

Date : 2026-01-18

Weekly Current Affairs

English

National

Tamil Nadu Introduces India's First Dedicated Policy To Support Deep Tech Startup

Tamil Nadu has launched India's first state-level Deep Tech Startup Policy to accelerate innovation-led growth in science and technology sectors. The policy commits significant funding over five years to support 100 deep tech startups, bridge lab-to-market gaps, and foster commercialisation of advanced research. It includes staged financing from early research to scale-up and infrastructure access through a single hub, promotes patent creation and tech transfer, and emphasises talent development through training and doctoral support.

Arunachal Pradesh's Keyi Panyor District Declared India's First Bio Happiness Region

Arunachal Pradesh's Keyi Panyor district has been declared India's first Bio-Happy District under an initiative that integrates biodiversity conservation with human well-being, sustainable livelihoods, nutrition, public health and environmental health. The model, promoted with research institutions and local administration collaboration, emphasises agrobiodiversity, ecosystem protection and traditional ecological knowledge while supporting diversified livelihoods for tribal and rural communities. It aims to foster harmonious human-nature coexistence through sustainable development approaches tailored to the district's rich ecological and cultural landscape.



All India Tiger Population Assessment 2026 Commences At Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary

The All India Tiger Estimation 2026 began in Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary under the Erode Forest Division, marking the start of the nationwide tiger census conducted once every four years to assess tiger numbers and broader biodiversity. Forest staff received structured training before field deployment across multiple ranges using scientific methods such as the line transect approach to record signs of big cats and other wildlife. The survey also documents herbivores, birds and vegetation, contributing data for habitat quality and conservation planning.



Indian Railways Honours 100 Personnel With 70th Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Awards

Indian Railways conferred the 70th Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar-2025 on 100 officers and employees in New Delhi, recognising their exemplary service across multiple domains. Honourees were chosen for innovation, improved processes, operational efficiency, safety and security, revenue enhancement efforts, timely execution of major projects, and sports excellence. The ceremony was presided over by the Railway Minister alongside senior officials. In addition to individual awards, 26 Shields were presented to top-performing railway zones for overall excellence and teamwork.

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MeitY Unveils PARAM SHAKTI Supercomputing Infrastructure At IIT Madras

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) unveiled the PARAM SHAKTI supercomputing facility at Indian Institute of Technology Madras, integrating the indigenous PARAM RUDRA system with a peak capacity of 3.1 petaflops. This high-performance computing infrastructure, developed under the National Supercomputing Mission, supports advanced research across disciplines like aerospace engineering, climate modelling, materials science and drug discovery by enabling large-scale simulations. The facility runs on open-source software and has been operational since early January, reinforcing technological self-reliance.

Union Minister Annpurna Devi Launches PANKHUDI Digital Platform For Women And Child Welfare

Union Women and Child Development Minister Annpurna Devi launched PANKHUDI, an integrated digital platform aimed at strengthening coordination, transparency and participation in women and child welfare initiatives nationwide. The single-window portal connects individuals, non-governmental organisations, non-resident Indians, corporate contributors and government agencies to support schemes in nutrition, health, early childhood care, child protection and women's safety. It facilitates proposal submission, progress tracking and structured engagement in social development programmes, enhancing accountability and convergence across stakeholders.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah Introduces National IED Data System To Strengthen Terror Probe Capabilities

Union Home Minister Amit Shah introduced the National IED Data System to strengthen investigative capabilities against terror incidents involving improvised explosive devices. The centralized digital platform enables systematic collection, analysis and sharing of data related to IED components, fabrication patterns and blast signatures. It aims to support intelligence agencies and forensic units in identifying linkages between incidents, improving threat assessment and enabling faster, evidence based investigations. The system enhances coordination among security agencies while reinforcing national

PIB Clears Kamala Hydropower Project Proposal In Arunachal Pradesh

The Public Investment Board has approved the proposed Kamala Hydroelectric Project in Arunachal Pradesh with an expenditure of about Rs 26,069.50 crore, aimed at generating 1,720 megawatts of clean energy once completed. Scheduled over eight years, the storage-based project on the Kamala River also includes a flood moderation component to aid Brahmaputra basin safety. It will be developed under a joint venture with NHPC and the state government and is expected to support regional power, infrastructure and employment growth.

Justice Manoj Kumar Gupta Takes Oath As Chief Justice Of Uttarakhand High Court

Justice Manoj Kumar Gupta took oath as the Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court at a ceremony in Dehradun, administered by the state Governor following the retirement of his predecessor. A senior judge of the Allahabad High Court, he was recommended for elevation by the Supreme Court Collegium in December 2025 and officially appointed by the President under constitutional provisions. Justice Gupta's experience spans civil, constitutional and rent control law, and his leadership begins as he assumes the judiciary's top post in the state.

Gujarat Chief Minister Flags Off 'Asha Van' Mobile Initiative For Early Cancer Screening

Gujarat Chief Minister flagged off the Asha Van mobile initiative to strengthen early cancer detection, particularly among underserved communities. The mobile units will conduct on site screening for common cancers, provide basic diagnostic services and facilitate timely referrals to higher medical centres. The initiative focuses on improving awareness, early diagnosis and treatment access through community level outreach. It integrates public health infrastructure with mobile healthcare delivery to reduce delays, improve survival outcomes and strengthen preventive healthcare services across districts.

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IREDA Secures Excellent MoU Performance Rating for the Fifth Year in a Row

The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) achieved an Excellent rating in its performance Memorandum of Understanding evaluation with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy for the financial year 2024-25, scoring 96.42 out of 100. This is the fifth consecutive year that IREDA has earned this distinction, reflecting sustained improvements in operational efficiency, financial discipline and corporate governance. The consistent high performance underscores IREDA's leadership role in financing renewable energy growth and advancing the country's energy transition goals.

India Records Highest Ever Fertilizer Output During the Year 2025

In 2025, India's domestic fertilizer production reached a record high of 52.46 million tonnes, meeting nearly 73 per cent of national demand and significantly reducing import dependence. This surge in output included key fertiliser types such as urea, NPK, DAP and SSP, driven by the establishment of new plants, revival of closed units and promotion of indigenous manufacturing. The government's strategic focus on self-reliance and supply chain stability ensured a steady increase in production over recent years, enhancing support for agriculture and nutrient availability for farmers.

UIDAI Introduces Aadhaar Mascot 'Udai' to Enhance Citizen Engagement and Service Accessibility

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has launched its official Aadhaar mascot named 'Udai' to make Aadhaar services more relatable and easier for citizens to understand and access. Selected through a national design competition, the mascot aims to simplify communication about Aadhaar features such as updates, authentication and offline verification, and improve public engagement with the digital identity system. UIDAI plans to integrate the mascot across communication channels and use it to boost awareness ahead of a revamped Aadhaar app launch.

India Records Twofold Rise in Fish Output Over 10 Years, Generating Large-Scale Employment Opportunities

India's fish production has more than doubled over the past decade, increasing from around 96 lakh tonnes in 2013-14 to almost 198 lakh tonnes in 2024-25, driven by modern aquaculture, improved infrastructure, and supportive policy interventions. This expansion has bolstered seafood exports, expanded aquaculture productivity, and created nearly 75 lakh direct and indirect jobs in the fisheries and allied sectors. The growth has strengthened rural livelihoods, enhanced nutritional security, and fortified India's position in the global seafood value chain.

APEDA Establishes Regional Office in Raipur to Promote Agricultural Exports from Chhattisgarh

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has inaugurated a regional office in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, to boost agricultural and processed food exports from the state. This office will support farmers, producer groups, cooperatives, and exporters with export registration, advisory services, market information, certification assistance, and infrastructure linkage. Chhattisgarh's diverse export potential includes non-basmati rice, GI products, fruits, vegetables, and forest produce. The initiative aims to strengthen global market presence, increase farmers' income, and enhance export competitiveness.

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Meghalaya Appoints Its First Woman as Chief Justice of the High Court

Justice Revati Mohite Dere was sworn in as the first woman Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court on January 10, 2026, assuming charge in Shillong after her appointment was notified by the central government earlier in the month. She succeeded Justice Soumen Sen, who was transferred to the Kerala High Court. Justice Mohite Dere brings extensive judicial experience from her tenure at the Bombay High Court, where she gained recognition for her judgments and commitment to justice.



Aralam Notified as Kerala's First Dedicated Butterfly Conservation Sanctuary

The Kerala government has officially designated Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary in Kannur district as the state's first butterfly conservation sanctuary, reflecting its exceptional biodiversity and abundance of butterfly species. The sanctuary, located in the Western Ghats, hosts more than 266 species, representing over 80 percent of the region's butterfly diversity and serving as a key habitat for migratory and endemic species. This status strengthens focused conservation, supports research, eco-tourism opportunities, and long-term ecological awareness in the area.

Andhra Pradesh Approves Dagadarthi Greenfield Airport To Enhance Nellore Region Connectivity

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet has approved the Dagadarthi Greenfield Airport project in Nellore district, advancing state aviation infrastructure and enhancing regional connectivity. The airport, positioned near national highways and major ports, aims to support passenger and cargo movement

industrial growth, and logistics. It will be Andhra Pradesh's eighth airport and is expected to spur economic development, attract investment, and generate employment. The government has authorised land acquisition and fast-tracked implementation to boost transport links and regional integration.



Tripura Gramin Bank Introduces India's First Mobile ATM Powered Entirely by Solar Energy

Tripura Gramin Bank has introduced India's first mobile ATM fully powered by solar energy to expand sustainable financial inclusion in rural areas. Supported by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, the solar-powered ATM van delivers uninterrupted banking services even in regions with limited electricity access. Known as "TGB on Wheels," this initiative enhances accessibility of cash withdrawals and basic banking facilities. The push for eco-friendly mobile banking reflects broader trends in leveraging renewable energy for essential services in underserved communities.

Rajasthan Develops Its First Completely Organic Village at Bamanwas Kankar

Bamanwas Kankar gram panchayat in Rajasthan's Kotputli-Behror district has become the first fully organic certified village body in the state, covering seven hamlets and eliminating chemical fertilisers and pesticides from farming. The community-driven shift to sustainable agriculture and ecological livestock management was motivated by declining soil health and environmental concerns. Supported by the Cofarmin Federation of Organic Societies and Producer Companies, the transition now includes organic certification and improved soil and ecosystem health, making it a model for rural sustainability.

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Delhi High Court Rules PM CARES Fund Entitled to Privacy Protection Under RTI Law

The Delhi High Court has ruled that the PM CARES Fund retains a statutory right to privacy under the Right to Information Act, even if it is controlled or supervised by the government. While hearing an appeal challenging disclosure of fund details, the court observed that privacy protection for third parties under the law extends to juristic entities, not just individuals. The court clarified that this privacy safeguard is distinct from constitutional privacy rights and must be respected during information disclosures.

India Records Fifty One Billion Dollar Foreign Investment Boosted By Startups And Manufacturing

India has attracted about fifty one billion dollars in foreign direct investment inflows over the past six months, reflecting strong global investor confidence in the economy. The government has aligned FDI attraction with domestic manufacturing and startup innovation, emphasising deep-technology ventures and research commercialisation to build long-term growth. Provisional data show robust inflows across sectors, with a year-on-year rise in investment. Policymakers are linking manufacturing expansion with startup activity to position India as a competitive global hub.

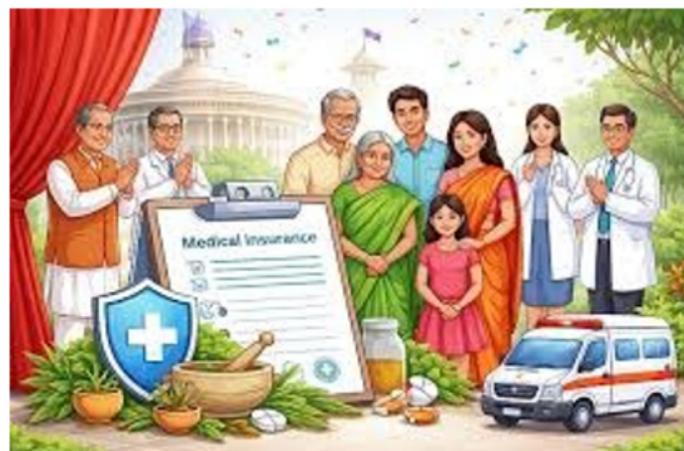


Reserve Bank Directs Automatic Transfer Of Pending Grievances To Internal Ombudsman System

The Reserve Bank of India has mandated that banks and eligible non-bank lenders implement automated complaint systems that escalate unresolved or partly resolved customer grievances to the internal ombudsman without delay. The new directive requires clear timelines for review and responses after escalation, enhancing accountability and consumer protection in the financial sector. The move strengthens internal ombudsman roles and aims to improve grievance resolution standards across regulated entities while reducing complaint pendency and enhancing customer service outcomes.

Union Finance Ministry Introduces Paripoorna Mediclaim Ayush Bima Scheme For CGHS Members

The Union Finance Ministry has launched the Paripoorna Mediclaim Ayush Bima as an optional health insurance plan for beneficiaries of the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS). The policy offers indemnity-based in-patient hospitalisation coverage within India with sum insured options of ten lakh or twenty lakh rupees and includes both modern and AYUSH treatments. Beneficiaries can choose co-payment options and access cashless treatment across a wide hospital network, with discounted premiums to enhance financial protection.



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Nipah Virus Confirmed Among Healthcare Personnel In West Bengal

Two healthcare workers in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district have tested positive for the deadly Nipah virus, health officials confirmed, triggering a high-alert response. Both nurses are critically ill and on ventilator support at a Barasat hospital as authorities initiate contact tracing and quarantine over one hundred potential contacts across multiple districts. State and national health teams have been mobilised and surveillance intensified to contain further spread. Public health advisories and preparedness measures are underway amid ongoing investigations.

India Reports Its First Scientifically Confirmed Case Of Pufferfish Poisoning

India has reported its first scientifically verified case of pufferfish poisoning from Gujarat, where a freshwater fish consumer developed symptoms consistent with tetrodotoxin exposure after consumption. Scientists confirmed the diagnosis highlighting the neurotoxin's severe effects and the previously unrecognised public health risk in Indian riverine regions. Pufferfish containing tetrodotoxin are often accidentally caught and sold with other fish, raising concerns about low awareness, absence of surveillance systems and the need for informed handling and monitoring of freshwater fish.

International

Hubble Telescope Detects A Dark Matter Cloud Without Stars Near Galaxy Messier 94

Astronomers using the Hubble Space Telescope have confirmed the discovery of a dark matter-dominated cloud, nicknamed "Cloud-9," located near the spiral galaxy Messier 94 around 14 million light-years from Earth. This object, rich in neutral hydrogen gas but devoid of stars, represents a rare cosmic relic that never underwent star formation. The finding provides new insight into the distribution of dark matter and early galaxy formation processes by revealing a structure where gas and dark matter coexist without the usual stellar component.

Akasa Air Joins International Air Transport Association As India's Fifth Member Airline

Mumbai-based Akasa Air has become a member of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) after successfully completing the mandatory Operational Safety Audit, making it the fifth Indian airline to join the global aviation body representing more than 360 carriers. Membership offers Akasa Air opportunities for deeper engagement in global industry practices, safety standards and collaboration, while enhancing its credibility and operational integration internationally. The airline currently operates a fleet serving numerous domestic and international destinations.



Regulatory Framework Issued for Reporting Entities Offering Virtual Digital Asset Related Services

The Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) has issued updated guidelines requiring entities that offer virtual digital asset-related services to register as reporting entities and comply with anti-money laundering and counter-terror financing obligations. These rules mandate appointment of a principal officer, cybersecurity assessments, and reporting of activities including transactions involving unhosted wallets. The framework integrates virtual digital asset service providers into existing financial crime prevention regimes, enhancing transparency, due diligence, and regulatory oversight in the digital asset ecosystem.

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Skydo Receives Central Bank Approval for PA-CB Licence to Strengthen Cross-Border Financial Transactions

Fintech firm Skydo has received central bank approval to operate as a Payment Aggregator for Cross-Border transactions under the PA-CB licence framework. The approval allows Skydo to facilitate compliant international payments for Indian exporters, freelancers and service providers. The licence strengthens regulatory oversight, improves settlement efficiency and enhances transparency in cross-border fund flows. It also supports India's expanding digital trade ecosystem by enabling secure foreign currency collections while aligning with anti-money laundering and financial compliance requirements.



Indian Army Major Swathi Shantha Kumar Receives United Nations Secretary-General's Award 2025

Indian Army Major Swathi Shantha Kumar has been awarded the United Nations Secretary-General's Award 2025 in the Gender Category for her leadership in promoting gender-inclusive peacekeeping. Serving with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), she led the first all-woman Indian engagement team and the project titled "Equal Partners, Lasting Peace," which strengthened community engagement and gender parity in conflict zones. Her initiative was selected through a global UN voting process and recognized for enhancing peacekeeping impact.

Italy Confers Prestigious Civil Honour on Goa-Based Industrialist Shrinivas Dempo

Italy has conferred the Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Stella d'Italia, a respected civilian honour, on Goa-based industrialist Shrinivas Dempo in recognition of his substantial work in strengthening ties between India and Italy. The award was presented at a ceremony in Goa by the Italian Consul General, highlighting Dempo's role in fostering cultural, economic, and community engagement. As honorary vice consul of Italy, he has supported Italian nationals and enhanced bilateral relationships through cooperation initiatives.

India Launches Official Logo And Digital Portal For BRICS Chairmanship In 2026

India has officially unveiled the logo and digital portal for its BRICS Chairmanship in 2026 as the country prepares to lead the multilateral forum. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar inaugurated the visual identity and online platform, which will house information on initiatives, meetings, events, and documents. The logo features a lotus and a Namaste gesture, reflecting cultural identity, cooperation, and unity among member nations. The chairship theme emphasises resilience, innovation, cooperation, and sustainability as India assumes leadership.

Israel Exits Seven United Nations Bodies Citing Persistent Institutional Bias

Israel has announced it will immediately withdraw from seven United Nations agencies and affiliated bodies, citing persistent institutional bias, politicisation and actions it considers hostile to the country's interests. The decision follows a review initiated after the United States' recent exit from dozens of international organisations and reflects growing tensions with global institutions over perceived unfair treatment. Israel's foreign ministry said it will sever contact with select UN bodies and reassess cooperation with others in its ongoing evaluation of international engagement.

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India China Bilateral Trade Expands In 2025 Despite Widening Trade Gap

In 2025, India-China bilateral trade reached record highs as both exports and imports expanded. India's shipments to China increased year-on-year, marking rare export growth, but Chinese exports to India grew faster, intensifying the trade imbalance. As a result, India's trade deficit with China widened to an all-time high near \$116 billion despite robust commerce activity. While broader trade ties show momentum, the growing gap underscores continuing structural imbalances in the bilateral economic relationship.

Ranks/Reports/Indices

Uttarakhand Police Achieves First Place In National ICJS Two Point Zero Performance Rankings

The Uttarakhand Police has secured the top position in the national ICJS 2.0 performance rankings with a score of 93.46, reflecting its advanced implementation of the Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System that digitises and interlinks police, courts, prosecution, prisons and forensic modules on a unified digital platform. This achievement, ahead of the central government's 2026 target, showcases coordinated efforts, technological adoption and extensive training of personnel. The Uttarakhand State Disaster Response Force was also honoured for its rescue work during a major event.

Bengaluru Secures Top Position In 2025 Rankings For Women Friendly Indian Cities

Bengaluru has been ranked the most women-friendly city in India for 2025 in the Top Cities for Women in India report, securing first place with the highest City Inclusion Score. The assessment measured both social and industrial inclusion, highlighting safety, quality of life, workforce participation and career opportunities for women. Following Bengaluru, the top five cities include Chennai, Pune, Hyderabad and Mumbai. The rankings reflect balanced urban ecosystems that support women's professional growth and personal well-being.



IREDA Secures 'Excellent' MoU Performance Rating For Fifth Year In A Row

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency has secured an Excellent performance rating under its Memorandum of Understanding with the government for the fifth consecutive year. The assessment reflects strong operational efficiency, financial performance and contribution to renewable energy financing across the country. IREDA has played a key role in supporting solar, wind, hydro and emerging clean energy projects while maintaining asset quality and profitability. The consistent rating highlights institutional stability and effectiveness in advancing India's clean energy transition objectives.

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Chhattisgarh Tops Large States In Student APAAR Identification Generation Drive

Chhattisgarh has emerged as the leading large state in generating Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) IDs for students under the National Education Policy 2020 initiative. As of early January 2026, the state has successfully generated APAAR IDs for 50,60,941 students out of 57,10,207 enrolled across 57,045 schools, marking 88.63 percent coverage, the highest among larger states. Districts like Bemetara and Rajnandgaon have exceeded 96 percent generation, with most others above 80 percent. This effort strengthens digital academic identity rollout and supports seamless academic tracking and mobility nationwide.



India Transitions To New Consumer Price Index Base Year With 2024 Series Implementation

India's statistical authorities are updating the Consumer Price Index (CPI) base year to 2024 = 100, replacing the earlier decade-old base to improve inflation measurement accuracy, representativeness, and data quality. The revised CPI will include an updated item basket and weights drawn from the latest household expenditure survey and incorporate e-commerce and online price data for broader coverage. The new series is scheduled for release on February 12, 2026, marking a significant methodological shift in tracking retail price movements.

Deloitte Projects Strong Economic Expansion for India in FY26 with Moderation Expected in FY27

Deloitte projects India's gross domestic product will expand between 7.5 and 7.8 percent in the fiscal year 2025-26,

driven by robust domestic demand, festive consumption and a strong services sector. Growth in the next fiscal year 2026-27 is expected to moderate to around 6.6 to 6.9 percent due to a high base effect and ongoing global uncertainties. The report highlights economic resilience amid external headwinds and continued policy support focused on sustaining momentum and addressing structural challenges.



India Secures 80th Position in Global Passport Strength Rankings

According to the Henley Passport Index 2026, India's passport has improved to the 80th position globally, up from 85th last year, reflecting enhanced international mobility for its citizens. Indian passport holders now receive visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 55 countries, including destinations in Asia, Africa and Oceania. While this rise signals progress in travel freedom and diplomatic engagement, India still lags behind top nations whose passports offer access to nearly 190 or more destinations without prior visas.

Berkeley Earth Report Declares 2025 As Warmest La Nina Year Ever Recorded

According to the latest Berkeley Earth climate analysis, 2025 emerged as the warmest year ever recorded under La Niña conditions, defying the usual cooling effect of this climate pattern. Despite La Niña phases early and late in the year, global average temperatures remained extraordinarily high, ranking among the top three warmest on record and highlighting persistent climate warming trends. Large land and ocean areas experienced record annual heat, affecting broad regions and populations worldwide.

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Fourth Edition Of Export Preparedness Index Released To Assess State Level Export Readiness

NITI Aayog released the fourth edition of the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024, a comprehensive framework measuring how ready Indian states and union territories are to support and grow exports. Structured around four pillars — export infrastructure, business ecosystem, policy and governance, and export performance — the Index uses data across 70 indicators. It identifies strengths, gaps, and opportunities in subnational economies, helping states design strategies to enhance competitiveness and align with India's export growth ambitions toward key trade goals.

Summits/MoUs/Conferences/Agreement

India Unveils Raisina Science Diplomacy Initiative 2026 To Align Scientific Cooperation With Global Policy

India has launched the Raisina Science Diplomacy Initiative 2026 to strengthen the integration of science, technology and innovation with foreign policy and global governance priorities. The initiative seeks to position scientific collaboration as a strategic tool in addressing shared global challenges such as climate change, health security, emerging technologies and sustainable development. It aims to enhance engagement between policymakers, scientists, diplomats and industry, enabling evidence-based decision making, cross-border research partnerships and coordinated international responses aligned with India's broader diplomatic and strategic objectives.



National Conference of Textiles Ministers 2026 Convened in Guwahati to Discuss Sectoral Growth

The two-day National Textiles Ministers' Conference 2026 was held in Guwahati to align central and state government strategies for expanding India's textile sector. Ministers and senior officials discussed policies on investment, infrastructure, exports, innovation, sustainability, employment and skill development under the theme "India's Textiles: Weaving Growth, Heritage and Innovation." Emphasis was placed on cooperative federalism, boosting production capacity, attracting investments, strengthening data systems and transforming districts into textile hubs, with a broader goal to make India a global textile manufacturing leader.

ICAR And NDDB Sign Collaborative Framework To Advance Dairy Research And Innovation

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen cooperation across multidisciplinary dairy research, innovation, and capacity building. The agreement covers dairy production, processing, and value addition, aiming to integrate ICAR's scientific expertise with NDDB's field-level experience. The partnership prioritises knowledge sharing, joint research, technology development, and training programmes. It will help address challenges like climate resilience, productivity enhancement, and value chain development, ultimately benefiting dairy farmers and boosting sector sustainability.

India And Germany Deepen Cooperation In Postal And Logistics Sector Development

India and Germany have agreed to strengthen bilateral collaboration in the postal, express and logistics sectors through the signing of two key instruments on January 12, 2026, during German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's visit to India. The Joint Declaration of Intent and a Letter of Intent were signed to build a structured partnership focused on cross-border e-commerce, time-definite international deliveries, digitalisation, operational efficiency and green logistics. The collaboration will explore joint service development, enhanced network connectivity and last-mile coordination, including premium international express

services that leverage India Post's reach with global logistics networks to improve transit times, reliability and shipment visibility for exports.

Kochi Selected as Host City for International Spice Conference 2026 Focusing on Global Trade Trends

Kochi has been chosen to host the International Spice Conference 2026 themed "Spice 360 – Getting Future Ready," bringing global stakeholders in the spice trade together from February 23 to 26, 2026. The event aims to explore current and future trends in the global spice economy, including sustainability, technology, supply-chain innovation and market integration. It will feature expert panels, business sessions and networking to strengthen international collaboration across production, processing and export value chains in the spice industry.



Science and tech/Space/Defence

Mission Sudarshan Chakra Launched To Enhance India's Integrated Drone Defence Capabilities

India's Mission Sudarshan Chakra is a comprehensive defence initiative to strengthen national air defence and counter-drone capabilities by integrating advanced detection, monitoring, and neutralisation systems. The programme aims to establish a joint counter-unmanned aerial system grid across Army, Navy and Air Force platforms to detect and respond rapidly to hostile drone incursions. It seeks to build a multi-layered, networked defence architecture that improves situational awareness, response coordination, and protection of key infrastructure and population centres from evolving aerial threats.



Researchers Develop Non Invasive Method To Measure Ultra Cold Atoms Accurately

Researchers have developed a novel non-invasive technique to precisely measure ultra-cold atoms without disturbing their fragile quantum states. The method enables accurate observation of atomic properties while preserving coherence, a key limitation in existing measurement approaches. This advancement improves experimental control in quantum physics research and enhances the reliability of data obtained from ultra-cold atom systems. The technique holds significance for future applications in quantum computing, precision sensing and fundamental physics experiments, where maintaining atomic stability during measurement is critical.

MSTripES Mobile Application Deployed For Tiger Population Estimation In Anamalai Reserve

The MSTripES mobile application has been deployed in Anamalai Tiger Reserve to support the All India Tiger Estimation Survey 2026, marking a digital shift in wildlife population assessment. GPS-enabled devices allow forest staff to directly record tiger sightings, prey information and ecological data in real time, improving accuracy and efficiency over manual methods. The survey includes multiple transect lines and vegetation surveys to assess tiger numbers. Earlier counts recorded around 25 tigers, suggesting potential growth.

DRDO Successfully Conducts Full-Scale Scramjet Engine Trial for Hypersonic Weapon Development

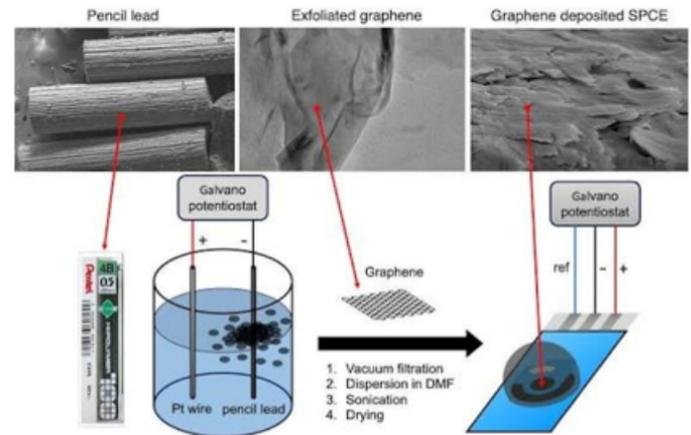
India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully completed a long-duration ground test of its full-scale actively cooled scramjet engine at the Scramjet Connect Pipe Test facility in Hyderabad on January 9, 2026. The engine ran for over twelve minutes, validating the combustor design and advanced propulsion technology that can support hypersonic cruise missiles capable of sustained flight at speeds above five times the speed of sound. This achievement builds on a prior sub-scale test and strengthens India's advanced aerospace defence capabilities.

Scientists Demonstrate World's First 2 Terabit Per Second Free-Space Optical Data Transmission Using Compact Optical Terminals

Researchers at the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT) have successfully demonstrated a free-space optical (FSO) communication link capable of 2 terabits per second using compact optical terminals that can be mounted on satellites or high-altitude platform stations (HAPS). The experiment transmitted data over a 7.4 kilometre urban link while maintaining stable performance despite atmospheric turbulence. This breakthrough establishes a new benchmark for miniaturised ultra-high-speed optical communication suitable for future non-terrestrial networks.

Researchers Create Affordable Flexible Sensor Using Pencil-Based Electrodes and Graphene Oxide Material

Scientists have developed a low-cost, flexible sensor using pencil-drawn graphite electrodes combined with graphene oxide material for sensing applications. The innovation enables reliable detection of mechanical strain and environmental changes while remaining inexpensive and easy to fabricate. The sensor demonstrates good sensitivity, durability and repeatability despite its simple design. This development opens pathways for affordable wearable electronics, health monitoring devices and flexible sensing technologies, particularly in resource-constrained settings requiring scalable and accessible sensor solutions.



SCORP Emerges as India's First Legged Mobile Manipulator, Advancing Indigenous Robotics Innovation

India's robotics ecosystem has unveiled SCORP, the country's first legged mobile manipulator, developed by deep-tech firm xTerra Robotics incubated at IIT Kanpur. SCORP combines agile multi-leg mobility with a dexterous robotic arm to navigate complex terrains and perform real-world manipulation tasks like inspection, object handling, and environmental monitoring. Its advanced perception and intelligent control systems are designed for industrial, safety, and security applications, reflecting a significant step in developing indigenous autonomous robotic solutions that enhance operational efficiency in challenging environments.

Joint Military Exercise Sanjha Shakti Conducted at Dighi Hills to Strengthen Disaster Response Capabilities

The Indian Army conducted Exercise Sanjha Shakti, a joint Military–Civil Fusion exercise, at Dighi Hills Range, Khadki Military Station under Southern Command to reinforce coordinated action between defence forces and civilian agencies. Held in early January, the exercise brought together the Army, police units, emergency services, and other stakeholders to simulate complex security challenges and emergency scenarios. It emphasised interoperability, rapid response, communication systems, decision-making, and joint readiness to enhance disaster management and public safety across civil–military frameworks.

Ola Electric Expands Into Residential Energy Solutions With Shakti Battery Launch

Ola Electric has rolled out its first residential battery energy storage system called Shakti from its Krishnagiri Gigafactory, marking the company's expansion beyond electric vehicles into decentralised energy solutions. The system uses indigenous 4680 Bharat Cells and comes in multiple configurations to power household, farm, and small business appliances with rapid charge and backup capabilities. Designed to be weatherproof, efficient, and reliable, Shakti aims to provide on-demand energy storage and promote energy management for modern needs.

Shakti aims to provide off-grid energy storage at



Jio Announces Development Of Human-Centric Artificial Intelligence Platform For Global Use

Reliance Jio has announced plans to build a people-first artificial intelligence platform designed in India for global adoption. The platform aims to provide everyday users with accessible AI services in regional languages on personal devices, enhancing productivity and usability. Leveraging India's emerging AI infrastructure, including data centres and local language tools, the platform is intended to democratise access to AI and support a wide range of applications for global users while reinforcing India's position in the global AI ecosystem.

Punjabi Artist Kaka Unveils Friendo Safety Application Aimed at Enhancing Women's Security

Punjabi singer Kaka has launched "Friendo," a mobile application designed to enhance women's safety by using real-time features and community support tools to address emergency situations effectively. The app offers instant SOS alerts, live location sharing with trusted contacts, automatic

triggers like shaking or voice commands, and discreet modes to gather audio or video evidence. It also includes safety education resources and community forums for shared support. The initiative reflects an effort to harness technology to improve personal security and awareness.

Voyager One Set To Become First Human Made Object To Reach One Light Day Distance From Earth

NASA's Voyager 1 spacecraft, launched in 1977, continues its decades-long journey through interstellar space and is expected by November 2026 to become the first human-made object about one light-day away from Earth. At this distance, radio signals will take a full 24 hours to travel to and from the probe, illustrating its enormous separation from Earth. Voyager 1 remains operational with limited instruments, sending slow data back while exploring the far reaches beyond the heliopause.

ICAR NDRI Develops Karan Fries Cattle Breed To Strengthen Climate Resilient Dairy Farming In India

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research's National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) in Karnal has developed the high-yield synthetic Karan Fries cattle breed, a cross between indigenous Tharparkar and Holstein-Friesian cattle, to support climate-resilient dairy farming. This breed produces significantly more milk compared to traditional indigenous cows and combines adaptability with productivity. The registration of Karan Fries alongside other high-yield breeds aims to enhance milk output, strengthen dairy sector sustainability and help Indian farmers meet rising dairy demand under changing climatic conditions.

Sports

Virat Kohli Surpasses Legends to Become Second-Highest Run Getter in International Cricket

Indian batting great Virat Kohli has become the second-highest run-scorer in international cricket history, surpassing former Sri Lankan star Kumar Sangakkara's total of 28,016 runs. He achieved this during India's first One Day International against New Zealand, reaching over 28,000 career runs across formats. Only the legendary Sachin Tendulkar, with

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Kohli's achievement highlights his consistency, longevity, and prolific scoring across Tests, ODIs, and T20 Internationals throughout his career.



Indian Climber Aritra Roy Successfully Scales Argentina's Highest Peak Mount Aconcagua

Indian mountaineer Aritra Roy has successfully summited Mount Aconcagua in Argentina, the highest peak outside Asia, reaching the top on January 7, 2026 after a challenging solo expedition. Sponsored by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, the climb tested his endurance with severe cold, snowstorms and difficult terrain. The achievement adds to Roy's ongoing Seven Summits pursuit and follows previous ascents including Mount Everest, Kilimanjaro and Elbrus. His accomplishment highlights determination and skill in high-altitude mountaineering.

Miscellaneous

Book On President Droupadi Murmu Released By Sanitation Worker At Andhra University Campus

A book on the life journey and public service of President Droupadi Murmu was released at Andhra University campus by a sanitation worker, highlighting dignity of labour and social inclusion. The event symbolically emphasised equality, respect and empowerment of marginalised communities. The book chronicles her personal struggles, political career and contributions to governance, inspiring students and readers. The release reflected values of humility, inclusiveness and recognition of every individual's role in nation building.

New Delhi World Book Fair 2026 Announces Free Entry with Special Tribute to India's Armed Forces

The 53rd New Delhi World Book Fair opened at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi from January 10 to 18, 2026 with free entry for all visitors for the first time in its history. Organised by the National Book Trust, the fair features more than 1,000 publishers from over 35 countries, 600 plus cultural and literary events and is expected to attract over two million visitors. The central theme, Indian Military History Valour and Wisdom @75, pays tribute to the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force.



NHAI Achieves Four Guinness World Records Along Bengaluru Kadapa Vijayawada Highway Corridor

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), in partnership with M/s Rajpath Infracon, has set four Guinness World Records on the Bengaluru-Kadapa-Vijayawada Economic Corridor (NH-544G) during construction. The records include longest continuous laying of bituminous concrete, highest volume placed in a day, extended continuous paving, and most bituminous material laid across a section. These feats showcase execution excellence, engineering capability, and large-scale project coordination on this six-lane access-controlled highway aimed at enhancing connectivity and travel efficiency.

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Nissan Restructures India Operations With Thierry Sabbagh Taking Charge As President

Nissan Motor Company has announced a major leadership restructuring that integrates India into a broader regional oversight under Thierry Sabbagh, who now serves as Divisional Vice President and President for Middle East, Saudi Arabia, CIS, and India for both Nissan and Infiniti brands. This change is part of Nissan's transformation plan aimed at improving operational efficiency, governance, and market execution in key regions. India's strategic importance is underlined by planned product launches and an expanded dealer network, targeting growth and enhanced customer reach.

All India Major Ports Cultural Festival 2025–26 Concludes Successfully At Paradip Port

The 25th All India Major Ports Cultural Meet 2025–26 concluded on January 11, 2026, after four days of vibrant cultural performances at Jayadev Sadan, Paradip Port, organised by the Paradip Port Authority in association with the Major Ports Sports Control Board. Around 200 artistes from nine major ports participated in music, dance, drama and other competitions that showcased diverse cultural talent. The Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port Authority team emerged as the overall champion, while other major ports secured runner-up positions, highlighting unity, cultural harmony and artistic excellence among port communities nationwide.

Actor Pawan Kalyan Becomes First Indian Honoured with Prestigious Samurai Martial Arts Recognition

Actor and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has become the first Indian formally inducted into the ancient Japanese Samurai martial arts tradition by entering Kenjutsu and earning the prestigious Fifth Dan rank. He also received the title "Tiger of Martial Arts" and entry into the historic Takeda Shingen Samurai lineage, reflecting over three decades of disciplined martial arts practice. The recognition highlights his long-term commitment to traditional combat disciplines beyond cinema and politics.

