National

Lucknow becomes Uttar Pradesh's first city to fully process fresh waste using scientific methods

Lucknow has become the first city in Uttar Pradesh to achieve 100 per cent scientific processing of fresh municipal waste under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban by commissioning the Shivari Solid Waste Management Plant. Together with existing facilities, the city's waste processing capacity now handles over 2,100 metric tonnes daily, eliminating open dumping of fresh waste. Collected waste is segregated at source, with organic waste converted to compost and biogas and inorganic waste recycled or turned into Refuse Derived Fuel, improving environmental sustainability and public health.

Centre clears revised wages and pensions for PSGICs, NABARD and RBI employees

The central government has approved long-pending wage revisions for employees of Public Sector General Insurance Companies and NABARD, along with enhanced pension payouts for retirees of NABARD and the Reserve Bank of India. The wage adjustment includes higher basic pay and allowances effective from earlier reference dates, and an increased contribution to pension schemes for future security. Family pension rates have also been standardised. These reforms are expected to benefit tens of thousands of serving staff, pensioners and family pensioners across the three institutions.

Tamil Nadu introduces Semmozhi Illakiya Virudhu as a national literary honour for Indian languages

The Tamil Nadu government has launched the Semmozhi Illakiya Virudhu, a national literary award recognising outstanding contributions in Indian languages, in response to recent disruptions in national literary award announcements. The initiative aims to honour literature written in languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Bengali and Marathi, with cash prizes and separate juries. It seeks to promote classical and regional literary traditions and reinforce cultural identity amid debates about fairness and representation in award recognition.

Odisha enforces statewide ban on gutkha, pan masala and tobacco products

The Odisha government has issued a comprehensive statewide ban on all products containing tobacco or nicotine, including gutkha, pan masala and similar chewable items, by prohibiting their manufacture, processing, storage, transportation, distribution and sale with immediate effect. The new notification replaces an earlier 2013 order to close legal gaps and ensure uniform enforcement, following directions from the Supreme Court. The prohibition covers both packaged and unpackaged products and aims to reduce tobacco-related health risks, particularly for children and young adults.

Rajasthan plans major biological park in Alwar housing eighty one wildlife species

The Rajasthan government has announced plans to develop a large biological park in Alwar's Kati Ghati area, envisioned to be one of the biggest wildlife attraction centres in the national capital region. The park master plan covers about 104 hectares and will exhibit around 81 different wildlife species, including animals and birds, with facilities to support conservation and tourism. The project aims to boost eco-tourism and provide a significant recreational and educational space for visitors once completed.

Government broadens carbon credit trading framework with new greenhouse emission intensity goals

The Government of India has expanded the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme by notifying amendments to the ... target ...,

bringing additional carbon-intensive sectors into the compliance regime. The new rules add industries such as petroleum refineries, petrochemicals, textiles and secondary aluminium, requiring 208 more obligated entities to meet defined emission intensity reduction targets. This broadens the scope of the Indian Carbon Market under the scheme, strengthening mechanisms for industrial decarbonisation and climate action through tradable carbon credits.

Vice President C P Radhakrishnan releases book chronicling Ram Janmabhoomi movement

Vice President C P Radhakrishnan released the book Chalice of Ambrosia: Ram Janmabhoomi – Challenge and Response by Surendra Kumar Pachauri at the Vice President's Enclave in New Delhi. The work documents the long struggle around the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, blending historical, legal and cultural perspectives on the effort to reclaim the site believed to be Lord Shri Ram's birthplace in Ayodhya. Radhakrishnan said the narrative is balanced and valuable for future generations.

RXIL Becomes First TReDS Platform In India To Declare Interim Dividend

Receivables Exchange of India Ltd (RXIL), India's first Trade Receivables Discounting System platform promoted by SIDBI and major banks, has declared a 21.6 percent interim dividend on its shares, becoming the first in the TReDS sector to return capital to stakeholders. This reflects the platform's financial resilience and maturity after years of

facilitating receivables financing for MSMEs. RXIL has strengthened liquidity access for thousands of MSMEs by digitising invoice discounting and enabling broader participation from financiers and state entities.

Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme Completes 11 Years Of Supporting Girl Child Education And Savings

The Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY), launched on January 22, 2015 under the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign, has completed 11 years as of January 22, 2026. This government-backed small savings scheme encourages long-term financial planning for girl children's education and future needs. Parents or guardians can open accounts for eligible girl children and contribute annually within prescribed limits. The scheme has seen widespread participation with crores of accounts opened and substantial cumulative deposits. It continues to offer attractive returns and tax advantages to support financial security for girls.

Punjab Launches Chief Minister Health Scheme Offering Free Cashless Treatment

Punjab's government, led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, has launched the Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojna, a universal health programme that provides free cashless medical treatment up to ten lakh per family for all residents with Aadhaar and voter ID. The scheme covers more than 2,500 medical procedures at over 850 empanelled government and private hospitals and applies to all 65 lakh families across the state. Registration drives are underway to issue health cards and boost access to diagnostics, medicines and specialised care.

RBI Releases Operational Framework For Export Credit Interest Support Under Niryat Protsahan

The Reserve Bank of India has issued operational guidelines for providing interest support on export credit under the Niryat Protsahan component of the Export Promotion Mission, aimed at strengthening export competitiveness. This framework enables eligible exporters, particularly in the micro, small and medium enterprise sector, to receive interest subvention on pre- and post-shipment credit routed through banks. The move is designed to improve access to

affordable export finance and support India's export growth through streamlined implementation and enhanced credit flow to exporters.

Government launches Digital Climate Atlas to mark 15 years of NICRA initiative

The Government launched the Atlas of Climate Adaptation in Indian Agriculture (ACASA-India), a digital climate atlas, to coincide with 15 years of the National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) programme. Developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and partners, the platform provides location-specific, data backed tools for climate adaptation planning in agriculture. It integrates 15 years of research to support farmers facing climate stresses and strengthen resilience. The initiative aligns with broader goals of sustainable agricultural development and resilience building.

India targets 100 GW hydro pumped storage capacity by 2047 to support renewable integration

India is planning to achieve 100 gigawatts of hydro pumped storage capacity by 2035-36, a key energy storage target to support growing renewable power integration and strengthen grid stability. The Central Electricity Authority's roadmap projects rising storage needs as wind and solar increase in the energy mix. Pumped storage will help balance supply, provide long-duration storage, and regulate frequency. It requires coordinated efforts among central and state governments and industry players to meet this long-term clean energy transition goal.

Chief of Defence Staff unveils Military Quantum Mission policy framework

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan unveiled the Military Quantum Mission Policy Framework, a comprehensive defence policy and roadmap to integrate cutting-edge quantum technologies across the Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force. The framework outlines four core pillars including quantum communication, computing, sensing, and materials. This strategic initiative aims to strengthen defence technological capabilities, enhance secure communication and situational awareness, and prepare India's armed forces for future conflict environments driven by rapidly evolving global technology competition.

NITI Aayog publishes sectoral transition reports for cement, aluminium and MSMEs

On January 21 2026, NITI Aayog released three comprehensive reports outlining green transition and decarbonisation roadmaps for the cement, aluminium and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sectors as part of India's climate action strategy. The reports recommend reducing emissions through cleaner energy adoption, energy-efficient technologies, alternative fuels, carbon capture and sustainable practices. They aim to guide these high-emission industries toward lower carbon footprints while supporting economic growth and contributing to India's net-zero emissions objective by 2070.

Operation Sindoor heroism highlighted at India's 77th Republic Day parade

India celebrated its 77th Republic Day at Kartavya Path with a grand parade showcasing military capability, cultural diversity, and diplomatic outreach. A key highlight was Operation Sindoor, presented through a tri-services tableau reflecting joint operational readiness and indigenous defence strength. Advanced weapon systems, mechanised columns, and aerial formations demonstrated India's evolving combat doctrine. Cultural performances under the theme *Vividata Mein Ekta* highlighted unity in diversity. The participation of a European Union military contingent and a Navy tableau tracing maritime heritage underscored India's growing global and strategic stature.

"Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice"

As bilateral trade talks advance, India plans to lower tariffs on car imports from the EU

India is considering a major reduction in import duties on European cars as part of advancing free trade negotiations with the European Union. Proposed tariffs would fall from as high as 110% to 40% for a limited quota of high-value vehicles, with possible further cuts over time. The move is expected to benefit European automakers while gradually opening India's protected auto market. Electric vehicles are excluded initially to safeguard domestic investments. This step is viewed as a key breakthrough toward concluding the long-pending India–EU free trade agreement.

India's UPI is poised to debut in Japan, extending its global digital payments footprint

India's Unified Payments Interface is set to enter Japan through a trial rollout in fiscal 2026, marking a key milestone in its global expansion. The initiative, led by a partnership between NPCI and Japan's NTT Data, will initially allow Indian tourists to make payments in Japan using UPI apps linked to Indian bank accounts. Plans are also underway for deeper integration between Indian and Japanese payment systems. Already operational in several countries, UPI's Japan debut highlights its growing role as a globally recognised real-time digital payments platform.

Akshita Dhankar hoists the national flag alongside the President on Republic Day

Flight Lieutenant Akshita Dhankar made history by unfurling the national flag alongside President Droupadi Murmu during the 77th Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi. Hailing from Kasni village in Haryana and inspired by her father's Air Force service, she developed an early commitment to national duty. An NCC cadet at Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College, she rose to Cadet Sergeant Major. Commissioned into the IAF's Administration branch in 2023, her rapid promotion reflects dedication and professionalism. Her ceremonial role symbolises the growing leadership and visibility of women in India's armed forces.

India marks a historic first by participating as the Partner Country at Gulfood 2026

India marked a major agri-trade milestone by debuting as a Partner Country at Gulfood 2026, the first such role in the event's history. Led by APEDA, India showcased its agri-diversity through a large pavilion featuring 161 exhibitors from 25 states. With participation from exporters, FPOs, startups, and support from FIEO, the initiative strengthens India's global food supply credentials and promotes investments in food processing, logistics, and agri-infrastructure.

UGC introduces new regulations to curb caste-based discrimination in higher education institutions

In January 2026, the University Grants Commission introduced binding regulations to curb caste and identity-based discrimination in higher education. The rules mandate Equal Opportunity Centres in all institutions, inclusive committees, biannual reporting, and national-level oversight. Protection now extends beyond SC/ST/OBCs to religion, gender, disability, and region. Unlike earlier advisory frameworks, non-compliance attracts strict penalties, including loss of funding and UGC recognition. The reforms aim to address long-standing campus exclusion, strengthen accountability, and create safer, more inclusive academic environments that also recognise the mental health impact of discrimination.

"Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice"

Bactrian camels make a notable appearance during the Republic Day celebrations

At the Republic Day Parade 2026, a rare double-humped Bactrian camel from Ladakh made a historic debut on Kartavya Path. Native to the Nubra Valley, these camels symbolised resilience, biodiversity, and strategic utility in extreme terrains. With exceptional cold tolerance and load-carrying ability at high altitudes, they have proven effective in military trials by DRDO. Their presence highlighted India's blend of traditional knowledge and modern high-altitude defence preparedness along sensitive border regions.

NITI Aayog rolls out Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0 to accelerate holistic development

NITI Aayog has launched Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0, a three-month national campaign running from January 28 to April 14, 2026, to achieve saturation of key development indicators in Aspirational Districts and Blocks. Covering 112 districts and 513 blocks, the initiative targets critical gaps in health, nutrition, sanitation, education, and animal welfare. Five KPIs have been identified for districts and six for blocks, focusing on maternal and child health, school infrastructure, public health monitoring, and animal vaccination. The campaign follows a time-bound, collaborative approach involving action plans, regular monitoring, and coordination between the Centre, States, and local administrations.

Madhya Pradesh designates 2026 as the Year of Agriculture to boost the farm sector

Madhya Pradesh has declared 2026 as the 'year of agriculture', highlighting agriculture and allied sectors as the foundation of rural growth. The State's agriculture budget has risen sharply to over Rs. 27,000 crore in 2024–25, supporting a multi-pronged development model focused on technology, income growth, natural farming, marketing, and digital transparency. Market reforms like the e-Mandi scheme now cover 259 markets with 40 lakh farmers registered. The government is also prioritising animal husbandry and dairy expansion under the Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Kamdhenu Yojana. Alongside agriculture, the State has reported progress in education, wildlife conservation, infrastructure development, and industrial reforms to strengthen overall economic growth.

Canada aims to double trade with India to USD 60 billion, boosting economic ties

Canada has announced a plan to double its bilateral trade with India from USD 30 billion to USD 60 billion by the end of the decade, signalling renewed economic engagement. The target was outlined ahead of a high-level visit to New Delhi and reflects efforts to strengthen ties amid global supply chain shifts. Energy cooperation lies at the centre, with Canada seeking to expand oil, LNG, uranium and critical mineral supplies to India. New west coast infrastructure is expected to cut shipping time and costs. The partnership also covers clean technology and resource diversification, supporting energy security, economic resilience and long-term sustainable growth for both countries.

"Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice"

International

India dispatches seven point five tonnes of essential cancer medicines to Afghanistan

India has sent 7.5 tonnes of essential cancer medicines to Afghanistan to help address urgent treatment needs amid shortages of critical healthcare supplies. The shipment was confirmed by the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson, highlighting India's commitment to humanitarian support for the Afghan population. The assistance forms part of broader bilateral cooperation on healthcare, with earlier engagements including dialogue on traditional medicine collaboration and previous deliveries of medical aid and vaccines.

Mozambique's Graca Machel Receives Indira Gandhi Peace Award

Graca Machel, the Mozambican humanitarian and former education minister, has been selected to receive the prestigious Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2025. She is recognised for her lifelong dedication to advancing education, health, nutrition and economic empowerment for vulnerable communities, particularly in Africa. The international jury honoured her impactful advocacy on human rights, social justice and inclusive development, celebrating her contributions to peace and welfare across nations.

World Economic Forum announces five new Fourth Industrial Revolution centres worldwide

The World Economic Forum announced the establishment of five new Centres for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) globally, expanding its network dedicated to responsible technology governance. These centres will be set up in France, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and India, including one in Andhra Pradesh. The network brings together governments, industry and experts to collaborate on policy frameworks, pilots and regional priorities. Focus areas include artificial intelligence, energy transition, cyber resilience and frontier technologies to advance innovation and international cooperation.

Delhi Declaration 2026 adopted during high-level global dialogue

The Delhi Declaration 2026 was unanimously adopted by more than 40 election management authorities from around the world at the International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM) held in New Delhi. It establishes a collaborative global framework with five key pillars to strengthen electoral integrity, promote inclusive and fair electoral processes, support responsible use of technology, maintain accurate electoral rolls, and enhance research, training and capacity building. Participating bodies committed to periodic progress reviews and future joint actions.
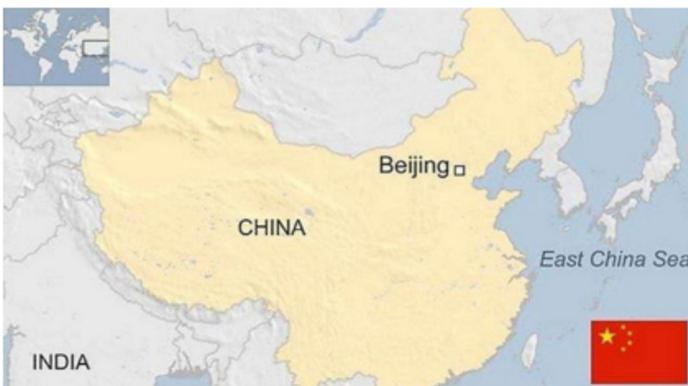
"Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice"

EU member states agree to enforce a binding ban on gas imports from Russia

European Union member states have given final approval to a law banning imports of Russian gas, formalising the bloc's commitment to cut energy ties with Moscow. The legislation, cleared in Brussels despite opposition from Hungary and Slovakia, sets clear timelines to end LNG imports by 2026 and pipeline gas by late 2027. The move locks in a sharp reduction in reliance on a former major supplier, which once met over 40% of EU gas demand. By making the ban legally binding, the EU strengthens its energy security strategy and geopolitical stance amid the Ukraine conflict.

China commissions the world's largest compressed-air energy storage (CAES) plant

China has commissioned the world's largest Compressed-Air Energy Storage (CAES) power plant in Jiangsu, marking a major step in its green energy transition. With a storage capacity of 2,400 MWh and a generation capacity of 600 MW, the facility can supply electricity to about 600,000 households annually. Built with support from Harbin Electric Corporation, the project enhances grid stability amid growing renewable energy use. It reflects China's push to diversify large-scale storage solutions and meet its target of adding over 180 GW of energy storage capacity by 2027.

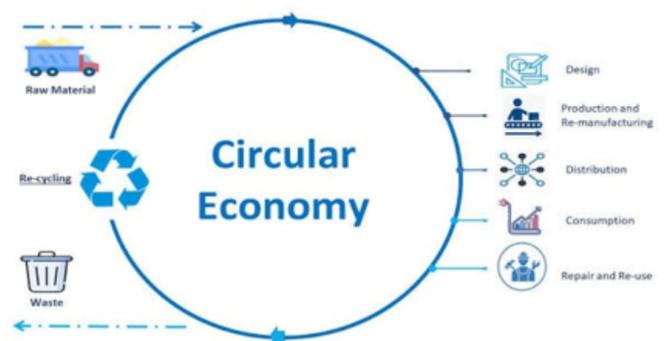**France introduces a bill to ban social media use for children under 15 to safeguard mental health**

France has approved legislation to ban children under 15 from accessing social media platforms, citing rising concerns over mental health, cyberbullying, sleep excessive screen time. Passed by a strong majority in the National Assembly, the bill mandates strict age-verification systems and expands existing smartphone restrictions in schools to include high schools. Inspired by Australia's similar move, the French government aims to enforce the law before the next academic year. With broad political and public support, the proposal may also influence wider European debates on regulating minors' digital exposure.

Ranks/Reports/Indices

Report released on circular economy practices for e-waste and lithium-ion batteries

NITI Aayog released reports highlighting India's circular economy challenges and opportunities for e-waste and lithium-ion battery recycling, noting that the country is losing significant economic value due to inefficient scrap management and low formal recycling. The reports underline gaps in processing capacity and standards, and emphasise the need to strengthen formal recycling systems and extended producer responsibility frameworks. They also recommended reforms and investments to improve resource recovery from e-waste and battery scrap, boost domestic recycling capacity, and reduce environmental harm.

Summits/MoUs/Conferences/Agreement

Uttarakhand Signs Agreement With ITBP For Healthy Border Initiative

The Uttarakhand government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) to launch the Healthy Border Campaign aimed at improving healthcare in remote frontier villages. This agreement will bring integrated primary medical services, telemedicine support and mobile health units to residents of 108 border villages in Pithoragarh, Chamoli and Uttarkashi districts. The initiative also includes deployment of medical teams, emergency support, medical supplies, and efforts to strengthen local livelihoods through cooperative procurement of agricultural and dairy products.

Goa Government Partners With Starlink To Strengthen Internet Access And Disaster Readiness

The Goa government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Starlink Satellite Communications to explore satellite-based internet solutions that enhance digital connectivity, disaster resilience and service delivery across the state. Under the agreement, the Department of Information Technology, Electronics and Communications will work with Starlink to assess high-speed satellite broadband deployments in underserved and remote areas with limited terrestrial network coverage. The collaboration also covers emergency response support, capacity building and improved access to digital services for public infrastructure.

Adani and Embraer sign a deal to build aircraft in India

India has moved closer to becoming a global aviation manufacturing hub with the Adani Group signing an MoU with Brazil's Embraer to explore aircraft manufacturing in India. The partnership covers aircraft production, components, maintenance, training, and supply chains, marking Adani's entry into commercial aircraft manufacturing. For Embraer, India offers a rapidly expanding aviation market and strong industrial potential. Aligned with Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat, the venture aims to boost indigenous aerospace capabilities, generate skilled employment, strengthen MSME participation, and reduce reliance on imported aircraft and components.

SIFFCY 2026 opens in New Delhi, spotlighting inclusion and diversity

The 12th edition of the Smile International Film Festival for Children and Youth (SIFFCY) began in New Delhi as a seven-day platform using cinema to engage young audiences on social and global issues. Organised by the Smile Foundation with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, the festival brings together filmmakers, educators, policymakers, and children. The 2026 edition highlights diversity, equity, and inclusion, with a special focus on disability representation, including films created by children with disabilities. Supported by several foreign missions, SIFFCY also promotes cross-cultural exchange while aligning with Smile Foundation's wider development work across education, health, and social empowerment.

Science and tech/Space/Defence

Tata Group announces investment of eleven billion in Maharashtra AI innovation city

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced that the Tata Group will invest eleven billion dollars to develop a state-of-the-art AI-focused Innovation City near the Navi Mumbai International Airport. The project aims to create a plug-and-play ecosystem to support startups, research and

"Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice"

technology companies, including infrastructure and a data centre. Work is expected to start within six to eight months, drawing strong interest from global investors and positioning Maharashtra as a major technology hub.

Suryoday Small Finance Bank Introduces AI Based Video KYC In Collaboration With HyperVerge

Suryoday Small Finance Bank has partnered with technology firm HyperVerge to launch an artificial intelligence-based video KYC system aimed at transforming digital customer onboarding. The AI-driven solution improves regulatory compliance and operational efficiency by enabling verification agents to complete nearly double the number of approved calls daily without extra staffing. The platform enhances customer experience, strengthens data security and integrates seamlessly into the bank's digital processes to support faster, secure identity verification during account opening and related services.

Gujarat Hosts India's First Integrated Private Satellite Manufacturing Facility In Sanand

Gujarat has begun construction of India's first integrated private satellite manufacturing facility at Khoraj in Sanand, marking a major step for the nation's private space sector. The Electro-Optical Payload Factory by Azista Space will conduct end-to-end satellite production, including design, assembly, testing and qualification under one roof. This facility aims to boost indigenous capability in high-resolution imaging and remote sensing satellites, support sectors like agriculture and disaster management, and strengthen India's self-reliance in space technology.

White Paper released on strengthening AI governance through techno-legal mechanism

The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government released a White Paper titled "Strengthening AI Governance Through Techno-Legal Framework", outlining India's approach to building a trusted and accountable artificial intelligence ecosystem. The techno-legal framework embeds legal, technical, and institutional safeguards into AI system design, balancing innovation with risk management. It aims to strengthen governance across the AI lifecycle by combining legal safeguards, technical controls and institutional mechanisms. The framework also proposes coordinated oversight and tools for compliance and implementation.

Indian Railways installs humanoid robot ASC ARJUN at Visakhapatnam Railway Station

The Waltair Division of East Coast Railway has deployed a humanoid robot named ASC ARJUN at Visakhapatnam Railway Station in a first-of-its-kind initiative by Indian Railways. Designed and developed using indigenous technology, the robot works alongside Railway Protection Force personnel to support passenger safety, security, crowd management, and service delivery. Equipped with AI and IoT capabilities, it performs intrusion detection, multilingual announcements, semi-autonomous patrols, and real-time monitoring to improve safety response and operational efficiency at the busy station.

CDS General Anil Chauhan unveils the Military Quantum Technology Policy Framework

India has launched the Military Quantum Mission Policy Framework to integrate advanced quantum technologies into its Armed Forces. Released by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, the framework outlines a roadmap for adopting quantum communication, computing, sensing, and advanced materials across the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Aligned with the National Quantum Mission, it promotes jointness and civil–military collaboration to enhance security, surveillance, and decision-making. The initiative reflects India's focus on technology-driven warfare and aims to strengthen defence preparedness, reduce external dependence, and maintain a strategic

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Microsoft launches its Maia 200 AI chip

Microsoft has unveiled Maia 200, its second-generation in-house AI chip, marking a strategic push to reduce reliance on Nvidia and strengthen control over its AI infrastructure. Deployed initially in U.S. data centres, the chip is built using advanced 3-nanometre technology and designed for large-scale generative AI workloads. Alongside the hardware, Microsoft introduced an open-source software stack, including Triton, to rival Nvidia's CUDA ecosystem. The move reflects a wider trend among major cloud providers to develop custom AI chips, signalling growing competition and deeper vertical integration in the global AI industry.

IIT Guwahati develops a method to monitor glacier hazards in the Eastern Himalayas

Researchers from IIT Guwahati have developed an advanced predictive framework to assess future glacial hazards in the Eastern Himalayas. Using high-resolution satellite imagery, terrain analysis, and machine-learning models, the study identified 492 potential sites where glacial lakes may form, increasing the risk of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods. Unlike earlier approaches, the method focuses on landform characteristics and uncertainty estimation, improving reliability. The findings can support early-warning systems, safer infrastructure planning, and disaster preparedness. The framework is also adaptable to other glaciated regions globally, strengthening climate resilience efforts.

Indian Railways introduces ASC ARJUN, a humanoid security robot

Indian Railways has deployed its first humanoid robot, ASC ARJUN, at Visakhapatnam Railway Station, marking a milestone in technology-driven station management. Developed indigenously by the Railway Protection Force, the robot supports security, surveillance, and passenger assistance while working alongside human personnel. Equipped with AI-based crowd monitoring, face recognition, and real-time connectivity, it enhances threat detection and emergency response. ASC ARJUN also assists passengers through multilingual announcements and interactive features. The initiative reflects Indian Railways' push towards smart stations, artificial intelligence adoption, and self-reliant innovation under the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision.

CISF kicks off the Vande Mataram Coastal Cyclothon 2026 to promote coastal security awareness

The CISF organised the second edition of the Vande Mataram Coastal Cyclothon 2026 as a nationwide outreach programme promoting coastal security and patriotism. Flagged off virtually from New Delhi, the 25-day event marks 150 years of *Vande Mataram* and carries the theme "Surakshit Tat, Samridh Bharat." Two cycling teams will cover nearly 6,500 km along India's eastern and western coasts, ending in Kochi. With 148 personnel, including women participants, the initiative highlights CISF's growing role in maritime security, public awareness, fitness promotion, and community engagement along coastal regions.

"Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice"

Captain Hansja Sharma creates history as a Rudra helicopter pilot

Captain Hansja Sharma has created history by becoming the Indian Army's first woman officer qualified to fly the Rudra Armed Helicopter, marking a major milestone for Army Aviation. At 27, she led an armed helicopter formation during the Army Day Parade 2026, reflecting high operational trust. A topper from the Combat Army Aviation Training School, Nashik, she is the first woman recipient of the Silver Cheetah Trophy and secured top merit in an Air Force Academy course. Her journey, marked by overcoming medical rejection through perseverance, highlights growing gender inclusivity in combat roles. Her achievement symbolises India's expanding indigenous defence capability and the evolving role of women in frontline military aviation.

Sports

Nat Sciver-Brunt scripts history by becoming the first player to score a century in the WPL

Nat Sciver-Brunt created history in Women's Premier League 2026 by becoming the first batter to score a century in the tournament. Representing the Mumbai Indians, she struck an unbeaten 100 off 57 balls against the Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Vadodara. Entering early after a quick wicket, she anchored the innings and shared a vital 131-run stand with Hayley Matthews. The landmark knock ended a long-standing WPL record drought and underlined the league's rising competitiveness.

Miscellaneous

Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2026 to host international theatre performances across 40 cities

The National School of Drama will organise the 25th Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2026, India's largest international theatre festival, from January 27 to February 20 across 40 locations nationwide. The festival will include 277 Indian and 12 international productions representing all seven continents, staged in over 228 Indian and foreign languages. It will feature diverse theatrical forms including traditional, folk and contemporary works, and include performances by underrepresented groups. BRM aims to expand cultural dialogue and celebrate dramatic arts at an unmatched scale.

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Davos 2026 World Economic Forum Highlights Global Economic And Policy Priorities

The 56th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos brought together nearly 3,000 leaders from government, business and civil society to discuss pressing global issues under the theme "A Spirit of Dialogue." Participants emphasised economic resilience amid geopolitical tensions, technological change and climate challenges. Key dialogues focused on improving workforce skills, expanding access to credit, investing in clean energy and technology, and addressing cyber risks. Leaders also highlighted the need for global cooperation on growth, job creation and sustainable development.

The President sanctions the Ashok Chakra for Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla

India has announced a major set of gallantry and service awards to honour exceptional courage and distinguished service across the Armed Forces. President Droupadi Murmu approved awards for 70 personnel, with the Ashok Chakra conferred on Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla for extraordinary courage and achievement. Several Kirti and Shaurya Chakras, along with Sena, Nao Sena, and Vayu Sena Medals, were also awarded. Additionally, over 300 service decorations and numerous Mentions-in-Despatches recognised exemplary leadership, operational excellence, and dedication across diverse missions and services.

International Customs Day 2026

International Customs Day is observed annually on 26 January to highlight the crucial role of customs authorities in facilitating global trade and protecting borders. The day commemorates the first meeting of the Customs Cooperation Council in 1953, now known as the World Customs Organisation. With 183 member countries covering most of the world trade, the WCO promotes standards, cooperation, and capacity building. International Customs Day honours customs officials, raises awareness of trade regulations, and emphasises secure supply chains, revenue collection, and collaboration to address smuggling and cross-border security challenges.

RBI approves Payoneer India in principle for cross-border payment aggregator operations

The Reserve Bank of India has granted in-principle approval to Payoneer India Private Limited to operate as a Payment Aggregator – Cross Border (PA-CB), strengthening India's cross-border payments framework. This allows Payoneer to facilitate international payments for Indian importers and exporters through a regulated digital platform. The move is expected to benefit MSMEs, startups, and freelancers by reducing costs and simplifying global transactions. Operating under RBI norms on net worth, transaction limits, and account segregation, the approval supports India's expanding digital trade ecosystem and global business integration.

Ex-BCCI President I.S. Bindra dies aged 84

Inderjit Singh Bindra, former BCCI president and a prominent figure in Indian cricket administration, passed away in New Delhi at the age of 84. He served as BCCI president from 1993 to 1996 and was known for firm leadership and a strong administrative vision. Bindra played a key role in developing the Punjab Cricket Association Stadium in Mohali, which hosted major international matches. Tributes from cricketing authorities highlighted his lasting influence on governance and infrastructure, marking the end of an important chapter in India's cricket administration history.

Indian physician clinches the 2025 Wiley Research Heroes Award

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya has won the Wiley Research Heroes Prize 2025, becoming the first Indian to receive this global honour. Selected from over 2,000 nominations, he was awarded in the *Impact Beyond Academia* category for translating research into actionable public health policy. A former WHO professional, his work focuses on immunisation, maternal and child health, conditional cash transfers, and strengthening primary healthcare. The recognition underscores India's rising role in evidence-based global health governance and policy-driven research impact.

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The Sikkim Police has been honoured with the President's Police Colour Award

The Sikkim Police has been conferred with the President's Police Colour Award (Nishaan), one of the highest distinctions for police forces in India. With this honour, Sikkim becomes the 15th state nationwide and the third from the North-East to receive the award since Independence. The recognition reflects the force's sustained excellence, discipline, and professionalism in maintaining law and order in a sensitive border state. The honour will be formally bestowed during a traditional Colour
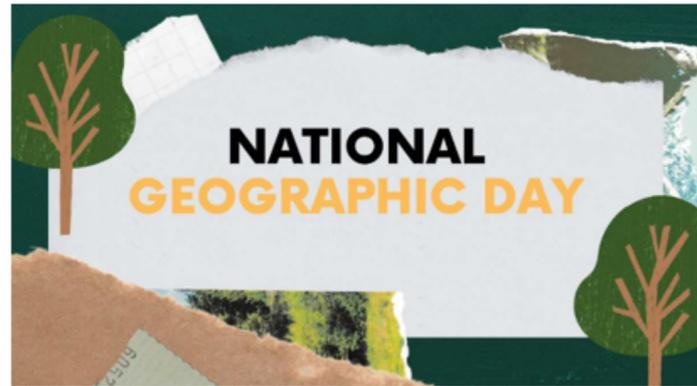
Veteran journalist Mark Tully passes away at the age of 90

Mark Tully, veteran journalist, author, and former BBC New Delhi Bureau Chief, passed away in New Delhi on January 26, 2026, at the age of 90. Born in Calcutta in 1935, he spent over five decades interpreting India for the global audience with rare empathy and depth. Fluent in Hindi, Tully covered landmark events from the Emergency to the Babri Masjid demolition. A prolific author, he was honoured with the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and a British knighthood for his contributions to journalism.

National Geographic Day 2026

National Geographic Day 2026 is observed on 27 January 2026, marking the founding of the National Geographic Society in 1888. The day celebrates curiosity, exploration, and the pursuit of geographic and scientific knowledge. It highlights the importance of understanding Earth's landscapes, cultures, wildlife, and environmental challenges such as climate change

reinforces the role of informed citizens in protecting the planet. National Geographic's legacy of research, exploration, and storytelling continues to inspire global awareness and responsibility toward nature.

Neolithic-era artefacts discovered

Recent Neolithic discoveries at **Lakkundi** have significantly strengthened efforts to secure **UNESCO** World Heritage status for the site. Excavations near the Kote Veerabhadreshwar Temple revealed prehistoric tools, confirming human habitation long before Lakkundi's medieval prominence under the Chalukyas, Hoysalas, and Yadavas. Known for its temples, stepwells, and religious plurality, the site reflects cultural continuity from prehistory to the Bhakti era. Backed by the **Karnataka** government, renewed conservation and documentation efforts aim to place Lakkundi on UNESCO's tentative list.

International Data Privacy Day 2026

International Data Privacy Day 2026 highlights the growing importance of protecting personal data in India's rapidly expanding digital ecosystem. With digital platforms operating at a population scale, the observance underscores that privacy is essential for trust and inclusion. India has strengthened its data governance framework through the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, the DPDP Rules, 2025, and enhanced cybersecurity oversight. Backed by a Rs. 782 crore allocation in the Union Budget 2025–26, these measures aim to secure digital infrastructure, prevent data misuse, and balance innovation with citizens' data rights in an increasingly digital economy.

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Gujarat allocates Rs. 1,250 crore to promote girls' education under the Namo Laxmi Scheme

Gujarat has strengthened girls' education by expanding financial support under the Namo Laxmi Scheme for the 2025–26 academic year. With an allocation of Rs. 1,250 crore, the scheme will benefit over 12 lakh girls studying in Classes 9 to 12. It provides Rs. 50,000 per student across four years, encouraging continuity and completion of secondary schooling. Targeted at families with limited income, the initiative aims to reduce dropouts, promote nutrition and health, and advance gender equity. The scheme reinforces Gujarat's education model focused on access, empowerment, and long-term social development.

Uttarakhand enacts the Uniform Civil Code Amendment Ordinance, 2026

Uttarakhand has strengthened its Uniform Civil Code through the UCC (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026, aimed at improving clarity, efficiency, and citizen accessibility. Implemented under Article 213, the ordinance refines procedural and penal provisions, aligns them with new criminal laws, and enhances registration and appellate mechanisms. A key achievement of the UCC has been the near-complete digitisation of marriage registration, significantly reducing delays and increasing transparency. Marking one year of UCC implementation, the reforms emphasise gender equality, child protection, digital governance, and public trust in civil law administration across the state.

Kerala declares Bacillus subtilis as its state microbe

Kerala has become the first Indian state to officially designate a microorganism as part of its state identity by declaring Bacillus subtilis as its State Microbe. The move highlights the crucial role of microbes in health, agriculture, and environmental sustainability. Widely used as a probiotic and bio-agent, Bacillus subtilis supports gut health, soil fertility, and disease control. The announcement coincided with the launch of the Centre of Excellence in Microbiome, aimed at advancing applied microbiome research. The initiative reflects Kerala's science-driven approach to development and innovation-led governance.

Scientists find a rare mushroom in Uttarakhand's oak forests

Scientists have discovered a new mushroom species, *Hemileccinum indicum*, in the high-altitude oak forests of Uttarakhand, marking the first record of the genus *Hemileccinum* in India. Found at over 2,600 metres in Bageshwar during monsoon field surveys, the species was confirmed through advanced genetic analysis. Distinguished by its pitted spores and unique physical features, the mushroom forms a beneficial partnership with oak tree roots, supporting forest health. The discovery highlights the rich yet underexplored fungal diversity of the Himalayas and underscores the ecological importance of fungi in maintaining resilient mountain ecosystems.

Karnataka sets up a Gig Workers Welfare Development Board to support platform workers

Karnataka has constituted the Platform-Based Gig Workers Welfare Development Board under the 2025 Act, formalising social security for gig workers. The Labour Minister will head the Board, with senior officials, worker union representatives, and aggregator platforms included to ensure balanced representation. Gig workers and aggregators must register, after which workers will receive unique identification numbers to access benefits. A dedicated welfare fund will be created through aggregator welfare fees, worker contributions, and government grants. The State has fixed an initial levy of 1–1.5 per cent on platforms, with scope for revision if needed. The move places Karnataka among the first States to establish a statutory welfare framework for platform-based

A new plant species has been discovered in the forests of Nagaland

Researchers from Nagaland University have discovered a new plant species, Hoya nagaensis, in the high-altitude, community-managed forests of Nagaland, underlining the region's rich but underexplored biodiversity. Found in the Kavünhou Community Reserved Forest in Phek district, the species was identified through detailed field surveys and taxonomic analysis and later published in *Kew Bulletin*. The plant is distinguished by unique leaf and floral features and belongs to the ornamental *Hoya* genus. Due to its extremely limited distribution and threats such as shifting cultivation and forest disturbance, it has been provisionally classified as Critically Endangered. The discovery highlights the vital role of indigenous community stewardship in conserving fragile forest ecosystems.

Maharashtra rolls out India's first menopause clinics, pioneering women's health care

Maharashtra has become the first Indian state to set up dedicated menopause clinics in government hospitals and urban health centres, strengthening women-centric public healthcare. The initiative provides comprehensive care under one roof, including medical consultations, mental health counselling, and screening for bone density, cardiovascular health, and hormonal balance, along with medicines and lifestyle guidance. Launched on January 14 under the guidance of Minister of State for Health Meghna Bordikar, the programme recognises menopause as a sensitive life transition rather than a disease. By addressing a long-neglected health phase with dignity and preventive care, the initiative aims to improve mid-life health outcomes for women and serve as a model for other states.

Chartered aircraft linked to Ajit Pawar crashes near Baramati

A chartered aircraft flying from Mumbai to Baramati crash-landed near the runway threshold on Wednesday morning, triggering a major emergency response. The plane was carrying Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar for a public engagement linked to local elections. According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, the accident occurred during the final phase descent followed by explosions and intense flames. The crash occurred near Baramati, a key political centre in western Maharashtra. Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the exact cause, while official confirmations are awaited.