Government of India**. It plays a crucial role in promoting **integrity, transparency, and accountability** in public administration by exercising superintendence over vigilance matters in Central Government organisations.

Mandate and Functions

- Prevent corruption in Central Government ministries, departments, public sector undertakings (PSUs), banks, and autonomous bodies
- Exercise supervisory control over vigilance administration
- Advise the Central Government and organisations on vigilance matters
- Monitor investigations of corruption cases referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), particularly those under the Prevention of Corruption Act

The CVC functions as an **independent body**, ensuring that vigilance mechanisms are insulated from political or administrative interference.

Establishment and Statutory Status

- **Established in 1964** through an **executive resolution** of the Government of India
- Initially lacked statutory backing, which limited its enforcement authority
- Granted **statutory status** under the **Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003**, significantly strengthening its powers, autonomy, and credibility

The 2003 Act marked a turning point by formally defining the CVC's powers, functions, and institutional framework.

Historical Background

- The origin of the CVC can be traced to the recommendations of the **Santhanam Committee (1962–1964)**, officially known as the Committee on Prevention of Corruption
- The committee highlighted the need for an independent central vigilance authority to combat corruption effectively
- For nearly four decades, the CVC functioned without statutory authority, relying mainly on executive support
- The enactment of the CVC Act, 2003 transformed it into an **independent statutory body**, enhancing its supervisory and advisory role over vigilance matters across the Central Government

Composition and Members

The Central Vigilance Commission consists of:

- **Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC)** – Chairperson
- **Up to two Vigilance Commissioners** – Members

Appointment Process

- Appointed by the **President of India**
- Based on recommendations of a **high-level committee** comprising:
 - The Prime Minister (Chairperson)
 - The Union Minister of Home Affairs
 - The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha (or the leader of the largest opposition party)

Tenure

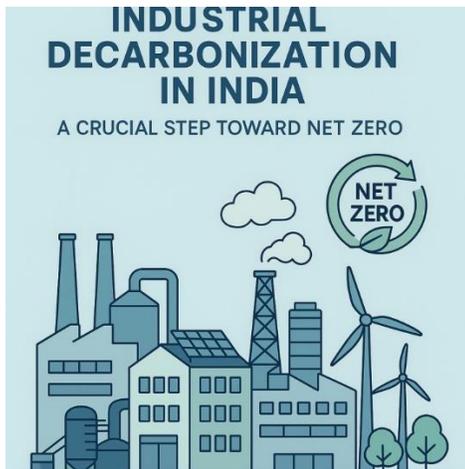
- **Four years or up to 65 years of age**, whichever is earlier
- Members are not eligible for reappointment, ensuring independence and impartiality

India expands GHG emission intensity regime to four more sectors

Why in the News?

The Union Government has **expanded the Greenhouse Gas Emission Intensity (GEI) reduction regime** to four additional industrial sectors through **amended rules notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.

This step operationalises India's Carbon Credit Trading framework and marks a shift towards compliance-based climate mitigation, using market mechanisms rather than criminal penalties to reduce industrial emissions.



Newly Included Industrial Sectors

The amended rules bring the following sectors under mandatory GEI targets:

- Petroleum refineries
- Petrochemicals
- Textiles
- Secondary aluminium (recycling-based aluminium production)

These sectors are in addition to the four sectors notified earlier:

- Aluminium
- Cement
- Chlor-alkali
- Pulp and paper

Together, these sectors account for a significant share of India's industrial energy consumption and carbon emissions, making them critical to India's decarbonisation pathway.

Coverage and Industrial Footprint

The expanded regime now covers 208 industrial units across India, distributed as follows:

- 173 textile units
- 21 petroleum refineries
- 11 petrochemical units
- 3 secondary aluminium units

Major public sector and private enterprises under the framework include:

- ONGC
- Indian Oil Corporation
- Bharat Petroleum
- Hindustan Petroleum
- Numaligarh Refinery
- Reliance Industries

The inclusion of these firms ensures that both public and private sector emitters participate in India's carbon market.

Legal and Policy Framework

- The expansion has been notified as the Greenhouse Gases Emission Intensity Target Amendment Rules
- Issued under the compliance mechanism of the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS), 2023
- The scheme is implemented and enforced by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

This framework creates a legally binding obligation on identified industries to improve emission efficiency.

What is a GEI (Greenhouse Gas Emission Intensity) Target?

A GEI target mandates industries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions per unit of output, rather than imposing absolute emission caps.

Key features:

- **Baseline year:** 2023–24
- **Target period:** From 2025–26 onwards
- **Overall reduction requirement:**
 - 3% to 7% reduction in emission intensity by 2026–27, depending on the sector

This approach allows industrial growth while ensuring progressive decoupling of emissions from production.

Compliance Mechanism and Penalties

Industrial units have two compliance options:

1. Achieve prescribed GEI reduction targets, or
2. Purchase and submit Carbon Credit Certificates equivalent to the emission shortfall

Non-compliance penalty:

- Levied as environmental compensation by CPCB
- Amount equals twice the average carbon credit price in that trading cycle
- Must be paid within 90 days

This system creates a **strong financial incentive for early compliance**, while supporting the development of a domestic carbon market.

Climate and Economic Significance

- Supports India's **Net Zero target of 2070**
- Strengthens delivery of India's **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** under the **Paris Agreement**
- Encourages **energy efficiency, cleaner fuels, waste heat recovery, electrification, and low-carbon technologies** in hard-to-abate sectors
- Promotes **market-driven decarbonisation**, replacing criminal sanctions with price-based signals

Internet Governance Capacity Building Programme

Why in the News

India marked one year of the **Internet Governance Internship and Capacity Building Scheme (IGICBS)**, underscoring its growing importance in building a skilled talent pool capable of engaging with complex national and global internet governance processes and effectively representing India's strategic interests in digital policy forums.

Key Institutions Involved

- **National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI)**
- **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**

NIXI implements the scheme under the policy guidance of MeitY, reflecting a strong government–institution partnership in strengthening India's digital governance ecosystem.

About IGICBS

The Internet Governance Internship and Capacity Building Scheme (IGICBS) is a **first-of-its-kind national capacity building initiative**, launched in **2024**, aimed at developing **human capital in the field of internet governance**.

Core Features

- Targets **students and young professionals** from **technology, law, international relations, and public policy** backgrounds.
- Combines **expert-led training, structured mentorship, and hands-on internships**.
- Focuses on the intersection of **policy, technology, law, and academia**, enabling interdisciplinary understanding.
- Designed to demystify complex domains such as:
 - Internet architecture and critical resources
 - Cyber norms and digital public policy
 - Data governance, privacy, and cybersecurity
 - Multistakeholder decision-making models

The scheme addresses a long-standing gap in India's digital ecosystem by creating trained professionals who can meaningfully contribute to both **technical standard-setting and policy negotiations**.

Key Achievements in the First Year

In its first year of implementation, IGICBS has delivered measurable outcomes:

- **10,000+ participants trained and engaged**, making it one of the largest structured internet governance capacity-building efforts globally.
- Creation of a **national pipeline of internet governance professionals**, ready for long-term engagement.
- **Enhanced India's participation** in global internet governance and technical standard-setting discussions.
- **Significant increase in youth participation** in multistakeholder platforms involving governments, private sector, civil society, and the technical community.

These achievements indicate a shift from ad hoc representation towards **institutionalised and sustained engagement**.

Strategic Significance

IGICBS holds long-term strategic relevance for India's digital future:

- **Strengthens India's voice in global internet governance**, ensuring that developing country

perspectives are better reflected in global norms.

- Supports the creation of a **secure, inclusive, open, and resilient digital ecosystem**, aligned with democratic values.
- Reinforces India's vision of **knowledge-led digital governance**, where policy positions are backed by technical and legal expertise.
- Builds domestic capacity for engagement in:

- Global internet governance discussions
- Technical standard bodies
- Multilateral and multistakeholder digital policy forums

By investing in people rather than only infrastructure, IGICBS represents a **strategic shift towards long-term digital sovereignty through expertise**.

History

1000 Years of Survival of Somnath Temple

Why in the News?

The Prime Minister of India recently highlighted the **thousand-year survival of the Somnath Temple**, marking **1,000 years since the 1026 CE attack by Mahmud of Ghazni**. The reference underscored Somnath's enduring significance as a **symbol of India's civilisational continuity, spiritual resilience, and cultural memory**, having withstood repeated cycles of destruction and reconstruction over centuries.



Somnath Temple

The **Somnath Temple** is one of the **12 sacred Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva**, making it among the most revered pilgrimage sites in Hindu tradition. It is often referred to as the **"Eternal Shrine"**, reflecting its extraordinary history of destruction and revival across a millennium.

Location

- **Prabhas Patan**, near **Veraval**, in the **Saurashtra region of Gujarat**
- Situated on the **Arabian Sea coast**

- Located at the **Triveni Sangam** of the Kapila, Hiran, and the mythological Saraswati rivers

The coastal and confluence location has added to the temple's spiritual symbolism, linking land, sea, and sacred rivers.

Historical Significance

Ancient Origins

- References to Somnath are found in sacred texts such as the **Shiva Purana**.
- Archaeological and literary evidence indicates **continuous worship since antiquity**.
- The temple underwent **multiple reconstructions even in pre-medieval times**, highlighting its long-standing religious importance.

The 1026 CE Event

- In **1026 CE**, the temple was attacked and plundered by **Mahmud of Ghazni**.
- This event is widely regarded as a **major historical rupture** in Indian history, symbolising large-scale cultural and religious upheaval.
- Despite extensive destruction, the sanctity of the site remained undiminished in popular memory and tradition.

Medieval Period

- The temple was rebuilt by **Kumarapala**, a ruler of the **Chaulukya dynasty**.
- Subsequent reconstructions were undertaken under the **Chudasama kings**.
- It faced repeated destruction during later **Sultanate invasions**, yet reconstruction followed each episode.

Symbol of Resilience

- Historical records suggest that the Somnath Temple was **destroyed at least six times**.
- After every destruction, it was **rebuilt by devotees and rulers**, reaffirming faith and continuity.
- Over time, Somnath evolved into a powerful **symbol of civilisational resilience**, spiritual endurance, and collective memory for Indian society.

Architectural Features

- Constructed in the **Chalukya (Solanki) architectural style**.
- Features a **prominent shikhara**, intricately carved stone walls, and ornate pillars.
- The **garbhagriha** houses the sacred **Jyotirlinga of Lord Shiva**.
- A famous inscription at the temple proclaims that **no landmass lies between Somnath and the South Pole**, symbolising cosmic alignment and spiritual centrality.

Modern Reconstruction

Post-Independence Revival

- Reconstruction was initiated in **1947**, soon after India's independence.
- The effort was led by **Vallabhbhai Patel**, who viewed the rebuilding as a **civilisational responsibility** rather than merely a religious act.
- The temple was designed by renowned architect **Prabhashankar Sompura**, using traditional temple architecture principles.

Inauguration

- The rebuilt temple was inaugurated on **11 May 1951** by **Rajendra Prasad**.
- The inauguration took place despite intense political and ideological debates of the period, reinforcing the idea of cultural restoration within a modern republic.

Present Management

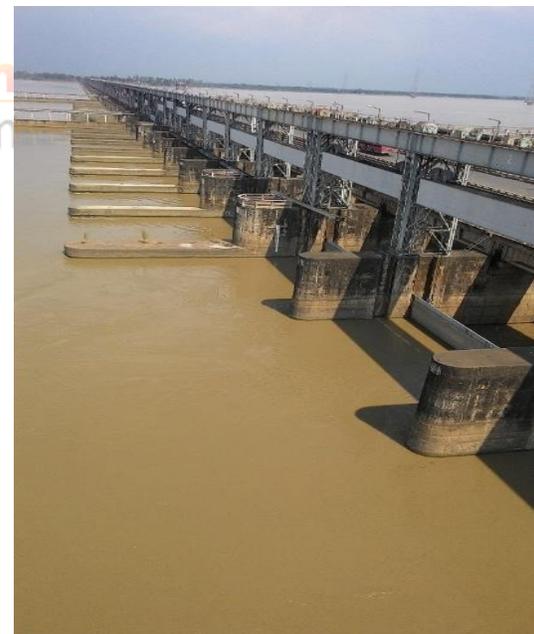
- The temple is managed by the **Somnath Trust**.
- The Trust is chaired by the **Prime Minister of India**, reflecting the temple's national cultural importance.

India Bangladesh Ganga Water Sharing Treaty (1996)

Why in the News?

Senior officials from the **Union Ministry of Jal Shakti** recently visited **Farakka Barrage** as the **India–Bangladesh Ganga Water Sharing Treaty** approaches its expiry in **December 2026**. The visit assumes significance as both countries are expected to begin **renewal and renegotiation discussions**, given the treaty's critical role in managing dry-season water sharing and bilateral water cooperation.

About the India–Bangladesh Ganga Water Sharing Treaty



The **India–Bangladesh Ganga Water Sharing Treaty** is a **bilateral agreement** that governs the sharing of waters of the **Ganga (Ganges) River** during the **lean or dry season** (January–May).

- **Date of signing:** 12 December 1996
- **Validity:** 30 years (1996–2026)
- **Nature:** Long-term, rule-based framework
- **Renewal:** By mutual consent of both countries

The treaty regulates water releases at **Farakka Barrage**, located in West Bengal, ensuring equitable downstream flows into Bangladesh.

Water availability and compliance are monitored downstream at **Hardinge Bridge**, a key observation point on the Ganga in Bangladesh.

Background: Evolution of the Dispute

Disagreements over dry-season flows of the Ganga date back to the **1950s**, soon after India initiated plans for the Farakka Barrage to divert water for maintaining the navigability of the **Hooghly River** and Kolkata Port.

- **1977**: First short-term water-sharing agreement
- **1982 & 1985**: Interim Memoranda of Understanding
- These arrangements lacked permanence and were often affected by hydrological variability and political changes

The **1996 treaty** marked a turning point by introducing a **stable, predictable, and long-term cooperative mechanism**, reducing uncertainty and diplomatic friction.

Key Features of the Treaty

1. Ten-Day Sharing Schedule

- Applies from **January to May** each year
- Water allocation is based on a **formula using historical average flows (1949–1988)** at Farakka
- The flow is calculated in **10-day blocks**, ensuring periodic adjustments based on availability

2. Low-Flow Consultation Clause

- If the Ganga's flow at Farakka falls below **50,000 cusecs** during any 10-day period
- **Immediate bilateral consultation** is mandatory
- This clause reflects flexibility and cooperative problem-solving during extreme hydrological stress

3. Minimum Release Assurance

- India commits to ensuring downstream releases to Bangladesh
- India may withdraw **up to 200 cusecs** between Farakka and the Bangladesh border for "reasonable uses," without affecting treaty obligations

4. Joint Committee Mechanism

- A **Joint Committee** with equal representation from both countries oversees implementation

- Responsibilities include:
 - **Daily monitoring** of flows at Farakka and Hardinge Bridge
 - Preparation of **annual reports**
 - Addressing disputes and operational issues through dialogue

5. Review and Renewal Provisions

- Formal review every **five years**, or earlier if required
- Renewal after 2026 is **not automatic** and depends on **mutual agreement**, making diplomatic engagement crucial in the coming period

Contemporary Significance

The treaty remains central to **India–Bangladesh relations**, particularly in the context of:

- Increasing **climate variability and reduced dry-season flows**
- Rising water demand due to population growth, agriculture, and industry
- The need for **basin-level cooperation** and data sharing

The recent visit by Jal Shakti Ministry officials signals India's intent to undertake **technical assessments, infrastructure reviews, and confidence-building measures** ahead of renewal talks.

Zehanpora Buddhist Site and Kashmir's Ancient Buddhist Past

Why in the News?

Archaeologists have uncovered **ancient Buddhist stupas and extensive settlement remains at Zehanpora in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir**, shedding new light on the region's **2,000-year-old Buddhist heritage**. The discovery is being hailed as one of the most significant archaeological breakthroughs in Kashmir in recent decades.

What makes the find especially remarkable is that the excavation was guided by **century-old photographs preserved in a French museum**, which helped researchers precisely identify the long-lost structures and validate local historical hypotheses.

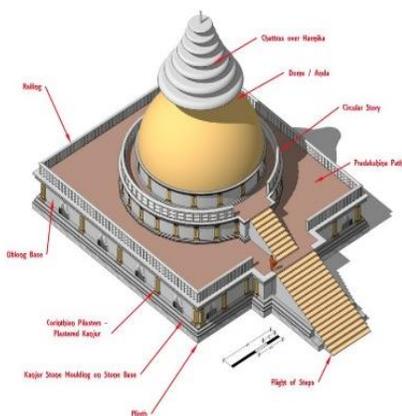
About the Zehanpora Discovery



- **Location:** Zehanpora village, Baramulla district, along the banks of the **Jhelum River**
- **Strategic setting:** The site lies on an **ancient Silk Route corridor** that historically connected Kashmir with **Central Asia and Kandahar**, making it a crucial node of trade and cultural exchange
- **Excavation timeline:** Systematic excavations began in **July 2025**
- **Survey methods used:**
 - Drone-based reconnaissance
 - Aerial photogrammetry
 - Ground-truthing and stratigraphic excavation

The combination of modern technology with historical visual records allowed archaeologists to relocate structures that had disappeared from the visible landscape over the last century.

Key Archaeological Findings



The excavation has revealed a **well-planned religious and urban complex**, indicating sustained occupation over several centuries.

Major discoveries include:

- **Three Buddhist stupas**, one of which displays **apsidal architecture**
- A clearly defined **pradakshina path**, confirming ritual circumambulation practices
- Remains of an **urban-type settlement**, likely including:
 - **Chaityas** (prayer halls)
 - **Viharas** (monastic residences)

Artefacts recovered:

- **Kushan-era pottery shards**, indicating everyday domestic and ritual use
- **Copper objects**, possibly ritual implements or household tools
- **Stone walls and foundations**, suggesting permanent and organised construction

Together, these finds point to **long-term monastic activity closely integrated with urban life**, rather than an isolated religious outpost.

Historical Significance

Link to the Gandhara Buddhist Network



The Zehanpora discovery firmly connects Kashmir to the **Gandhara Buddhist cultural and intellectual network**, which flourished across parts of present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, and northwest India.

Key implications:

- Kashmir emerges as a **central hub of Buddhist learning**, not a peripheral region
- Demonstrates strong **cultural, religious, and intellectual exchange** between South Asia and Central Asia
- Reinforces the role of Kashmir as a **bridge between Indian and trans-Himalayan Buddhist traditions**

Chronological Context

- **3rd century BCE:** Buddhism enters Kashmir during the reign of **Ashoka**, who is credited with promoting Buddhism across the Indian subcontinent
- **1st–3rd century CE:** Buddhism flourishes under the **Kushan Empire**, which actively patronised:
 - Urbanisation
 - Long-distance trade
 - Construction of stupas and monasteries

The architectural style and material culture at Zehanpora strongly align with this **Kushan phase of expansion and consolidation**.

Literary Corroboration



The findings provide rare archaeological confirmation of classical textual accounts.

- The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim **Xuanzang** (7th century CE) recorded entering Kashmir via the Silk Route
- He described the region as rich in **monasteries, scholars, and Buddhist learning**

The Zehanpora excavation offers **material evidence that substantiates these literary descriptions**, bridging the gap between texts and archaeology.

Karnataka Land Revenue Amendment and Jamma Bane System in Coorg



Why in the News?

The Karnataka government has amended its land revenue framework to modernise and legally streamline the **Jamma Bane land record system** in Kodagu (Coorg). The **Karnataka Land Revenue (Second Amendment) Act, 2025** received the assent of Governor **Thawarchand Gehlot** on January 7, 2025.

The amendment aims to resolve long-pending ownership ambiguities associated with Jamma Bane lands, improve land administration, and enable legitimate landholders to access formal credit, undertake lawful transactions, and reduce disputes.



About Jamma Bane Lands

Jamma Bane is a **unique and region-specific land tenure system** found **only in Kodagu district of Karnataka**. The term Jamma literally means **hereditary**, reflecting the nature of these grants that were traditionally passed down through generations.

These lands were originally granted between **1600 and 1800** by the erstwhile **Coorg (Kodagu) kings**, and later recognised and continued by the **British colonial administration**. The grants were issued primarily **in return for military service**, as Kodagu had a strong martial tradition. Consequently, Jamma Bane lands are closely associated with the **Kodava community**, which historically formed the backbone of local defence forces.

Nature and Composition of Jamma Bane Holdings

Jamma Bane holdings typically consist of **two distinct categories of land**, both integral to the traditional agrarian-forest economy of Kodagu:

- **Wetlands (Jamma lands):**
These low-lying areas were used mainly for **paddy cultivation**, ensuring food security for the landholding family.
- **Bane lands (forested highlands):**
These were originally forested tracts located on hill slopes. Over time, many of these areas were **converted into coffee plantations**, forming the basis of Kodagu's globally renowned coffee economy.

This dual structure linked agriculture, forestry, and livelihood in a sustainable manner long before modern land-use planning concepts emerged.

Core Problem in the Traditional System

Under the old land record system:

- Ownership of Jamma Bane land was **recorded permanently in the name of the original pattedar (grantee)**.
- Names of successors were added only as **additional entries**, without altering the primary ownership record.

As generations passed, this practice created serious administrative and legal complications, including:

- **Absence of clear and marketable title** for current landholders
- **Difficulties in sale, purchase, or legal transfer** of land
- **Inability to secure bank loans**, as financial institutions require clear ownership documents

- **Frequent inheritance and succession disputes**, often leading to prolonged litigation

These issues became more acute with rising land values, increased formalisation of agriculture, and stricter regulatory requirements.

Significance of the 2025 Amendment

The Karnataka Land Revenue (Second Amendment) Act, 2025 seeks to **modernise colonial-era record-keeping practices** by enabling clearer recognition of present-day ownership and succession rights, while respecting the historical character of Jamma Bane grants.

Key objectives include:

- Updating land records to reflect **current legal heirs** more accurately
- Reducing ambiguity in ownership and improving **title clarity**
- Facilitating **access to institutional credit** for farmers and coffee growers

PM Modi highlights Parbati Giri's contribution to freedom struggle

Why in the News

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** paid tribute to **Parbati Giri** on the occasion of her **birth centenary**, acknowledging her contribution to India's freedom struggle and her lifelong commitment to social service after Independence. She was also remembered earlier in the Prime Minister's radio programme Mann Ki Baat, underlining her enduring relevance as a symbol of grassroots nationalism and compassion-driven service.



Who was Parbati Giri?

Parbati Giri was a **freedom fighter from Odisha**, widely revered as the “**Mother Teresa of Western Odisha**” for her selfless dedication to the poor, tribals and marginalised communities.

- Born in **1926** in undivided Sambalpur region (present-day western Odisha)
- Joined the freedom movement at the remarkably young age of **16**
- Combined nationalism with Gandhian ideals of service, simplicity and sacrifice
- Emerged as a powerful example of women’s participation from India’s tribal and backward regions

Her life reflects how the national movement was not limited to urban centres but was deeply rooted in rural and tribal India.

Role in the Freedom Struggle

Parbati Giri actively participated in the **Quit India Movement of 1942**, one of the most intense mass uprisings against British colonial rule.

- Mobilised local communities in western Odisha against colonial authority
- Faced repression and hardship at a young age, reflecting the sacrifices made by women freedom fighters

- Represented the **often-overlooked contribution of women and tribal belts** in India’s independence struggle
- Part of the broader **mass-based resistance**, which made British rule increasingly ungovernable during the 1940s

Post-Independence Contributions

After Independence, Parbati Giri chose a life of **social service over political power**, dedicating herself entirely to nation-building at the grassroots level.

Key Areas of Work

- **Tribal welfare:** Worked closely with tribal communities, focusing on dignity, education and basic living conditions
- **Healthcare:** Helped provide care and support to the sick, elderly and destitute
- **Women empowerment:** Encouraged education, self-reliance and social awareness among women
- **Child welfare:** Established and supported **orphanages and welfare institutions** for abandoned and vulnerable children

Her work was guided by compassion rather than institutional backing, making her service deeply personal and community-driven.

International Relations

US Withdraws from UNFCCC and IPCC

Why in the News?

The United States President **Donald Trump** has signed a presidential memorandum withdrawing the United States from **66 international organisations**, including the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**. With this decision, the United States has become the **first country to formally initiate withdrawal from the UNFCCC**, marking a major shift in global climate governance and multilateral cooperation.



This move signals a retreat from international climate commitments at a time when global temperatures, extreme weather events, and climate-related economic risks are intensifying worldwide.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The **UNFCCC** is the **foundational international treaty** governing global cooperation on climate change. It establishes the legal, institutional, and procedural framework under which countries negotiate collective responses to climate change.

Establishment and Membership

- **Adopted:** 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit (UNCED)
- **Entered into force:** 1994
- **Membership:** Near-universal participation, with almost all UN member states as Parties

The Convention is built on the principle of **common but differentiated responsibilities**, recognising that while all countries must address climate change, developed nations bear greater historical responsibility.

Key Roles and Functions of the UNFCCC

The UNFCCC acts as the backbone of the global climate regime by:

- Organising the annual **Conference of the Parties (COP)** meetings, the highest decision-making body on climate issues
- Hosting landmark climate agreements, most notably the **Paris Agreement**, which seeks to:
 - Limit global warming to **well below 2°C**, preferably **1.5°C**, above pre-industrial levels
- Establishing global systems for:
 - **Greenhouse gas emissions reporting**
 - **Transparency and accountability frameworks**
 - **Climate finance mechanisms** to support developing countries
 - **Carbon markets and rule-making** under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement

Through these mechanisms, the UNFCCC enables coordinated climate action, trust-building, and long-term policy predictability.

Legal Implications of US Withdrawal from the UNFCCC

The withdrawal has far-reaching legal and diplomatic consequences:

- The exit takes effect **one year after formal notification** is submitted
- Withdrawal from the UNFCCC **automatically triggers exit from the Paris Agreement**, as the latter is legally anchored within the Convention
- The US will:
 - Cease to be a **Party to COP negotiations**
 - Lose formal decision-making and bargaining rights
 - Be permitted to attend meetings only as an **observer**, without voting or negotiating authority

This significantly diminishes the US's ability to shape global climate rules, finance mechanisms, and long-term mitigation pathways.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The **IPCC** is the UN's leading scientific body on climate change, jointly established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Unlike the UNFCCC, the IPCC does not make policy. Instead, it provides **policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive scientific assessments** that underpin global climate negotiations.

Functions of the IPCC

The IPCC plays a critical role by:

- Producing **comprehensive assessment reports** on:
 - The physical science of climate change
 - Impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation
 - Mitigation pathways and emissions reduction strategies
- Establishing **scientific benchmarks** used in international negotiations, including temperature thresholds and carbon budgets
- Informing:
 - National climate policies
 - International agreements
 - Climate litigation and risk assessments

Its assessment reports are regarded as the **gold standard of climate science** worldwide.

Impact of US Exit from the IPCC Framework

The US withdrawal affects both science and diplomacy:

- **Reduced US influence** over the framing and emphasis of global climate science assessments
- **Restrictions on formal nomination** of US experts as lead authors or coordinating authors in IPCC reports
- US scientists may still:
 - Participate as **reviewers**
 - Contribute through **non-governmental or academic channels**

While scientific collaboration may continue informally, the absence of official backing weakens institutional engagement and leadership.

Global Risks Report 2026



Global Risks Report 2026

Why in the News?

The **World Economic Forum** released the **Global Risks Report 2026**, which identifies **goeconomic confrontation** as the most severe global risk in the near term. The findings are based on the Global Risks Perception Survey, which gathered insights from over 1,300 experts across academia, business, government, international organisations, and civil society worldwide. The report was published ahead of the WEF's annual meeting in **Davos**, where global leaders discuss pressing economic and geopolitical challenges.

About the Report

The Global Risks Report 2026 is the **21st edition** of this flagship WEF publication. It provides a forward-looking assessment of risks that could shape global stability and

prosperity. The analysis is structured across **three time horizons**:

- **Immediate term (2026)**: Risks likely to have an impact within the next year
- **Short to medium term (up to 2028)**: Risks emerging or intensifying over the next two to three years
- **Long term (up to 2036)**: Structural risks with enduring consequences over the next decade

By integrating expert perception data with trend analysis, the report aims to help policymakers and institutions anticipate shocks rather than merely react to them.

Top Global Risks in 2026

Goeconomic confrontation has been ranked as the **number one risk** for 2026. This reflects the increasing use of economic tools—such as **tariffs, sanctions, investment screening, export controls, and restrictions over critical minerals**—as instruments of strategic competition between major powers.

- The risk is closely linked to **state-based armed conflict**, which ranks second.
- Together, these risks highlight a broader **retreat from multilateral cooperation** and the growing trend of **economic weaponisation**, where trade and finance are leveraged for geopolitical influence.

The report notes that prolonged goeconomic tensions could fragment global supply chains, slow economic growth, and deepen divisions between geopolitical blocs.

Economic Risks: A Sharp Upward Trend

Economic risks have shown the **steepest rise in rankings** compared to previous editions:

- **Economic downturn** has climbed to **rank 11**, reflecting fears of weak growth, high interest rates, and uneven recovery across regions.
- **Inflation**, though easing in some economies, remains volatile and has risen to **rank 21**, driven by supply-side disruptions and geopolitical instability.

- **Asset bubble burst** has moved up to **rank 18**, signalling concerns about overvalued financial and real estate markets.

These risks are driven by **high global debt levels, financial fragility, and persistent geopolitical rivalry**, which together reduce the resilience of the global economic system.

Technological Risks

Technological threats continue to rise in prominence:

- **Misinformation and disinformation** rank **second** in the short-term outlook, underlining their capacity to influence elections, fuel social unrest, and undermine trust in institutions.
- **Cyber insecurity** is ranked **sixth**, reflecting growing threats to critical infrastructure, financial systems, and government networks.

The report highlights **artificial intelligence (AI)** as a double-edged sword:

- **Adverse outcomes of AI technologies** are ranked **30th** in the two-year outlook but jump dramatically to **5th** in the ten-year horizon.
- Key concerns include **job displacement, social and mental health impacts, algorithmic bias, and the potential military use of AI**, especially in autonomous weapons and surveillance systems.

Societal Risks

Societal risks are increasingly interconnected with political and economic stresses:

- **Rising political and social polarisation** is eroding social cohesion in many countries.
- **Weakening trust in institutions**—governments, media, and even science—has been identified as a critical vulnerability.

Notably, **inequality** has been identified as the **most interconnected global risk for the second consecutive year**, as it amplifies political instability, social unrest, and resistance to reforms. The report also points to the growing divide between “**street narratives**” and **elite perspectives**, posing challenges to democratic resilience and effective governance.

Environmental Risks: Short-Term Dip, Long-Term Dominance

In the short term, environmental risks appear **deprioritised** due to immediate geopolitical and economic pressures:

- **Extreme weather events** fell from **rank 2 to rank 4**.
- **Pollution** dropped from **rank 6 to rank 9**.
- **Biodiversity loss and earth system change** declined sharply in near-term rankings.

However, the long-term outlook tells a different story:

- **Environmental risks occupy half of the top ten risks** over the next decade.
- **Extreme weather** is ranked as the **top long-term global risk**.
- The environmental category is viewed with the **highest level of pessimism** over the ten-year horizon, reflecting concerns over climate tipping points, ecosystem collapse, and insufficient global action.

Transition in the Global Order

The report underscores a fundamental shift in the international system:

- **68% of respondents** expect a **contested multipolar world order** over the next decade.
- Only **6%** foresee a revival of a **unipolar, rules-based system**.

Institutions rooted in the post-war architecture of the **Bretton Woods Conference**—including global financial and governance frameworks—are under increasing strain.

BRICS Plus Naval Drills and South Africa Probe



Why in the News?

South Africa has launched an internal probe into **Iran's participation in BRICS Plus naval exercises** conducted near Cape Town, following reports that President Cyril Ramaphosa had preferred Iran's withdrawal to avoid diplomatic friction with the United States. The controversy has highlighted the delicate balance South Africa seeks to maintain between its strategic autonomy within BRICS and its economic ties with Western partners.

Key Facts

- The naval drills were held in **False Bay**, a strategically sensitive maritime zone close to **Simon's Town Naval Base**, which historically hosts facilities used by Western navies.
- Participating countries included **China, Russia and Iran**, conducting joint manoeuvres under the **BRICS Plus** framework.
- Iranian naval vessels were actively involved throughout the exercise, conducting coordinated operations alongside other participants.
- South Africa's Defence Ministry has ordered a formal inquiry to determine whether presidential guidance regarding Iran's participation was ignored, misunderstood, or never formally communicated.
- The investigation is focused on civil–military coordination and adherence to executive foreign policy directives.

Diplomatic and Economic Context

The naval drills coincided with sensitive diplomatic engagements between South Africa and the United States over the possible extension of the **African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)**, a preferential trade arrangement that allows duty-free access for eligible African countries to the US market.

- South Africa is among the largest beneficiaries of AGOA, particularly in **automobiles, agricultural products, and manufactured goods**.
- There is concern within Pretoria that visible military cooperation with Iran—currently under

extensive US sanctions—could jeopardise South Africa's eligibility or invite stricter scrutiny.

- The **US Embassy in South Africa** formally conveyed its concern over Iran's participation, signalling unease over the strategic implications of the drills.

Given South Africa's fragile economic recovery and high dependence on exports, any disruption to AGOA benefits could have significant macroeconomic consequences.

Strategic Sensitivities Around the Naval Exercise

False Bay's proximity to Simon's Town adds to the controversy. Simon's Town has long been associated with strategic naval infrastructure, and joint drills involving sanctioned states near such installations raise red flags for Western partners.

From South Africa's perspective, the exercises were framed as part of routine multilateral defence cooperation. However, critics argue that the timing and participant mix amplified geopolitical signalling at a moment when South Africa was seeking to reassure Washington of its continued engagement with the West.

About BRICS Plus

The **BRICS** grouping is a platform for cooperation among major emerging economies, originally comprising **Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa**. The grouping has expanded in recent years under the "BRICS Plus" format to include additional members.

Currently, BRICS consists of **10 countries**:

- Brazil
- China
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Russian Federation
- South Africa
- United Arab Emirates

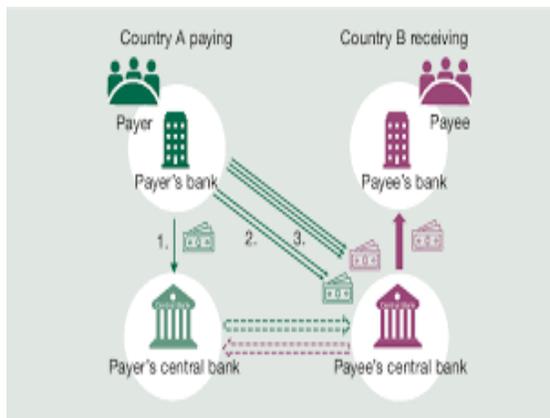
BRICS Plus initiatives increasingly extend beyond economics into areas such as **defence cooperation, energy security, and geopolitical coordination**,

reflecting the bloc's ambition to shape a more multipolar global order.

RBI proposes CBDC linkage on BRICS agenda

Why in the News?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has advised the Government of India to place a proposal on linking Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) on the agenda of the BRICS 2026 Summit, which India is scheduled to host. The proposal reflects India's intent to shape the global discourse on sovereign digital currencies and cross-border payment reforms among major emerging economies.



Key Proposal

The RBI has suggested interlinking the CBDCs of BRICS member countries, including India's e-rupee, to enable seamless cross-border trade finance and tourism payments.

The proposal focuses on:

- **Faster settlement of international transactions**, potentially in real time
- **Lower transaction costs** by reducing intermediaries
- **Reduced reliance on correspondent banking systems**, which are often slow and expensive

Importantly, the RBI has clarified that this initiative is **not a formal de-dollarisation drive**, but rather an effort to improve **efficiency, resilience, and reliability** in cross-border payment infrastructure.

Background and Context

The proposal builds on commitments made in the **2025 BRICS Rio Declaration**, which called for:

- Greater **interoperability of national payment systems**
- Exploration of **sovereign digital currencies** for cross-border use

At present, **all core BRICS members — Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa — are running CBDC pilot projects**, though none has fully rolled out a universal retail CBDC. India's **e-rupee** is among the more advanced pilots, being tested for both wholesale and retail use cases.

The RBI sees the BRICS platform as a practical sandbox to test **CBDC-to-CBDC linkages** before any wider global adoption.

CBDCs vs Cryptocurrencies

Issuing Authority

- **CBDCs** are issued and regulated by a country's central bank, such as the Reserve Bank of India.
- **Cryptocurrencies** are issued privately through decentralised blockchain networks with no sovereign backing, for example **Bitcoin**.

Legal Status

- **CBDCs** are **legal tender**, meaning they must be accepted for payments within the issuing country.
- **Cryptocurrencies** are **not legal tender in most countries**, and their regulatory status varies widely.

Stability and Regulation

- CBDCs are backed by the sovereign and designed to maintain **monetary stability**.
- Cryptocurrencies are often **highly volatile** and susceptible to regulatory, security, and governance risks.

Strategic Significance

- **Indirect challenge to dollar-centric payment rails:**

While not aimed at replacing the US dollar, CBDC interoperability among BRICS could gradually reduce dependence on dollar-based settlement systems, especially amid rising geopolitical and financial fragmentation.

- **Internationalisation of the rupee:** Linking the e-rupee with other BRICS CBDCs can enhance the **global usage of the Indian rupee** through regulated, transparent digital channels.
- **Sovereign digital alternative to stablecoins:** The initiative aligns with India's preference for **safe, sovereign digital money** over privately issued stablecoins, which pose risks to monetary sovereignty.
- **Resilient payment infrastructure:** CBDC networks can offer greater resilience against sanctions, disruptions, and systemic shocks compared to traditional correspondent banking.

Spain joins Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)



Why in the News?

Spain has formally joined the **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**, marking a significant diplomatic development in India's maritime outreach. Spain's Foreign Minister handed over the Declaration of Accession to India's External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar**, underscoring Europe's growing engagement with the Indo-Pacific and its willingness to align with cooperative, rules-based maritime frameworks led by India.

What is the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)?

The **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative** is a **non-treaty, voluntary, and cooperative framework** launched by

India in 2019 to promote collaboration in the maritime domain across the Indo-Pacific region.

Key characteristics of IPOI include:

- It is **not a military alliance** and does not impose binding legal obligations on participating countries.
- It focuses on **practical cooperation**, capacity building, and sharing of best practices.
- Participation is open to **like-minded countries** committed to a rules-based maritime order.
- Countries can engage flexibly across different thematic pillars based on their interests and expertise.

IPOI complements existing regional mechanisms while offering an inclusive platform that avoids bloc politics and strategic exclusivity.

Aim and Core Pillars of IPOI

The overarching aim of IPOI is to **promote a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific** by addressing shared maritime challenges through cooperation rather than confrontation.

Its objectives include:

- Enhancing **maritime security and safety**, including freedom of navigation and respect for international law, especially UNCLOS.
- Promoting **sustainable use of marine resources**, marine ecology protection, and the blue economy.
- Strengthening **maritime connectivity, disaster risk reduction, and capacity building** among partner countries.
- Balancing **security, development, and sustainability** in the maritime domain, recognising that oceans are central to trade, climate resilience, and livelihoods.

By design, IPOI allows different countries to lead or participate in specific pillars, ensuring decentralised leadership and shared ownership.

Significance of Spain's Accession

Spain's decision to join IPOI carries both symbolic and strategic importance:

- **Enhanced global and European legitimacy:** Spain's accession reinforces IPOI's credibility beyond the Indo-Pacific, positioning it as a genuinely global maritime initiative rather than a regionally confined framework.
- **Reflects Europe's Indo-Pacific turn:** It aligns with the broader European shift towards deeper engagement in the Indo-Pacific, complementing EU strategies that emphasise maritime security, connectivity, and multilateralism.
- **Strengthens India's leadership role:** Spain's participation underlines India's emergence as a **net security provider and agenda-setter** in maritime governance, capable of shaping inclusive norms rather than exclusive coalitions.
- **Supports inclusive multilateralism:** At a time of intensifying great power rivalry and militarisation of sea lanes, Spain's entry highlights the appeal of cooperative, non-aligned platforms that prioritise dialogue, sustainability, and rule-based order.

US Exit from World Health Organization

Why in the News?

On **23 January 2026**, the **United States formally withdrew from the World Health Organization (WHO)**, completing a year-long exit process restarted by **Donald Trump** at the beginning of his second presidential term. The move marks one of the most significant disruptions in global health governance in recent decades, given the United States' historical role as WHO's largest financial contributor and a key agenda-setter in international public health.



Background and Timeline

- On **Day 1 of his second term in January 2025**, President Trump signed an **executive order** initiating the withdrawal of the US from the WHO.
- The administration justified the decision by alleging that the WHO **failed to adequately handle the COVID-19 pandemic**, particularly accusing it of delayed responses, lack of transparency, and excessive deference to China in the early stages of the outbreak.
- As required under US domestic law, a **one-year notice period** was observed, culminating in the formal exit in January 2026.
- The US government has also clarified that it **will not rejoin the WHO nor participate as an observer**, effectively severing all institutional engagement with the organisation.

This decision revives and completes a withdrawal attempt first announced during Trump's previous term, which was later reversed by the Biden administration in 2021.

Financial Dimension of the Withdrawal

The financial implications of the US exit are substantial:

- The United States was **WHO's largest single contributor**, accounting for roughly **15–18% of its total budget** through assessed contributions and voluntary funding.
- At the time of withdrawal, the US had **outstanding unpaid dues of around USD 260 million**, the settlement of which remains **legally disputed**.
- While US law mandates a one-year notice before withdrawal, there is ambiguity over whether all pending financial obligations must be cleared before exit, a point that has become a subject of international legal and diplomatic debate.
- All **US funding—both mandatory and voluntary—has now been stopped**, affecting programmes related to disease surveillance, vaccination, emergency response, and health systems strengthening.

WHO's Response and Concerns

Reacting to the development, WHO Director-General **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus** publicly urged the United States to reconsider its decision.

- He warned that the withdrawal could have **serious global public health consequences**, particularly for low- and middle-income countries that rely heavily on WHO-supported programmes.
- WHO has indicated that the funding gap created by the US exit may force the organisation to **reduce its workforce by up to 25%**, alongside scaling back several technical assistance and emergency preparedness initiatives.
- The leadership also stressed that pandemics, antimicrobial resistance, and health emergencies **cannot be effectively addressed without collective global action**, underscoring the risks of fragmentation in global health governance.

Broader Implications

Global Health Governance

The US withdrawal weakens multilateral coordination at a time when the world faces **recurring pandemic threats, climate-linked health risks, and rising zoonotic diseases**. It may also embolden other countries to selectively disengage from international institutions.

Strategic and Geopolitical Impact

The exit potentially creates space for **other major powers and philanthropic actors** to expand their influence within the WHO, reshaping priorities and decision-making dynamics.

Impact on Global South

Many WHO programmes in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—particularly in immunisation, maternal health, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS—face **funding uncertainty**, raising concerns about reversals in hard-won public health gains.

Polity

Special Intensive Revision in Uttar Pradesh



Why in the News?

The **Election Commission of India** has published the **draft electoral rolls of Uttar Pradesh** after completing a **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** exercise. This revision led to the deletion of **2.89 crore voters**, the **highest absolute number of deletions recorded by any State or Union Territory** in India so far, drawing attention to the scale and implications of electoral roll purification.

What is the Special Intensive Revision (SIR)?

The Special Intensive Revision is a comprehensive verification exercise undertaken by the Election Commission to:

- Clean and update electoral rolls
- Remove ineligible entries such as deceased persons, duplicate registrations, and voters who have permanently migrated
- Improve the accuracy and credibility of elections
- Ensure that voting rights are extended only to eligible citizens at the correct place of residence

Unlike routine annual revisions, SIR involves **door-to-door verification, field-level checks, and cross-validation with official databases**, making it a more exhaustive process.

Key Data from Uttar Pradesh SIR

- **Total voters in 2025 electoral list:** 15.44 crore
- **Voters retained in draft rolls:** 12.55 crore
- **Total voters deleted:** 2.89 crore
- **Overall percentage deleted:** 18.70%

This indicates that nearly **one in five entries** in the earlier rolls was found to be ineligible or unverifiable during the intensive revision.

Break-up of Deletions

The Election Commission categorised deletions based on specific causes:

- **Deceased voters:**
 - 46.23 lakh
 - **2.99%** of the total electorate
- **Permanent migration / non-availability at address:**
 - 2.17 crore
 - **14.06%**
 - This reflects high internal migration for employment, education, and urbanisation, especially from rural areas.
- **Multiple or duplicate registrations:**
 - 25.47 lakh
 - **1.65%**
 - Often arising from voters shifting residences but failing to delete their earlier entries.

Comparative Perspective Across India

- **Uttar Pradesh:**
 - Highest deletions in **absolute numbers** due to its large population and electorate size.
- **Andaman and Nicobar Islands:**
 - Recorded a **higher percentage of deletion** than Uttar Pradesh, though in much smaller absolute terms.

Deletion Rates in Other States

- **Tamil Nadu:** 15.19%
- **Gujarat:** 14.50%
- **Chhattisgarh:** 12.88%
- **Kerala:** 8.65%
- **West Bengal:** 7.59%

These figures show that large-scale voter roll corrections are being carried out nationwide, though the **intensity and outcomes vary by demographic mobility and administrative reach.**

Significance of the Exercise

- **Electoral integrity:**
Reduces chances of impersonation, bogus voting, and electoral fraud.
- **Administrative accuracy:**
Enables better polling station planning, voter facilitation, and resource allocation.
- **Democratic credibility:**
A cleaner roll enhances public trust in electoral outcomes, especially in a politically significant state like Uttar Pradesh.
- **Policy insight:**
High migration-related deletions highlight socio-economic mobility patterns and urban pull factors.

Thiruvalluvar Day

Why in the News?

On **Thiruvalluvar Day**, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** paid homage to **Thiruvalluvar**, emphasising the enduring relevance of his teachings in contemporary society. The Prime Minister urged citizens, especially the youth, to read and reflect on the **Tirukkural**, describing it as a timeless guide to ethical living, good governance, and social harmony. The occasion once again brought national attention to Thiruvalluvar's universal philosophy, which transcends time, region, and religion.



About Thiruvalluvar

Thiruvalluvar is one of the greatest intellectual and moral figures of ancient India and a towering personality of **Tamil civilisation**.

- He was a celebrated **Tamil poet-philosopher of the Sangam age**, believed by most scholars to have lived around **2,000 years ago** (approximately between the 1st century BCE and 1st century CE).
- Tradition associates him with **Mylapore**, in present-day Chennai, where temples and cultural institutions continue to honour his legacy.
- Popularly known as **Valluvar**, he is revered not merely as a poet but as a **moral teacher and saint** across South India.
- His influence extends beyond Tamil Nadu, with translations of the Tirukkural available in over **80 languages**, making him one of the most translated classical authors in the world.

The Tirukkural: A Timeless Ethical Text

The Tirukkural, Thiruvalluvar's only known work, is considered one of the finest ethical treatises ever composed.

- It consists of **1,330 couplets (kural)**, written in simple yet profound Tamil.
- The work is divided into **three sections**:
 - **Aram (Virtue)** – moral conduct and ethical living
 - **Porul (Wealth)** – governance, economics, and social responsibility
 - **Inbam (Love)** – human emotions and family life
- Remarkably, the Tirukkural avoids references to specific rituals, gods, or sectarian practices, which gives it a **universal and secular appeal**.
- Themes such as justice, compassion, integrity, non-violence, friendship, leadership, and the duties of rulers remain highly relevant to modern democratic governance and public life.

Social and Religious Context

Thiruvalluvar lived during a period of **intense philosophical interaction** in South India.

- His era witnessed the coexistence and dialogue among **Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism**, all of which influenced ethical thought.
- Scholars continue to debate his religious affiliation, with many associating him with **Jainism** due to his emphasis on non-violence and moral restraint, while others see strong roots in **Hindu philosophical traditions**.
- Importantly, Thiruvalluvar rejected the idea that **renunciation alone leads to spiritual excellence**.
- He strongly demonstrated that a **householder's life**, guided by virtue and discipline, could be equally capable of achieving moral and spiritual fulfilment.

Contemporary Relevance

In today's world of social change, political challenges, and ethical dilemmas, Thiruvalluvar's teachings continue to offer guidance:

- His ideas on **just governance** resonate with modern principles of accountability and welfare-oriented administration.
- Emphasis on **personal ethics and social responsibility** aligns with contemporary debates on leadership and public morality.
- The Tirukkural is frequently quoted in discussions on education, civil services ethics, conflict resolution, and inclusive development.

Prior Sanction for Corruption Investigations | Section 17A of PCA, 1988



Why in the News?

A two-judge Bench of the **Supreme Court of India** has delivered a **split verdict** on the constitutional validity of **Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA), 1988**. The provision mandates **prior government approval** before initiating any inquiry or investigation against a public servant for decisions taken or recommendations made in the discharge of official duties.

The split decision reflects a deeper constitutional debate on the balance between **protecting honest decision-making within the bureaucracy** and **ensuring effective anti-corruption investigations**, especially at the preliminary stage.

What is the Current Split Verdict?

Opinion of Justice K V Viswanathan

Justice Viswanathan **upheld Section 17A, but with conditions**, adopting a purposive and reform-oriented interpretation.

Key observations:

- **Prior approval is necessary** to shield honest officers from harassment and frivolous complaints that may paralyse administrative decision-making.
- However, such approval **cannot be left to the political executive alone**.
- To ensure independence and fairness, the approval must be granted by an **independent authority**.
- He read Section 17A **in conjunction with the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**, holding that:
 - For **Central government officials**, approval should be based on the **binding opinion of the Lokpal**.
 - For **State government officials**, approval should rest on the **Lokayukta** concerned.
- This interpretation, according to him, preserves the constitutionality of Section 17A while aligning it with principles of **institutional integrity, accountability, and rule of law**.

Opinion of Justice B V Nagarathna

Justice Nagarathna **struck down Section 17A as unconstitutional**, taking a rights-based and equality-centric approach.

Key observations:

- Described Section 17A as **“old wine in a new bottle”**, reviving discredited safeguards that had earlier been invalidated by the Court.
- Held that the provision **violates Article 14** of the Constitution (equality before law).
- Found **no intelligible differentia or rational nexus** between:
 - Public servants protected at the investigation stage, and
 - The stated objective of preventing harassment.
- Emphasised that **adequate protection already exists under Section 19 of the PCA**, which requires prior sanction **before prosecution**, not investigation.
- Warned that requiring approval even before inquiry or investigation:
 - Hampers anti-corruption agencies,
 - Enables delay and suppression of evidence,
 - Undermines the principle that **investigation must be free from executive control**.

What is the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988?

The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 is India's primary anti-corruption legislation aimed at combating corruption among public servants.

Key features:

- Enacted to **consolidate and amend laws relating to corruption** in public offices.
- Based largely on the recommendations of the **Santhanam Committee (1962)**.
- Covers offences such as:
 - Bribery,
 - Criminal misconduct,
 - Obtaining undue advantage,
 - Abuse of official position.

- Applies to a wide definition of **public servants**, including:
 - Government officials,
 - Judges,
 - Employees of local authorities and public bodies.

What is Section 17A of the PCA?

- **Inserted by the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018.**
- Mandates **prior approval of the appropriate government** before:
 - Conducting any **inquiry**, or
 - Initiating any **investigation**.
- Applicable **only when the alleged offence relates to:**
 - A recommendation made, or
 - A decision taken by a public servant while performing official functions.

Rationale Behind Section 17A

The legislative intent behind introducing Section 17A was to address concerns of bureaucratic over-caution.

Stated objectives:

- Protect honest officers from:
 - Frivolous,
 - Vexatious,
 - Motivated complaints.
- Prevent **decision-making paralysis** and “play-safe” behaviour in administration.
- Distinguish between:
 - **Good faith administrative decisions**, and
 - **Deliberate acts of corruption**.

Critics, however, argue that the provision shifts the balance too far in favour of executive protection at the cost of **independent investigation**.

Earlier Supreme Court Rulings on Prior Sanction for Investigation

The current split verdict must be read in light of earlier landmark rulings:

Vineet Narain vs Union of India (1998)

- Struck down the **Single Directive** that required prior sanction to investigate senior officials.

- Held that such executive control **violates the rule of law** and the principle of equality.

Dr Subramanian Swamy vs Director, CBI (2014)

- Struck down **Section 6A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act**.
- Section 6A required prior approval to investigate senior officers.
- Declared unconstitutional for violating **Article 14**, as it created an impermissible class of protected officials.

Constitutional and Institutional Significance

The split verdict raises important constitutional questions:

- Can the executive regulate the **investigative stage** of corruption cases?
- Does protection of honest officers justify **pre-investigation barriers**?
- How should courts balance **administrative efficiency** with **anti-corruption accountability**?

Since the Bench has delivered divergent opinions, the matter is likely to be **referred to a larger Bench** of the Supreme Court for authoritative resolution.

National Legislative Index (NLI)



Why in the News?

At the **86th All India Presiding Officers Conference**, **Om Birla**, the Speaker of **Lok Sabha**, announced the initiation of the **National Legislative Index (NLI)**. The announcement marks an important step towards institutional reform and performance benchmarking of legislatures in India, covering both the **Parliament of India** and **State Legislatures**.

What is the National Legislative Index (NLI)?

The **National Legislative Index (NLI)** is a proposed **performance evaluation framework** aimed at objectively assessing and comparing the functioning of legislative bodies across India.

It seeks to introduce **data-driven, standardised, and transparent metrics** to evaluate how effectively legislatures perform their core constitutional responsibilities—law-making, deliberation, and oversight.

By relying on predefined indicators and measurable outcomes, the NLI moves legislative assessment away from subjective perceptions towards evidence-based evaluation.

Predefined Indicators under NLI

The index is expected to evaluate legislatures across multiple dimensions, with a strong emphasis on **legislative functioning and discipline**. Key indicators include:

- **Number of sittings held** during a legislative session or year
- **Duration of sittings**, reflecting time devoted to law-making
- **Percentage utilisation of House time**, measuring efficiency
- **Frequency of adjournments and disruptions**, highlighting procedural discipline
- **Legislative output**, such as bills introduced, debated, and passed
- **Committee work**, including the functioning of standing and select committees

These indicators together provide a holistic picture of both quantitative productivity and qualitative engagement.

Aim of the National Legislative Index

The NLI is designed with multiple interlinked objectives:

- **Promote healthy competition** among legislatures by encouraging performance-based improvement
- **Enhance efficiency and accountability** in legislative functioning

- **Improve the quality of debates and deliberations**, ensuring informed law-making
- **Encourage people-centric and outcome-oriented legislation**, aligned with public welfare
- **Strengthen democratic governance** by reinforcing the role of legislatures as representative institutions

Key Features of NLI

1. Objective Performance Metrics

The index relies on measurable indicators such as sittings, legislative productivity, committee effectiveness, and time utilisation, ensuring objectivity and consistency.

2. Comparative and Competitive Framework

NLI enables **cross-comparison between Parliament and State Legislatures**, fostering peer learning and dissemination of best practices across states.

3. Transparency and Accountability

By placing legislative performance in the public domain, the index enhances **citizen scrutiny**, encourages discipline among members, and raises standards of debate and conduct.

4. Citizen-Centric Orientation

The focus on outcomes ensures that legislative performance is evaluated not merely by quantity of laws, but by their relevance, quality, and societal impact.

Significance of the National Legislative Index

- **Discourages frequent disruptions and adjournments**, which undermine democratic deliberation
- **Improves deliberative depth**, strengthening informed policy-making
- **Reinforces legislatures as core pillars of constitutional democracy**, rather than symbolic forums
- **Aligns institutional performance with long-term national development goals**, including good governance and inclusive growth
- **Promotes efficient and outcome-oriented governance**, essential for public trust in democratic institutions

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

India Inaugurates Global Standard Environmental and Solar Calibration Facilities

Why in the News?

India has inaugurated the **world's second National Environmental Standard Laboratory (NESL)** and the **world's fifth National Primary Standard Facility for Solar Cell Calibration** at CSIR National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi.

These landmark facilities significantly strengthen India's capabilities in **environmental monitoring, air quality governance, and renewable energy metrology**, positioning the country among a small group of nations with such advanced national-level standards infrastructure.



National Environmental Standard Laboratory (NESL)

The **National Environmental Standard Laboratory (NESL)** is an apex national facility dedicated to the **testing, calibration, and certification of air pollution monitoring instruments**. It has been designed specifically to address India's unique **climatic, geographical, and environmental conditions**, which differ significantly from those in temperate regions where most global calibration standards originate.

Location

• **CSIR National Physical Laboratory**, New Delhi

Institutions Involved

- Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
- CSIR National Physical Laboratory

Objectives

- Establish **India-specific environmental measurement standards** that reflect real-world operating conditions.
- Improve the **accuracy, consistency, and reliability of air quality data** generated across the country.
- Provide strong scientific support to the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**, which targets a substantial reduction in particulate matter pollution in major Indian cities.

Significance of NESL

- Strengthens **pollution governance** by ensuring that regulatory decisions are based on accurate and comparable data.
- Reduces India's dependence on **foreign calibration laboratories**, lowering costs and turnaround time.
- Enhances the **credibility of air quality monitoring networks** across cities, industries, and research institutions.
- Facilitates better **policy formulation, enforcement, and public trust** in air quality indices and pollution alerts.

National Primary Standard Facility for Solar Cell Calibration

Alongside NESL, India has commissioned the **National Primary Standard Facility for Solar Cell Calibration**, a **high-precision metrology facility** dedicated to the calibration of solar cells at the highest level of measurement accuracy.

Location

- **CSIR National Physical Laboratory**, New Delhi

Key Features

- Utilises a **Laser-based Differential Spectral Responsivity (DSR) system**, considered the global gold standard for photovoltaic calibration.

- Achieves a **world-leading measurement uncertainty of 0.35% (k=2)**, placing India at the forefront of solar metrology.
- Developed in collaboration with **Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt**, Germany's national metrology institute.
- Becomes **only the fifth such facility worldwide**, joining a very small group of countries with primary solar calibration standards.

Importance of the Solar Calibration Facility

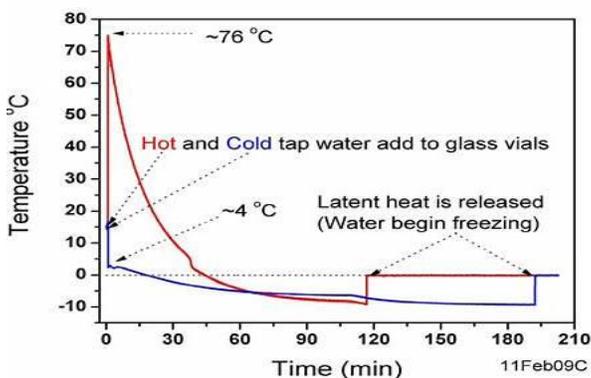
- Provides **globally comparable and internationally accepted photovoltaic measurements**, crucial for exports.
- Supports India's rapidly expanding **solar manufacturing and R&D ecosystem**, including advanced cell technologies.
- Enhances **confidence and trust** in Indian solar performance data among investors, developers, and international markets.

Indian Scientists Simulate Mpemba Effect Using Supercomputers

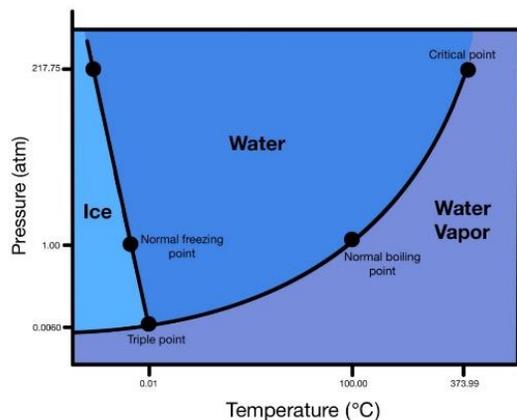
Why in the News?

Indian scientists have achieved a major breakthrough by developing the **first supercomputer-powered simulation** that successfully captures the **Mpemba effect**—the counterintuitive phenomenon where **hot water freezes faster than cold water under certain conditions**.

The achievement was officially announced by the **Ministry of Science and Technology**, highlighting India's growing strength in high-performance computing and fundamental physics research.



Phase Diagram of Water



What is the Mpemba Effect?

The **Mpemba effect** is a physical phenomenon in which **hot water freezes faster than colder water**, even when both are placed in identical environments.

- The effect is named after **Erasto Mpemba**, who reported the observation in the 1960s while studying ice cream freezing.
- For decades, the phenomenon puzzled scientists because it appeared to contradict basic thermodynamic intuition.
- Multiple explanations—such as evaporation, convection currents, dissolved gases, and supercooling—were proposed, but **no single, complete theoretical framework** existed.

As a result, the Mpemba effect remained one of the most debated paradoxes in classical physics.

Key Findings of the New Simulation

Indian researchers have now provided the **most comprehensive computational validation** of the Mpemba effect to date through large-scale simulations:

- The supercomputer model **successfully reproduced the Mpemba effect in water**, closely matching experimental observations.
- Crucially, the simulations showed that the effect is **not unique to water** and can occur in **other fluid-to-solid phase transitions**.
- The study demonstrated that **non-equilibrium thermodynamics**, rather than equilibrium assumptions, governs the freezing process.
- The initial thermal state of a system strongly influences how energy is redistributed during

cooling, allowing hotter systems to reach the frozen state faster in specific conditions.

This marks the **first time the Mpemba effect has been captured end-to-end using high-resolution computational physics.**

Scientific Significance

The findings carry wide-ranging implications for physics and beyond:

- **Resolves a long-standing physical paradox** using modern computational tools rather than simplified analytical models.
- Deepens understanding of **phase transitions**, heat flow, and energy dissipation in complex systems.
- Strengthens the theoretical foundation of **non-equilibrium thermodynamics**, a field relevant to many natural and industrial processes.
- Demonstrates how **supercomputing can bridge the gap between theory and experiment**, especially where laboratory replication is difficult or limited.

Broader Applications and Future Potential

The insights gained from this research extend far beyond freezing water:

- **Materials science:** Helps design materials with controlled cooling and solidification properties.
- **Condensed matter physics:** Improves models of non-equilibrium phase changes.
- **Climate and cryospheric studies:** Enhances understanding of ice formation processes.
- **Industrial processes:** Optimisation of cooling, casting, and thermal storage technologies.

The study opens new research pathways where **initial conditions and thermal histories** play a decisive role in system evolution.

Institutional and National Context

- The research reflects strong support from **India's advanced scientific infrastructure**, including access to high-performance computing facilities.
- It aligns with national priorities in **computational science, fundamental physics, and indigenous supercomputing missions.**
- The achievement reinforces India's position as a **global contributor to frontier scientific**

research, not only in applied technology but also in resolving deep theoretical questions.

White dwarf system

Why in the News?

NASA's Imaging X-ray Polarization Explorer (IXPE) has, for the first time, successfully probed the *internal geometry and emission processes* of a white dwarf binary system by measuring **X-ray polarisation**. Detailed observations of the system **EX Hydrae** have revealed unexpected insights into gas flow patterns, magnetic accretion columns, and X-rays reflected from the white dwarf's surface—phenomena that were previously inferred only through indirect models.



Significance of IXPE Observations

IXPE is the world's first dedicated mission to measure the **polarisation of cosmic X-rays**, a property that carries information about the *geometry, magnetic fields, and emission mechanisms* of extreme astrophysical environments.

Key breakthroughs from the EX Hydrae study include:

- **Estimation of accretion column height**
By analysing the polarisation angle and degree of X-rays, scientists were able to infer the *vertical extent of hot accretion columns*, which rise thousands of kilometres above the white dwarf's surface.
- **Detection of reflected X-rays**
IXPE detected X-rays that were not emitted

directly from the accreting plasma but were **reflected off the solid surface of the white dwarf**—a first-of-its-kind observation for such systems.

- **Direct test of accretion and magnetic field models**

The data provide observational evidence to validate or refine theoretical models of **magnetically controlled accretion**, plasma shocks, and radiation transport under extreme gravity.

- **Broader relevance to high-energy astrophysics**
These findings strengthen our understanding of how matter behaves in intense magnetic fields, offering parallels to more extreme objects such as neutron stars and black holes.

White Dwarf Binary Systems

A **white dwarf binary system** consists of a white dwarf and a companion star gravitationally bound to each other. Due to the white dwarf's intense gravity, matter from the companion star is gradually pulled toward it, releasing enormous amounts of energy in the process.

How Such Systems Form

- A **Sun-like star** exhausts its nuclear fuel after billions of years.
- It expels its outer layers, forming a **planetary nebula**.
- The remaining dense core collapses into a **white dwarf**, roughly Earth-sized but extremely massive.
- In a binary system, the companion star overflows its material toward the white dwarf, initiating accretion.

EX Hydrae and Intermediate Polars

EX Hydrae belongs to a subclass of white dwarf binaries known as **intermediate polars**.

Defining Features of Intermediate Polars

- The white dwarf possesses a **moderate magnetic field**.
- The magnetic field partially disrupts the accretion disc.
- Infalling gas is channelled along magnetic field lines, forming **accretion columns** near the magnetic poles.

- These columns heat the plasma to **tens of millions of degrees**, producing intense X-ray emission.

IXPE's polarisation measurements revealed that the accretion geometry in EX Hydrae is more complex than previously assumed, with both direct and reflected X-ray components contributing to the observed signal.

Key Characteristics of White Dwarfs

- **Extreme density**
A white dwarf packs a mass comparable to the Sun into a volume similar to Earth.
- **Degenerate matter**
The star is supported by **electron degeneracy pressure**, a quantum mechanical effect explained by the *Pauli Exclusion Principle*, rather than by nuclear fusion.
- **High-energy emissions**
Accreting material releases gravitational energy, producing ultraviolet and X-ray radiation.
- **Magnetic accretion columns**
In magnetised systems, gas falls in narrow streams that can extend several thousand kilometres above the surface.
- **Chandrasekhar limit**
A white dwarf cannot exceed about **1.4 times the Sun's mass**; crossing this limit can trigger a catastrophic collapse or thermonuclear explosion.

India Becomes First Nation to Commercially Produce Bio Bitumen

Why in the News?

India has become the **first country in the world to commercially produce bio-bitumen**, marking a major milestone in sustainable infrastructure development. The announcement was made by Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways **Nitin Gadkari**, underscoring India's commitment to green alternatives, circular economy practices, and reduced dependence on fossil fuel-based construction materials.

This development aligns with India's broader goals of climate action, import substitution, and rural economic transformation under sustainable development frameworks.

Bio-Bitumen: An Overview



Bio-bitumen is an **eco-friendly binding material** used in road construction as a partial or complete substitute for conventional petroleum-based bitumen. Unlike traditional bitumen derived from crude oil, bio-bitumen is produced from **renewable biological sources**, significantly lowering its carbon footprint.

It performs the same essential function as conventional bitumen—binding aggregates in asphalt—while offering environmental and economic advantages.

Raw Materials Used

Bio-bitumen production utilises a wide range of **locally available organic and agricultural waste**, including:

- Vegetable oils
- Crop stubble and agricultural residues
- Forestry and plant-based biomass
- Other forms of organic and agro-waste

The use of crop residue is particularly significant in India, as it provides a productive alternative to stubble burning, which is a major contributor to air pollution in northern states.

Economic Significance



The commercial adoption of bio-bitumen carries substantial economic benefits:

- **Foreign exchange savings:** With just **15% blending** of bio-bitumen in road construction, India can save nearly **₹4,500 crore annually** by reducing imports of petroleum-based bitumen.
- **Reduced import dependence:** India currently imports a significant share of its bitumen requirement; bio-bitumen directly lowers this import bill.
- **Additional income for farmers:** Agricultural waste and crop residue gain commercial value, creating new revenue streams for farmers.
- **Rural employment generation:** Collection, processing, and supply of bio-feedstock generate local jobs and strengthen rural livelihoods.

Environmental and Strategic Importance

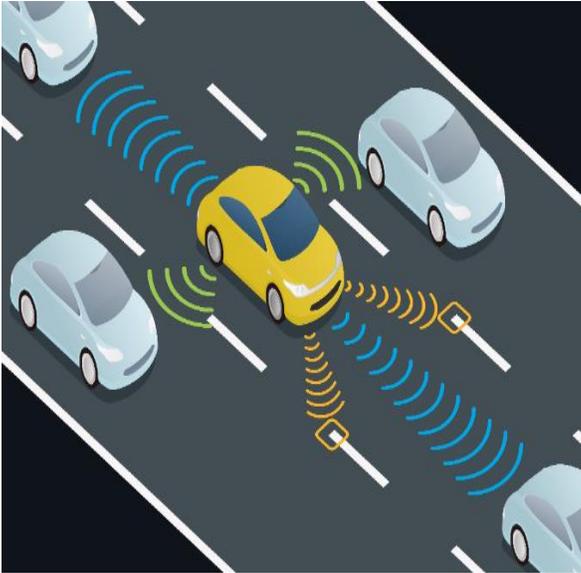
- **Lower carbon emissions:** Bio-bitumen has a substantially smaller carbon footprint compared to conventional bitumen.
- **Waste-to-wealth model:** Converts agricultural and organic waste into a high-value industrial input.
- **Supports climate commitments:** Helps India progress towards its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and long-term net-zero goals.
- **Sustainable road infrastructure:** Enables greener highways and urban roads without compromising durability or performance.

Overall Significance

India's commercial-scale production of bio-bitumen represents a **global first** and places the country at the forefront of sustainable road construction technologies. By integrating environmental protection, economic savings, farmer welfare, and infrastructure growth, bio-bitumen exemplifies India's shift towards **green, self-reliant, and inclusive development**.

The initiative also opens avenues for future innovation in bio-based construction materials, positioning India as a potential exporter of sustainable infrastructure solutions in the coming years.

Vehicle-to-Vehicle Communication Technology



Why in the News?

The Government of India is preparing to roll out **Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) communication technology** by the end of **2026** as part of its broader road safety and intelligent transport systems strategy. The move aims to significantly reduce **road accidents caused by fog, rear-end collisions, sudden braking, and multi-vehicle pile-ups**, which are especially common on high-speed highways and in low-visibility conditions.

India records one of the **highest numbers of road fatalities globally**, with poor visibility, delayed driver reaction, and lack of real-time information among vehicles being major contributors. V2V technology is expected to directly address these gaps by enabling vehicles to “talk” to each other and warn drivers before a collision risk materialises.

What is Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) Technology?

Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) technology is a **direct wireless communication system** that allows vehicles on the road to exchange safety-critical information with one another in **real time**.

Key characteristics include:

- **Direct vehicle communication** without reliance on mobile networks or the internet

- Operates using **short-range dedicated communication protocols**
- Enables vehicles to automatically transmit and receive safety alerts
- Designed primarily to **prevent accidents rather than respond after they occur**

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

How the V2V System Works

- Each vehicle is fitted with a **SIM-like onboard communication device**
- The device continuously broadcasts essential data such as:
 - Vehicle speed
 - Exact position
 - Direction of movement
 - Sudden braking or deceleration events
- Nearby vehicles equipped with V2V systems receive these signals within milliseconds
- The system generates **instant visual and audio alerts** for drivers, enabling timely evasive action

Unlike traditional safety systems that depend only on sensors within a single vehicle, V2V expands awareness beyond line-of-sight limitations.

Key Features of V2V Technology

1. 360-Degree Communication

Vehicles receive alerts from **all directions**—front, rear, and sides—covering blind spots and non-visible hazards.

2. Distance Warning System

Automatically warns drivers when another vehicle comes dangerously close, reducing the risk of **rear-end collisions**.

3. Stationary Vehicle Detection

Alerts drivers about **parked, broken-down, or accident-hit vehicles** ahead, even before they become visible.

4. Fog and Low-Visibility Safety

Highly effective during **fog, heavy rain, or smog**, when human reaction time is compromised and visual cues are limited.

5. Pile-Up Prevention

By instantly warning multiple vehicles in a chain, V2V can **prevent large-scale highway pile-ups**, a major cause of mass casualties in winter months.

Significance for India

- **Accident prevention:** Shifts road safety from reactive to **predictive and preventive**
- **Highway safety:** Particularly useful on expressways, national highways, and freight corridors
- **Technology readiness:** Complements India's push towards **connected vehicles and smart mobility**
- **Policy alignment:** Supports national road safety goals and long-term plans for autonomous and semi-autonomous transport

Bio Safety Level 4 Containment Facility in Gandhinagar

Why in the News?

Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** laid the foundation stone of a **Bio Safety Level-4 (BSL-4) Containment Facility** in **Gandhinagar**, Gujarat. He described the facility as a *"national health shield"* and a critical milestone in strengthening India's advanced health security architecture, biomedical research capacity, and preparedness against high-risk infectious diseases.

This initiative reflects India's growing emphasis on **biosecurity, pandemic preparedness, and cutting-edge biotechnology infrastructure**, especially in the post-COVID-19 global health environment.



What is a BSL-4 Facility?

A **Bio Safety Level-4 (BSL-4)** laboratory represents the **highest level of biological containment** under internationally accepted biosafety standards.

Key Features

- Designed to handle **extremely dangerous and lethal pathogens**
- Pathogens are typically:
 - Highly infectious
 - Transmitted through air, aerosols, or direct contact
 - Associated with **high fatality rates**
 - **No proven vaccines or definitive treatments** available
- Laboratories are completely **isolated from the external environment**
- Operate under **stringent international biosafety and biosecurity protocols**

Working Conditions

- Scientists wear **positive pressure, air-supplied suits**
- Work is conducted in **sealed, negative-pressure environments**
- Multiple layers of containment including:
 - Air filtration using HEPA filters
 - Chemical decontamination systems
 - Strict access controls and waste treatment mechanisms

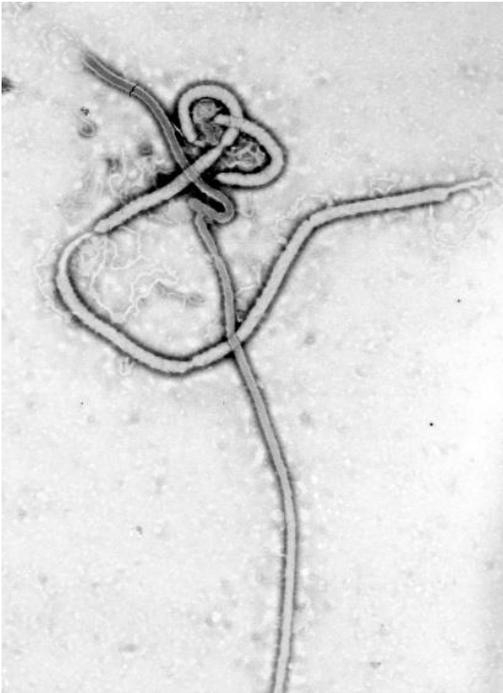
These measures ensure **zero accidental release** of pathogens into the environment.

Pathogens to be Studied at the Gandhinagar Facility

The proposed BSL-4 laboratory in Gandhinagar will enable advanced research on some of the world's most dangerous viruses, including:

- **Ebola virus**
- **Marburg virus**
- **Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) virus**
- **Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD) virus**
- **Nipah virus**

These pathogens are known for causing **severe hemorrhagic fevers, neurological complications, and high mortality**, and several are **zoonotic**, posing risks of spillover from animals to humans.



BSL-4 and High-Containment Facilities in India

India has a **limited but strategically significant network** of high-containment laboratories:

Existing BSL-4 Facilities

- **National Institute of Virology, Pune**
 - Only **civilian BSL-4 laboratory** currently operational
 - Plays a key role in outbreak investigation and virus research
- **Defence BSL-4 Laboratory, Gwalior**
 - Established by **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** in 2024
 - Focuses on **strategic and defence-related biosecurity research**

High-Security Animal Disease Laboratories

- **National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD)**
 - Equipped with **ABSL-3+** (Animal Bio Safety Level) facilities
 - Supports surveillance of transboundary animal diseases
- **International Centre for Foot and Mouth Disease**
 - Houses **ABSL-3Ag** containment for highly contagious livestock diseases

Strategic Significance of the Gandhinagar BSL-4 Facility Strengthening National Health Security

- Enhances **early detection, diagnosis, and research** on emerging infectious diseases
- Reduces India's dependence on foreign laboratories for high-risk pathogen studies

Pandemic Preparedness

- Improves capacity to respond to **future pandemics and bioterror threats**
- Supports development of **vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics** under secure conditions

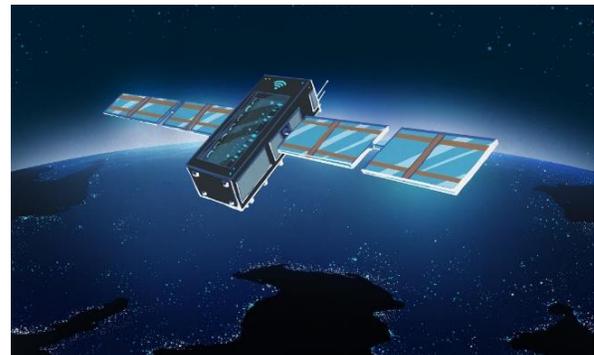
Boost to Biotechnology and Research Ecosystem

- Encourages **advanced virology, immunology, and genomic research**
- Positions India as a **regional hub for high-end biosafety research**

One Health Approach

- Supports integration of **human health, animal health, and environmental health**, crucial for controlling zoonotic diseases like Nipah and KFD.

Project Suncatcher



Why in the News?

Google Research has unveiled **Project Suncatcher**, a forward-looking research initiative that explores the feasibility of deploying **AI datacentres in Low Earth Orbit (LEO)** powered entirely by **solar energy**. The concept has drawn global attention as it seeks to address the **rapidly escalating electricity demand of advanced AI systems**, which is increasingly straining terrestrial power grids and sustainability goals.

With large-scale AI models, data-intensive applications, and continuous training workloads consuming unprecedented amounts of electricity, Project

Suncatcher positions space-based infrastructure as a potential long-term solution to the energy–compute imbalance.

What is Project Suncatcher?

Project Suncatcher is a **conceptual research programme** rather than a commercial deployment plan. It examines the scientific, engineering, and environmental feasibility of placing **AI-focused datacentres in Low Earth Orbit**, where they can operate continuously using **direct solar power**.

Key features of the concept include:

- Deployment of modular AI datacentres in **LEO**, closer to Earth than traditional satellites
- **24x7 access to uninterrupted solar energy**, unhindered by night cycles, weather, or seasonal variations
- Designed specifically to handle **energy-intensive AI workloads**, such as large model training, inference at scale, and high-performance computing
- Exploration of advanced thermal management, radiation shielding, and autonomous operations in space
- Entirely research-driven, developed under the long-term sustainability and infrastructure studies of Google Research

The project does not indicate immediate launches but serves as a **blueprint for future AI infrastructure paradigms**.

Objectives of Project Suncatcher

Project Suncatcher is guided by several strategic and sustainability-driven objectives:

1. Reducing the Energy Footprint of AI

Modern AI datacentres are among the fastest-growing consumers of electricity globally. By shifting compute-intensive workloads to space-based facilities powered by solar energy, the project aims to **dramatically lower dependence on fossil-fuel-based power**.

2. Enabling Round-the-Clock Clean Solar Power

Unlike Earth-based solar plants, which are limited by daylight and weather, LEO-based infrastructure can harness **near-continuous solar radiation**, enabling stable and predictable energy generation for AI operations.

3. Decoupling AI Growth from Terrestrial Constraints

Project Suncatcher seeks to separate the expansion of AI compute from key Earth-bound limitations, including:

- **Overloaded terrestrial power grids**
- **Land availability constraints** for hyperscale datacentres
- **Water-intensive cooling systems**, which are increasingly unsustainable in water-stressed regions

4. Supporting Long-Term Scalability of AI Infrastructure

As AI adoption accelerates across sectors such as healthcare, climate modelling, defence, and finance, demand for compute is expected to grow exponentially. Space-based datacentres offer a **theoretically scalable environment**, unconstrained by urban zoning, local opposition, or regional resource scarcity.

Indigenous Sodium Ion Battery Development in India

Why in the News?

The **Chatterjee Group** is evaluating the commercial production of **indigenous sodium-ion (Na-ion) batteries** after its research arm achieved a major technological breakthrough. Scientists at the **Research Institute for Sustainable Energy (RISE)** have successfully developed a high-speed charging sodium-ion battery using largely India-sourced materials, positioning the technology as a promising alternative to conventional lithium-ion batteries.



Key Developments

- **Rapid charging capability:** The newly developed sodium-ion battery can charge up to **94% in just 5 minutes**, a significant leap over most existing battery chemistries.

- **Energy density:** The battery demonstrates an energy density of around **180 Wh/kg**, comparable to widely used **lithium iron phosphate (LFP)** batteries.
- **Indigenous sourcing:** Most raw materials and components are derived from Indian supply chains, strengthening domestic technological self-reliance.
- **Commercial readiness:** A fully scalable prototype suitable for industrial deployment is expected within **2–3 years**.
- **Investment outlook:** Commercialisation could attract investments of **USD 10–12 billion**, reflecting strong confidence in India's emerging energy-storage ecosystem.

About Sodium-Ion Batteries

Sodium-ion batteries function on principles similar to lithium-ion batteries but use **sodium ions** as charge carriers instead of lithium ions.

Key Characteristics

- Sodium is **abundant, low-cost, and widely available**, unlike lithium which is geographically concentrated.
- Batteries exhibit a **safer thermal profile**, with lower risks of overheating and thermal runaway.
- They are particularly well-suited for applications where **fast charging, safety, and cost efficiency** are critical.

Strategic Advantages

Reduced Dependence on Critical Minerals

- No requirement for **lithium, cobalt, nickel, or copper**, minerals largely imported and subject to geopolitical risks.
- Significantly lowers India's dependence on overseas suppliers, especially China-dominated supply chains.

Supply Chain Resilience

- Sodium-based systems reduce exposure to price volatility and shortages of critical battery minerals.
- Supports India's broader push for **Atmanirbhar Bharat** in advanced manufacturing and clean technologies.

Cost and Safety Benefits

- Potentially **lower manufacturing costs** due to cheaper raw materials.
- Enhanced safety makes them suitable for dense urban deployment and rural installations alike.

Commercial Potential and Use Cases

Electric Mobility

- Particularly attractive for **two-wheelers and three-wheelers**, where ultra-fast charging can reduce downtime and ease range anxiety.
- Could accelerate EV adoption in price-sensitive markets.

Grid-Scale Energy Storage

- Well suited for **renewable energy integration**, helping stabilise power grids with high solar and wind penetration.
- Enables cost-effective storage for peak-shaving and load-balancing.

Off-Grid and Rural Energy Systems

- Ideal for **remote and rural electrification**, where durability, safety, and affordability are crucial.
- Supports decentralised energy solutions such as microgrids and solar-battery hybrids.

Artemis II Mission

Why in the News



The **NASA** is targeting **6 February** for the launch of **Artemis II**, the first **crewed lunar mission** under the Artemis programme. The mission marks humanity's return to lunar spaceflight **more than five decades after Apollo 17**, the last human mission to the Moon, and represents a major milestone

in preparations for sustained human presence beyond Earth orbit.

What is Artemis II?

Artemis II is the **first mission to carry astronauts** under the Artemis programme and the first crewed voyage to travel beyond low Earth orbit since the Apollo era.

Key features of the mission include:

- **Crewed lunar flyby mission:** Astronauts will orbit the Moon and return to Earth without attempting a landing
- **Mission duration:** Approximately **10 days**, including outbound journey, lunar flyby, and Earth re-entry
- **Primary objective:** To **validate human-rated deep-space systems** in real operational conditions
- **Spacecraft and launch system:** The Orion crew capsule launched atop the Space Launch System (SLS), the most powerful operational rocket in the world

Artemis Programme: Broader Context

The Artemis programme is NASA's flagship human exploration initiative aimed at returning humans to the Moon and establishing a long-term lunar presence as a stepping stone for future Mars missions.

Artemis I

- **Conducted:** August 2022
- **Nature:** Uncrewed mission
- **Significance:** First integrated flight test of Orion and the SLS
- **Outcome:** Successfully validated spacecraft performance, lunar navigation, and high-speed Earth re-entry

Artemis II

- **Next major step:** First crewed Artemis mission
- **Purpose:** Bridge between system testing and surface exploration
- **Focus:** Crew safety, mission control coordination, and deep-space human operations

Artemis III

- **Target timeframe:** Around **2027**
- **Goal:** Land astronauts on the **Moon's south pole**—a region rich in permanently shadowed areas believed to contain water ice

- **Historic aspect:** Planned to include the **first woman and first person of colour** to walk on the Moon

Why Artemis II Matters

- Restores **human deep-space capability** lost since the Apollo era
- Demonstrates readiness for sustained lunar exploration
- Lays the technological and operational foundation for Moon-to-Mars missions
- Symbolises a renewed era of human spaceflight focused on **long-term presence**, not one-off missions

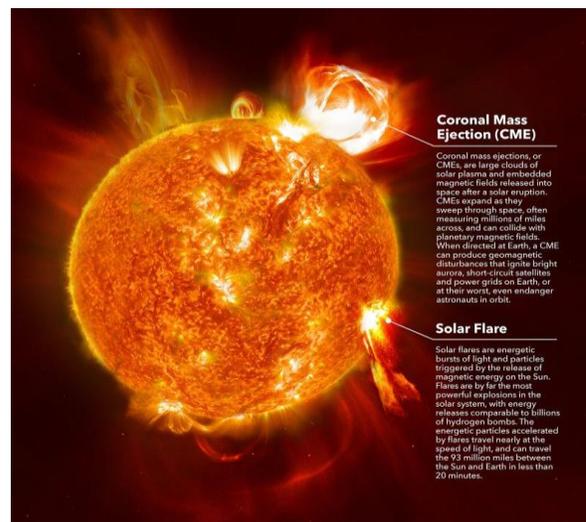
In essence, Artemis II is not just a return to the Moon—it is a **gateway mission** that will shape the future of human exploration across the solar system.

Strongest Solar Radiation Storm in Over 20 Years

Why in the News?

The Sun has unleashed the **strongest solar radiation storm in over two decades**, triggering **spectacular and rare auroras** across large parts of **Europe and the United States**, while also raising serious concerns about **satellite operations, aviation safety, power grids, and astronaut health**.

Scientists have confirmed that this is the **most intense solar radiation event since October 2003**, a period remembered for the historic "Halloween Solar Storms."



What is a Solar Radiation Storm?

A **solar radiation storm** occurs when the Sun releases a sudden burst of **high-energy, fast-moving charged particles**, primarily **protons**, during powerful solar events such as **solar flares** or **coronal mass ejections (CMEs)**.

These particles travel through space at extremely high speeds and can reach Earth within minutes to hours, penetrating deep into the planet's **magnetosphere** and significantly increasing radiation levels in space and at high altitudes.

Severity and Classification

- The current event has been classified as a **Level 4 (Severe)** storm on the **five-point Solar Radiation Storm Scale (S1–S5)**
- It is the **strongest solar radiation storm recorded since October 2003**
- The storm occurred during the **peak phase of the Sun's 11-year solar cycle**, a period marked by heightened solar activity, increased sunspots, and frequent eruptions

A Level 4 storm is rare and indicates **exceptionally high radiation levels** that can disrupt both space-based and Earth-based systems.

Why Are Auroras Appearing So Far South?

Under normal conditions, auroras are confined to **high-latitude regions** near the Arctic and Antarctic circles. However, during intense solar storms:

- Charged particles overwhelm Earth's magnetic field

- Energy penetrates deeper into the atmosphere
- Auroras expand toward **mid-latitude and even low-latitude regions**

This explains why **vivid auroral displays** were visible in regions that rarely experience them, delighting skywatchers while signaling an unusually powerful space weather event.

Potential Impacts and Risks

1. Satellites and Space Systems

High-energy particles can damage satellite electronics, interfere with onboard sensors, and shorten satellite lifespans. Navigation, communication, and weather satellites are particularly vulnerable.

2. Aviation and GPS Disruptions

Radiation storms can affect **high-frequency radio communications**, especially on polar flight routes. Airlines may be forced to reroute flights to avoid increased radiation exposure to crew and passengers.

3. Power Grids and Infrastructure

Strong solar storms can induce electric currents in long transmission lines, potentially damaging transformers and causing **power outages**, as seen during past extreme events.

4. Astronaut Safety

Astronauts aboard space stations or future deep-space missions face elevated radiation exposure, making such storms a major concern for **human spaceflight planning**.

Security Issues

National IED Data Management System (NIDMS)



Why in the News?

Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** virtually inaugurated the **National IED Data Management System (NIDMS)** at the garrison of the **National Security Guard (NSG)** in Manesar. Describing it as a next-generation digital shield against terrorism, the Home Minister underlined that NIDMS will significantly enhance India's capability to prevent, investigate, and prosecute terror incidents involving Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

The launch comes amid persistent threats from terror networks using IEDs as their primary weapon of choice,

especially in left-wing extremism-affected regions, border areas, and urban terror modules.

What is the National IED Data Management System (NIDMS)?

The **National IED Data Management System (NIDMS)** is a **national-level online digital platform** and a **centralised repository** that captures, stores, and analyses data related to IED incidents across India.

It is designed as an end-to-end intelligence and investigation support system that enables:

- Systematic documentation of IED incidents
- Advanced pattern and trend analysis
- Strengthened deterrence and prevention strategies

A key strength of NIDMS is that it offers **single-click access** to verified IED-related data for authorised agencies across the country, ensuring faster decision-making and coordinated response.

Nodal Agency and Launch Authority

- **Nodal Agency:** National Security Guard (NSG)
- **Launched by:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

The NSG, with its specialised expertise in bomb disposal, counter-terrorism, and forensic analysis of explosives, will manage and maintain the platform, ensuring data accuracy, security, and operational relevance.

Key Objectives of NIDMS

NIDMS has been conceptualised with multiple strategic objectives:

- **Strengthening counter-terrorism investigations** by providing structured and searchable IED data
- **Identifying recurring patterns** in explosives used, triggering mechanisms, locations, and tactics
- **Enabling scientific and evidence-based prosecution**, improving conviction rates in terror cases
- **Improving inter-agency coordination** among central, state, and intelligence agencies
- **Supporting preventive policing**, allowing authorities to anticipate and neutralise threats before attacks occur

Key Features of the Platform

Two-Way Digital Architecture

- Field agencies can **upload fresh IED incident data** in real time
- Authorised users can **access historical and analytical datasets**

Comprehensive Historical Coverage

- Maintains a **chronological database of all recorded bomb blasts since 1999**, making it one of the most exhaustive IED repositories in the country

One Nation – One Data Repository

- Uniform and standardised access for **central and state agencies**, eliminating data silos and duplication

Secure National Digital Platform

- Built with **high-end cybersecurity architecture**
- Ensures encrypted data sharing, access control, and audit trails

Standardisation and Integration

- Enables **uniform reporting formats**, technical classification of explosives, and consistent terminology
- Facilitates seamless data integration with other criminal justice and security databases

Agencies Covered Under NIDMS

The platform will be accessible to a wide spectrum of security and investigation agencies, including:

- **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**
- State Anti-Terrorism Squads (ATS)
- Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)
- State and Union Territory police forces
- Intelligence and specialised investigation agencies

This broad coverage ensures a **whole-of-government approach** to countering IED-based terrorism.

Integration with Other National Security Databases

A major strength of NIDMS lies in its interoperability with existing national criminal justice and security platforms:

- **CCTNS** – Connecting over **17,700 police stations** nationwide
- **ICJS 2.0** – Integrating data from more than **22,000 courts**
- **e-Prisons** – Database of over **2.2 crore prisoners**
- **e-Prosecution** – Covering around **2 crore criminal cases**

- **e-Forensics** – Housing data from more than **31 lakh forensic samples**
- **NAFIS** – National Automated Fingerprint Identification System with over **1.2 crore fingerprint records**

Through these linkages, NIDMS enables investigators to correlate IED data with suspects, forensic evidence, criminal history, and judicial outcomes on a single digital ecosystem.

Overall Significance

The launch of NIDMS marks a critical shift in India's counter-terrorism strategy—from reactive response to **data-driven prevention and precision investigation**. By combining historical depth, real-time inputs, and advanced analytics, NIDMS strengthens India's ability to dismantle terror networks that rely on IEDs as low-cost, high-impact weapons.

China reiterates claim over Shaksgam Valley



Why in the News?

China has recently **reasserted its cartographical claim over the Shaksgam Valley** and defended the construction of infrastructure in the region as part of its sovereign territory. India has **strongly rejected China's assertions**, reiterating that **Shaksgam Valley is an integral part of Indian territory** under the former princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. India has also once again declared the **1963 China–**

Pakistan Boundary Agreement illegal, null, and void, as Pakistan had no authority to cede Indian territory to China.

About Shaksgam Valley (Trans-Karakoram Tract)

- **Location:**
A remote, high-altitude valley located **north of the Karakoram Range**, adjoining China's **Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region**.
- **Political Status:**
The valley forms part of **Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK)**, specifically the **Hunza–Gilgit region of Gilgit-Baltistan**, which India considers an integral part of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Area:**
Approximately **5,180 square kilometres**, illegally ceded by Pakistan to China in 1963.
- **Strategic Proximity:**
 - Close to the **Siachen Glacier**, the world's highest battlefield
 - Adjacent to **Aksai Chin**, another region under Chinese occupation claimed by India
 - Near critical China–Pakistan connectivity routes in the Karakoram region
- **Geostrategic Importance:**
Control over Shaksgam Valley strengthens China's strategic depth in the western sector and enhances military and logistical coordination with Pakistan.

Historical Background of the Dispute

1963 Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement

- In March 1963, Pakistan and China signed the **Sino-Pakistan Agreement**, under which Pakistan **illegally transferred Shaksgam Valley to China**.
- India **never recognised this agreement**, as the territory legally belonged to the erstwhile princely State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Article 6 of the Agreement

- Article 6 explicitly states that:
 - The boundary settlement is **temporary**
 - It is **subject to renegotiation** after the **final resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute**

- Despite this clause, China continues to treat the area as permanently ceded.

India's Official Position

- **Lack of Sovereignty:**
India maintains that **Pakistan had no sovereign authority** to negotiate or transfer any part of Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Illegality of the Agreement:**
As Pakistan was merely an **occupying power**, the 1963 agreement is **legally invalid under international law**.
- **Null and Void:**
India consistently asserts that the agreement is **null, void, and without legal standing**, and does not affect India's territorial claims.
- **Diplomatic Protests:**
India has lodged **strong diplomatic protests** against China's infrastructure development and cartographic assertions in the area.

Strategic and Geopolitical Significance

- The Shaksgam Valley lies at the **junction of India, China, and Pakistan**, making it crucial for:
 - Military logistics and surveillance
 - China-Pakistan strategic coordination
 - Regional power balance in the western Himalayas
- China's activities in the region align with its broader strategy of **consolidating control over disputed territories**, often through infrastructure development followed by cartographic claims.

Conclusion

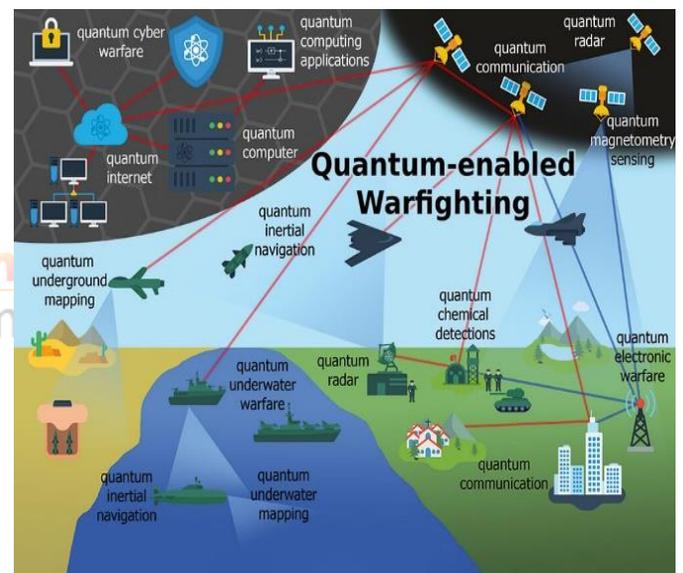
The Shaksgam Valley dispute underscores the **complex territorial dynamics of Jammu and Kashmir** and the strategic convergence between China and Pakistan. India's firm rejection of Chinese claims reflects its long-standing position that **no bilateral agreement between China and Pakistan can alter India's sovereignty** over the region. The issue remains a critical component of India's diplomatic and strategic engagement with both neighbours, especially amid rising border tensions.

Military Quantum Mission Policy Framework

Why in the News?

The **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Anil Chauhan**, has released the **Military Quantum Mission Policy Framework**, marking a major step towards integrating cutting-edge quantum technologies into the operational architecture of the **Indian Armed Forces**. The framework aligns India's defence preparedness with emerging technologies that are expected to redefine future warfare.

What is the Military Quantum Mission Policy Framework?



The **Military Quantum Mission Policy Framework** is a **strategic vision and roadmap document** designed to guide the **systematic adoption, integration, and operationalisation of quantum technologies** across India's defence ecosystem.

Key characteristics include:

- Applicability across **Army, Navy, and Air Force**
- Focus on **future battlefield dominance** rather than experimental research alone
- Emphasis on **operational readiness**, scalability, and secure deployment
- Integration of military needs with national scientific and industrial capabilities

Quantum technologies are based on the principles of **quantum mechanics**, which govern the behaviour of matter and energy at atomic and sub-atomic scales.

These principles enable capabilities that far exceed classical systems in speed, precision, and security.

Aim of the Framework

The policy framework seeks to ensure that India does not lag behind global military powers that are rapidly militarising quantum science.

Its core aims are:

- **Tri-services integration** through joint planning, interoperability, and common standards
- **Alignment of defence requirements with the National Quantum Mission**, ensuring coherence between civilian research and military deployment
- **Adoption of a civil–military fusion model**, leveraging India’s academic strength, startup ecosystem, and defence industry

Key Features of the Framework

1. Four Pillars of Quantum Integration

The framework is structured around four critical quantum domains:

- **Quantum Communication**
Enables ultra-secure communication using quantum encryption and quantum key distribution (QKD), making interception or hacking virtually impossible.
- **Quantum Computing**
Offers exponential increases in computational power, supporting complex military simulations, cryptanalysis, logistics optimisation, and real-time battlefield decision-making.
- **Quantum Sensing and Metrology**
Allows extremely precise detection of submarines, aircraft, and stealth platforms, as well as high-accuracy navigation and timing even in GPS-denied environments.
- **Quantum Materials and Devices**
Focuses on next-generation materials for sensors, processors, and secure hardware critical for military platforms.

2. Tri-Services Jointness

- Ensures **unified implementation** across the Army, Navy, and Air Force

- Prevents duplication of effort and **silos-based development**
- Promotes interoperability and joint operational doctrines in quantum-enabled warfare

This reflects India’s broader shift towards **theatre commands and integrated defence planning**.

3. Civil–Military Fusion Model

The framework strongly emphasises collaboration beyond the armed forces:

- Partnerships with **universities, research institutions, startups, and private industry**
- Creation of **dedicated governance and coordination mechanisms**
- Faster transition of research outcomes into deployable military systems

This approach mirrors global best practices adopted by technologically advanced militaries.

4. Future Battlefield Orientation

The policy is explicitly designed around future conflict scenarios, focusing on:

- **Secure and tamper-proof communications**
- **Superior sensing, navigation, and surveillance capabilities**
- **Faster and more accurate command-and-control decisions**
- **Enhanced resilience against cyber, electronic, and information warfare**
- Reduced dependence on vulnerable satellite-based systems

Strategic Significance

The Military Quantum Mission Policy Framework signals India’s intent to:

- Prepare for **next-generation warfare**, where information dominance and technological superiority are decisive
- Reduce reliance on foreign technologies by building **indigenous quantum capabilities**
- Position India among the **global leaders in defence-oriented quantum innovation**

As quantum technologies increasingly move from laboratories to battlefields, this framework ensures that India’s armed forces are not just future-ready, but future-shaping.

Trivia

79th Foundation Day of Bureau of Indian Standards

Why in the News?

The **79th Foundation Day of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** was commemorated recently, during which the Union Minister underscored BIS's evolving role from a **purely regulatory authority to a facilitative, enabling, and industry-friendly institution**. The emphasis was on aligning standardisation with **ease of doing business, innovation, consumer empowerment, and the promotion of a nationwide quality culture**, in line with India's economic and manufacturing ambitions.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)



The Bureau of Indian Standards is **India's National Standards Body**, playing a central role in ensuring that products, services, and systems conform to **established benchmarks of quality, safety, reliability, and efficiency**.

Core Functions

- **Standardisation:** Formulation and periodic revision of Indian Standards across sectors such as manufacturing, construction, food safety, electronics, environment, and services.
- **Product Certification:** Grant of the **ISI Mark**, assuring consumers that products meet prescribed Indian standards.
- **Hallmarking:** Certification of gold and silver jewellery to protect consumers against adulteration and under-caratage.

- **Quality Assurance & Conformity Assessment:** Supporting industries in improving product quality and process efficiency.

Through these functions, BIS safeguards **consumer interests** while enhancing the **global competitiveness of Indian products**.

Establishment and Legal Framework

- **Established:** 1987
- **Operational from:** 1 April 1987
- **Governing Law:** **BIS Act, 2016**
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi

The **BIS Act, 2016** significantly strengthened the organisation by:

- Expanding mandatory certification to critical consumer goods for public safety
- Enhancing penalties for non-compliance
- Providing legal backing for hallmarking and conformity assessment
- Improving alignment with **international standards frameworks**

Historical Evolution of Standardisation in India

- **1947** – Establishment of the **Indian Standards Institution (ISI)**, laying the foundation of organised standardisation in independent India
- **1952–1956** – Launch of the **ISI Certification Marks Scheme**, introducing quality marks on consumer goods
- **1987** – Transformation of ISI into the **Bureau of Indian Standards**, with a broader mandate covering services and systems
- **2016** – Enactment of the **BIS Act, 2016**, strengthening consumer participation, market surveillance, and global integration

This evolution reflects India's shift from basic quality control to a **modern quality infrastructure ecosystem**.

Changing Role: From Regulator to Facilitator

In recent years, BIS has reoriented itself to support:

- **Ease of Doing Business** by simplifying certification procedures
- **Digital platforms** for online standards access, licensing, and grievance redressal

- **Startup and MSME support**, enabling faster compliance with standards
- **Stakeholder consultation**, involving industry, academia, and consumers in standards formulation

The focus is increasingly on **voluntary adoption of standards**, innovation-friendly regulation, and reduced compliance burdens without compromising safety.

Significance of BIS in Contemporary India

- **Strengthens India's Quality Infrastructure** by ensuring uniform benchmarks across sectors
- **Supports flagship initiatives** such as *Make in India*, *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, and *Vocal for Local*
- **Enhances export competitiveness** by aligning Indian Standards with ISO, IEC, and other global norms
- **Promotes consumer safety and trust**, especially in high-risk sectors like food, electronics, construction materials, and jewellery
- **Encourages a culture of quality**, making standards a tool for growth rather than mere regulation

Overall Importance

As India aspires to become a **global manufacturing and innovation hub**, the Bureau of Indian Standards plays a pivotal role in bridging **domestic production with international quality expectations**. The 79th Foundation Day celebrations reaffirm BIS's transformation into a **partner in national development**, balancing consumer protection, industrial growth, and global integration through robust and forward-looking standardisation.

Kathputli Art of Rajasthan

Why in the News?

The **traditional Kathputli art of Rajasthan** has come into focus as a symbol of **India's rich intangible cultural heritage**, with attention centred on **Kathputli Nagar**, also known as Puppets' Colony in Jaipur. Despite rapid urbanisation and the dominance of digital entertainment, **nearly 250 artisan families** continue to preserve this **centuries-old puppet tradition**, highlighting both its cultural resilience and the challenges faced by traditional folk artists in contemporary India.

What is Kathputli?



Kathputli is regarded as **one of the oldest surviving folk puppet traditions in India**.

Etymology

- **Kath** – meaning *wood*
- **Putli** – meaning *doll*

Together, the term refers to **wooden dolls animated through strings**, reflecting both craftsmanship and performance art.

Key Characteristics

- Puppets are **carved from wood**, often from locally available materials
- Painted faces with **bold expressions and stylised features**
- Dressed in **vibrant Rajasthani costumes**, often echoing royal attire
- **String-operated**, usually controlled by a single puppeteer
- Performances combine **music, rhythm, dialogue, and movement**

Region and Community

- Kathputli is practised **primarily in Rajasthan**, with Jaipur as a major centre.
- **Kathputli Nagar in Jaipur** functions as a **living cultural hub**, where puppet-making and performances coexist within the same community.
- The craft is **hereditary in nature**, passed down orally and practically from one generation to the next within artisan families.

- Skills such as **wood carving, costume stitching, painting, music, and narration** are often shared among family members, making it a collective art form.

Historical and Cultural Significance

- Kathputli performances were traditionally conducted by **travelling storytellers**, who moved from village to village.
- The art served as a **powerful medium of mass communication** in pre-modern India, long before print, radio, or cinema.

Themes Traditionally Narrated

- **Stories of Rajput kings, warriors, and courtly life**
- **Folk legends, myths, and local heroes**
- **Moral tales and social messages**, often blended with humour and satire

Through these narratives, Kathputli helped **educate, entertain, and culturally unite communities**, making it an early form of popular theatre.

Contemporary Relevance

Today, Kathputli is widely showcased in:

- **Cultural festivals and fairs**
- **Tourism circuits**
- **Government-sponsored heritage events**
- International cultural exchanges representing Indian folk traditions

It remains an important symbol of **Rajasthan's folk identity** and India's broader **intangible cultural heritage**.

Current Challenges

Despite its cultural value, the Kathputli tradition faces multiple challenges:

Competition from Modern Entertainment

- Digital media, television, and online content have reduced demand for traditional live performances.

Economic Insecurity

- Many artisans face **irregular income**, limited market access, and low remuneration.
- Younger generations often migrate to other occupations due to **financial uncertainty**.

Dependence on Tourism

- Performances are largely dependent on **tourist seasons, cultural festivals, and government events**, making livelihoods vulnerable to economic slowdowns.

Broader Significance

The situation of Kathputli reflects a wider issue concerning the **survival of traditional art forms in a rapidly modernising society**. Protecting and promoting Kathputli is not only about preserving an art form but also about **safeguarding community knowledge systems, oral traditions, and cultural diversity** that form the backbone of India's living heritage.



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**26, G3, Paris Ganga Apartment, Gangai
Amman Koil Street, Vadapalani,
Chennai - 26**

Phone: : 9884 2222 49 / 9176 448 448

Whatsapp : 9884 2222 49

Email: shakthiiacademy@gmail.com

Website : www.shakthiiacademy.com