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Weekly Current Affairs

English

National

Kerala Leads India In Rapid Rise Of Personal Electric Vehicle Ownership

In 2025, Kerala emerged as a leader in personal electric vehicle adoption across India, recording one of the highest electric vehicle penetration rates among major states. Strong middle-class uptake, household charging installations and widespread public charging infrastructure helped boost both two-wheeler and four-wheeler electric vehicle ownership. The state's early EV policy and rising consumer awareness contributed to a jump from low penetration levels in 2022 to a notable share in 2025. Major EV brands saw strong sales in the state.



Andhra Pradesh Selected To Develop World's Largest Green Ammonia Facility At Kakinada

Andhra Pradesh will host what is expected to be the world's largest green ammonia and hydrogen complex at Kakinada with an investment of around ten billion dollars. The project is planned to produce up to 1.5 million tonnes per year of green ammonia, using renewable energy and converting existing facilities. It will enable India's first exports of green ammonia to markets like Germany, Japan and Singapore and create thousands of construction and long-term jobs as part of the state's clean-energy expansion.

GeM's Womaniya Platform Marks Seven Years Supporting Women Entrepreneurs

The Government e-Marketplace's Womaniya initiative has completed seven years of empowering women-led micro and small enterprises by enhancing their participation in public procurement. Launched in January 2019, the platform has helped over 200,000 women-led firms secure more than 80,000 crore in government orders, exceeding the mandated procurement share. By offering a transparent, fully digital interface and eliminating intermediaries, Womaniya has reduced barriers to entry. Partnerships and capacity-building efforts have further strengthened women entrepreneurs' access to government markets.

Yemen Appoints New Prime Minister After Resignation Of Sitting PM

Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council has accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Salem bin Breik and appointed Foreign Minister Shaya Mohsin al-Zindani as the new prime minister. The council approved the leadership change in Riyadh, tasking al-Zindani with forming a new government under constitutional procedures. Bin Breik has been assigned an advisory role on financial and economic affairs. The caretaker government will continue until a new cabinet is formed. The move occurs amid ongoing efforts to stabilize Yemen's war-torn political landscape.

National Startup Day 2026 Highlights India's Startup Driven Economic Growth

National Startup Day 2026 marked India's tenth anniversary of its flagship Startup India initiative, celebrating a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem that fuels innovation, employment and economic expansion. The ecosystem now has over two lakh recognised startups, averaging more than one hundred new ventures launched daily in recent years. Startups are decentralising beyond major cities into Tier-II and Tier-III regions, addressing diverse sectors and generating substantial direct jobs. The event underscored technology adoption, greater access to capital, and policies supporting business growth nationwide.

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GAIL's 694-kilometre-long gas pipeline running along the expressway

India has completed a landmark infrastructure project with GAIL's 694-km Mumbai–Nagpur Natural Gas Pipeline, built mostly within a narrow 3-metre utility corridor along the Samruddhi Mahamarg. Executed under the PM GatiShakti framework, the project overcame severe terrain, monsoon, and clearance challenges through innovative engineering and close coordination. With 16.5 MMSCMD capacity, it will expand city gas distribution, support industries, promote cleaner energy, and serve as a model for integrated corridor-based



Google has introduced open translation models that support 55 languages

Google has launched TranslateGemma, an open-source suite of translation-focused AI models built on the Gemma 3 architecture, to enable high-quality multilingual communication across devices. Available in 4B, 12B and 27B variants, the models support translation across 55 languages with high efficiency and accuracy. Trained using advanced fine-tuning and reinforcement learning techniques, TranslateGemma delivers strong performance even on mobile and edge devices, lowers computational costs, and expands access to reliable AI translation worldwide.

The government has blocked access to 242 illegal betting and gambling website links

The Government has intensified action against illegal online betting and gambling by blocking 242 website links in January 2026, taking the total blocked platforms to over 7,800. Enabled by the Online Gaming Act, the crackdown

targets offshore and non-compliant operators that evade laws and exploit users. The move aims to curb digital fraud, unregulated financial flows, and addiction among youth, while protecting consumers and strengthening digital safety. The initiative also seeks to clearly separate lawful skill-based gaming from prohibited betting activities.

Supreme Court Allows All Candidates to Compete for Unreserved Seats Based on Merit

The Supreme Court of India has ruled that unreserved or general category seats in public recruitment are truly open to all candidates based on merit, regardless of social category, and are not exclusive to general category applicants. If a candidate from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes or Economically Weaker Sections scores above the general category cutoff without any relaxations, they must be considered for unreserved vacancies. This principle does not reduce reserved quotas and affirms equality of opportunity under the Constitution.

India Opens First Government-Funded BSL Four Laboratory in Gandhinagar

India has laid the foundation stone for its first government-funded Biosafety Level-4 (BSL-4) laboratory in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, under the Gujarat State Biotechnology Mission. Spread over approximately 11,000 square metres and costing an estimated 362 Crore INR, the facility will operate under the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre and include advanced containment laboratories for BSL-4, BSL-3, and animal biosafety research. It will enhance the nation's ability to study high-risk pathogens, develop diagnostics, and strengthen outbreak response and biosecurity.

India Offers Digital Public Infrastructure Collaboration to Commonwealth Nations

India has announced its readiness to collaborate with Commonwealth nations by sharing its Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), underscoring technology as a global public good that can strengthen democratic governance and service delivery. Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised this commitment while hosting the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) in

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interoperable digital systems like digital identity, payments, and data platforms that can support public services, democratic processes, and governance in partner countries.

India's electronics exports surpassed the USD 47 billion mark in 2025

India's electronics exports crossed a record USD 47 billion in 2025, marking 37% growth over 2024 and highlighting the success of PLI-led manufacturing. Smartphones, especially iPhones produced in India, contributed nearly two-thirds of exports, reflecting deeper integration into global value chains. Other segments like photovoltaic cells, networking equipment and PCBAs also expanded. Sustaining momentum toward the USD 55 billion target will require stable policies, trade certainty and resilience to global risks.

Maruti Suzuki plans to establish a large-scale automobile manufacturing plant in Gujarat

Maruti Suzuki and the Gujarat Government have signed an investment letter for a Rs. 35,000 crore car manufacturing plant at Khoraj. Spread over 1,750 acres, the facility will be developed in phases with four units and an eventual capacity of 10 lakh vehicles annually. Production is expected to begin by FY2029. The project will generate large-scale employment, boost MSMEs and strengthen Gujarat's position as a leading automobile manufacturing hub.

PM Modi inaugurated the foundation stone for the Rs. 6,957 crore Kaziranga Elevated Corridor

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the Rs. 6,957 crore Kaziranga Elevated Corridor in Assam to protect wildlife and improve connectivity. The 34.5-km elevated road along NH-715 will allow animals to cross safely beneath it, reducing roadkill near Kaziranga National Park. The project balances conservation with development by easing traffic, supporting tourism and trade, and generating employment. It offers a long-term infrastructure solution to frequent wildlife deaths caused by heavy highway traffic.

India inaugurates its first open-sea marine fish farming initiative

India has launched its first open-sea marine fish

seaweed cultivation, the initiative uses advanced cages developed by NIOT and involves local fishing communities. Implemented with support from the Ministry of Earth Sciences and the island administration, the project aims to boost livelihoods, promote sustainable marine resource use, and strengthen India's Blue Economy through science-led innovation.

India unveils its first tailings policy aimed at recovering critical minerals

India has notified its first Tailings Policy to recover critical and strategic minerals from mining waste such as tailings, overburden and mine dumps. The policy provides a framework to identify and extract valuable companion minerals like lithium, cobalt and rare earths from secondary sources. By tapping existing waste instead of opening new mines, the initiative aims to strengthen domestic supply chains, reduce import dependence, support clean energy goals and advance Atmanirbhar Bharat through sustainable resource utilisation.

India and the UAE aim to achieve USD 200 billion in bilateral trade by 2032

India and the UAE have agreed to double bilateral trade to USD 200 billion by 2032, marking a major boost to their strategic partnership. The decision builds on expanding cooperation across manufacturing, energy, logistics and technology. During talks in New Delhi, both sides signed agreements on defence, space, energy, infrastructure, finance and civil nuclear cooperation. Initiatives like investment in Dholera, GIFT City operations and a House of India in Abu Dhabi highlight deepening economic, strategic and cultural ties.

BCCI Secures Rs. 270 Crore Sponsorship Agreement with Gemini Before IPL 2026

The BCCI has secured a major commercial boost for the IPL with a Rs. 270 crore, three-year sponsorship deal with Google's AI platform Gemini, starting from the 2026 season. The agreement highlights IPL's unmatched global appeal and the increasing presence of AI companies in Indian sports. With AI brands using cricket to reach mass audiences, the sponsorship landscape is evolving. Alongside Gemini's entry,

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Tata remains the title sponsor, Apollo Tyres holds jersey rights, and IPL 2026 is scheduled from March 26 to May 31, reinforcing the league's financial strength.

New Deal Makes UAE India's Second-Biggest LNG Supplier

India and the United Arab Emirates signed a long-term LNG supply agreement during UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's January 2026 visit to New Delhi. Under the deal, the UAE will supply 0.5 million metric tonnes of LNG annually, becoming India's second-largest LNG supplier after Qatar. The agreement strengthens India's energy security and supports its shift toward cleaner fuels. Alongside energy cooperation, both nations set a USD 200 billion trade target by 2032 and expanded collaboration in defence, nuclear energy, and clean technology, further deepening strategic bilateral ties.

The UAE and Telangana have joined hands to develop Bharat Future City

Telangana strengthened its global urban development agenda at the World Economic Forum 2026, where the UAE and the state agreed to explore cooperation for developing Bharat Future City. Envisioned as India's first net-zero greenfield smart city, the project will focus on sustainability, innovation, and smart infrastructure. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy highlighted its role in the Telangana Rising 2047 vision, targeting a USD 3 trillion economy. The UAE proposed strategic investments, a joint task force, and agri-food partnerships, reflecting expanding international collaboration.

International

United States Halts Immigrant Visa Processing For Citizens Of 75 Countries

The U.S. State Department has announced an indefinite suspension of immigrant visa processing for citizens of 75 countries effective January 21, 2026. The pause targets only immigrant visas that lead to permanent residence, while non-immigrant visas such as tourist, student and work visas will continue. The government says the move aims to tighten screening and prevent entry of individuals likely to use public assistance, requiring stricter financial and

background evaluations. The suspension follows other recent restrictive immigration policies under the current administration.

A massive 300-year-old black coral has been discovered in the deep waters off New Zealand

Marine scientists have discovered a giant black coral in the deep waters of Fiordland, New Zealand, estimated to be 300–400 years old and among the largest ever recorded. Measuring over 13 feet tall, the coral highlights the stability and resilience of deep-sea ecosystems. Growing only millimetres each year, such corals act as living records of ocean history and vital habitats for marine life. The find reinforces the need for strict protection of fragile deep-sea environments.



Australia's Finke River Declared Oldest Continuously Flowing River Globally

Scientists acknowledge the Finke River in Australia as one of the oldest continuously flowing river systems on Earth, with origins estimated between 300 and 400 million years ago. Known as Larapinta in the Indigenous Arrernte language, it stretches over roughly 640 kilometres through the Northern Territory and South Australia. Geological evidence reveals the river's course predates major tectonic uplift events in the region. Although its surface flow is intermittent, the geological continuity and ancient landscape it traverses highlight its exceptional age and significance.

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Global Order Shifts with Rise of a Third Strategic Power Centre

The global geopolitical landscape is experiencing significant transformation as traditional unipolar dominance by the United States wanes and a multipolar order takes shape. Analysts argue that a rising third strategic power centre, involving countries like India aligning with Germany and possibly other middle powers, seeks to balance influence between the major blocs led by the United States and China. This emerging pole emphasises strategic autonomy, economic cooperation and diversified partnerships, advocating shared global governance and resilient industrial and technology ecosystems in the evolving world order.

EU Council and Commission Presidents to Attend India's 77th Republic Day as Chief Guests

The President of the European Council, António Luís Santos da Costa, and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, will visit India from January 25 to 27, 2026, as Chief Guests at the 77th Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi. This high-level state visit, extended on the invitation of India's Prime Minister, includes co-chairing the 16th India-EU Summit on January 27 and meetings with top Indian leaders, reinforcing India-EU strategic ties.

Tropical Storm Nokaen increases lahar risk near the Philippines' Mayon Volcano

The Philippines is on alert as tropical storm Nokaen, the first cyclone of 2026, threatens to trigger lahars around the active Mayon Volcano. Heavy rainfall over southern Luzon may mobilise loose volcanic deposits from recent eruptions, forming dangerous mudflows. Authorities and Phivolcs have warned of risks to downstream communities, infrastructure and evacuation centres. The situation highlights the combined threat of tropical storms and volcanic hazards in disaster-prone regions.

IMF projects stable global growth in 2026, with AI-driven gains offsetting trade challenges

The IMF has raised its global growth forecast for 2026 to 3.3%, citing strong investment in artificial intelligence as a key driver offsetting trade and geopolitical risks. AI-led spending on data centres, chips and

adjustments have also improved outlooks. While inflation is expected to moderate, the IMF cautions that renewed trade tensions or AI-related market corrections remain key downside risks.

Abu Dhabi Named the World's Safest City for the 10th Straight Year

Abu Dhabi has retained its title as the world's safest city for the tenth consecutive year, according to the Numbeo global safety ranking. Topping the index since 2017, the city's achievement reflects low crime rates, strict law enforcement, and effective governance. Advanced surveillance, smart city infrastructure, and efficient emergency services further strengthen public safety. This sustained security enhances residents' quality of life and boosts confidence among tourists, investors, and global talent, reinforcing Abu Dhabi's status as a leading international hub for business, innovation, and stable urban living.

NASA Astronaut Sunita Williams Announces Retirement

NASA astronaut Sunita Williams retired after 27 years of distinguished service, leaving a lasting impact on human spaceflight. A former U.S. Navy pilot, she joined NASA in 1998 and flew three space missions, spending over 600 days aboard the International Space Station. Williams served as ISS commander, completed nine spacewalks with a record-setting duration for women, and became the first person to run a marathon in space. Beyond missions, she held key leadership roles and supported future Moon and Mars programs, inspiring generations worldwide.

Israel has joined Trump's Peace Board to help oversee the Gaza ceasefire plan

Israel has agreed to join US President Donald Trump's proposed Board of Peace, an international body intended to oversee the Gaza ceasefire and post-war reconstruction. Confirmed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the decision marks a shift from Israel's earlier reservations and may cause internal political friction. The US-led board aims to supervise ceasefire implementation, security arrangements, disarmament, and reconstruction through a Gaza executive committee. Several countries have joined or

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been invited, reflecting a broad coalition, while Trump's remarks about potentially sidelining the UN have sparked global controversy and diplomatic concern.

Ranks/Reports/Indices

SEBI Chief Says India Tops Global List in Initial Public Offerings

India has emerged as the leading global market for initial public offerings (IPOs) in terms of number of listings, surpassing major markets including the United States, Greater China and Europe. Data shows Indian primary markets accounted for nearly one-fifth of worldwide IPO activity, with robust investor participation across sectors. The strong performance reflects growing confidence in India's capital markets, proactive regulatory reforms, and expanding equity participation by retail and institutional investors. This performance marks a significant achievement for India's financial markets.



India secures sixth position in Asia's Manufacturing Index 2026

India ranked sixth among 11 countries in the Asia Manufacturing Index 2026, indicating steady progress but highlighting competitiveness gaps. Released by Dezan Shira & Associates, the index assesses manufacturing readiness across eight pillars, including infrastructure, workforce and innovation. While India benefits from a large market and improving facilities, it lags in execution speed and policy stability. With China leading and Malaysia rising, the ranking underscores the need for faster reforms, better logistics, skill development and technology adoption.

Summits/MoUs/Conferences/Agreement

Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 To Bring Global Power Leaders To India

The Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 is scheduled from March 19 to 22 at Yashobhoomi in New Delhi, uniting global power sector leaders to deliberate on the future of electricity and sustainable energy systems. The summit, themed "Electrifying Growth. Empowering Sustainability. Connecting Globally," will feature over 50 high-level sessions, expert panels, exhibitions, and technology showcases across the electricity value chain. It aims to facilitate strategic partnerships, showcase innovations, and drive investment and dialogue among policymakers, industry, academia, and investors.

Madhya Pradesh Partners With Digital India BHASHINI To Strengthen Multilingual AI Governance

The Government of Madhya Pradesh has partnered with the Digital India BHASHINI Division under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to strengthen multilingual artificial intelligence-driven digital governance. The memorandum of understanding will deploy BHASHINI's language AI tools to make public services more accessible across diverse languages spoken in the state. AI solutions will enable multilingual government communication, document translation and improved citizen engagement. The move supports inclusive technology use and expands AI access in e-governance frameworks across the state.



Shri Praveen Vashista has been appointed as a Vigilance Commissioner

Shri Praveen Vashista has been appointed as Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission, strengthening India's anti-corruption framework. A 1991-batch IPS officer of the Bihar cadre, he assumed office on January 16, 2026, following a Presidential appointment under the CVC Act, 2003. With over three decades of experience across state policing, CBI investigations, and key roles in the Ministry of Home Affairs, his appointment adds significant expertise to vigilance and integrity administration.

India and Germany have signed a joint declaration to strengthen cooperation in the telecommunications sector

India and Germany have signed a Joint Declaration of Intent on Telecommunications Cooperation during the German Chancellor's visit to India in January 2026. The agreement aims to deepen collaboration in telecom and ICT by promoting innovation, policy coordination, and sustainable digital transformation. It provides a structured framework for regular consultations, joint working groups, and industry-academia engagement. The partnership also focuses on strengthening manufacturing, easing business conditions, and enhancing cooperation in international digital governance platforms.

ICICI Bank extends Sandeep Bakhshi's term as MD and CEO until 2028

ICICI Bank's board has approved the reappointment of Sandeep Bakhshi as Managing Director and CEO for a two-year term from October 2026 to October 2028, subject to regulatory and shareholder approvals. Leading the bank since 2018, Bakhshi has strengthened governance, improved asset quality and restored investor confidence. His continuation aligns with RBI governance norms, ensuring leadership stability, regulatory compliance and sustained growth at India's second-largest private sector bank.

Raymond Lifestyle names Satyaki Ghosh as its new Chief Executive Officer

Raymond Lifestyle has appointed Satyaki Ghosh as its Chief Executive Officer, effective January 19, 2026,

experience, Ghosh has held senior leadership roles across FMCG, textiles, retail and consumer businesses. Previously associated with the Aditya Birla Group, he led major textile and fashion yarn operations. His appointment reflects Raymond's focus on strengthening leadership and driving growth in its lifestyle business.



Government Appoints New Ambassadors to New Zealand and Georgia

India has announced two key diplomatic appointments to strengthen its global engagement. Senior IFS officer Muanpui Saiawi (2005 batch), currently Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as India's next High Commissioner to New Zealand, with a focus on boosting cooperation in trade, education, agriculture, and Indo-Pacific affairs. Meanwhile, Amit Kumar Mishra (2004 batch), presently at MEA headquarters, will serve as India's Ambassador to Georgia. Both appointments reflect India's continued efforts to deepen bilateral ties and expand its diplomatic presence across regions.

Ravi Shankar Chhabi Appointed as DIG in CRPF on Central Deputation

The Ministry of Home Affairs has approved the appointment of Ravi Shankar Chhabi, a 2007-batch IPS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre, as Deputy Inspector General in the Central Reserve Police Force on central deputation. Previously serving as DIG (Public Grievances) at the UP DGP headquarters, he brings extensive experience in law and order, women's safety, prison reforms, and election duties.

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His induction strengthens CRPF leadership amid growing internal security challenges. The appointment reflects the Centre's practice of deploying seasoned state officers to bolster national-level paramilitary forces.

Odisha and Meghalaya have signed an MoU to strengthen early childhood care

Odisha and Meghalaya have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen Early Childhood Care, Education and Development through inter-state cooperation. The agreement focuses on improving nutrition, health, early learning, and caregiving by sharing best practices, conducting joint research, and building institutional capacities. Drawing on Odisha's community-based models and Meghalaya's experience in tribal and difficult terrains, the partnership promotes inclusive and context-specific solutions. Aligned with national priorities, the MoU reinforces cooperative federalism and aims to enhance early childhood outcomes critical for lifelong health, learning, and social development.

The RBI has approved the reappointment of Kaizad Bharucha as a Whole-Time Director of HDFC Bank

The Reserve Bank of India has approved the reappointment of Kaizad Bharucha as Whole-Time Director and Deputy Managing Director of HDFC Bank for a three-year term starting April 19, 2026. The decision ensures continuity in the leadership of India's largest private sector bank and reflects regulatory confidence in his performance and governance standards. RBI approval is mandatory for senior banking appointments to uphold stability, risk management, and compliance. Bharucha's continued role supports strategic decision-making and operational stability amid rapid changes in India's banking and financial services landscape.

Science and tech/Space/Defence

Scientist Toby Kiers Awarded Tyler Prize For Breakthrough Research On Fungal Networks

Dr Toby Kiers, an evolutionary biologist and professor, has been awarded the 2026 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement for her pioneering research on mycorrhizal fungal networks and their

functioning. Her work reframed these underground networks as active systems that facilitate nutrient exchange between plants and soil and store significant amounts of carbon. Kiers also co-founded a global initiative to map and protect fungal biodiversity. She will receive the prize at a ceremony in Amsterdam.

Root Wilt Disease Emerges as Major Threat to Agricultural Productivity

Root wilt disease, caused by a phytoplasma infection, is increasingly threatening coconut cultivation in major producing states such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The disease weakens trees by disrupting nutrient and water transport, leading to reduced productivity and widespread plantation decline. Recent outbreaks have devastated large tracts of traditional coconut-growing areas, leaving farmers facing significant losses as infected trees often require removal. With no definitive cure available, agricultural scientists are advocating strengthened surveillance and integrated disease management strategies to mitigate further impact on yields and livelihoods.

IMD Marks 151 Years with Deployment of Two Hundred Automatic Weather Stations

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) celebrated its 151st anniversary by announcing a major expansion of its weather monitoring network with the deployment of 200 Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) in 2026 across four metropolitan cities: Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Pune. Each city will receive 50 AWS to enhance hyper-local and real-time forecasting, especially for sudden weather changes such as thunderstorms and heatwaves. The initiative will boost disaster preparedness, support sectors like agriculture and aviation, and improve weather data resolution for informed planning and safety measures, marking a significant upgrade in urban meteorological infrastructure.

India and Japan Coast Guards conduct a joint HNS response exercise in Mumbai

The Indian Coast Guard and Japan Coast Guard conducted a joint Hazardous and Noxious Substances response drill in Mumbai to enhance maritime pollution preparedness. Held onboard ICGS Samudra Prahari, the exercise focused on

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coordinated chemical spill response, equipment deployment and safety management. Senior officials reviewed operational effectiveness, while planning sessions and industrial visits strengthened cooperation. The engagement reflects deepening India–Japan maritime ties and shared responsibility for environmental protection and security in the Indo-Pacific.



Andhra Pradesh is set to establish a new spaceport at Hope Island

Andhra Pradesh has announced plans to establish a new spaceport at Hope Island, aimed mainly at supporting private and commercial launch missions. Confirmed by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, the facility will be part of the state's Space City initiative and will focus on small and medium-lift launch vehicles. It will complement existing launch centres like Sriharikota and Kulasekharapatnam, reduce dependence on a single site, and strengthen India's private space ecosystem. The coastal location offers strategic advantages for efficient launches and global competitiveness.

India plans to deploy more than 50 surveillance satellites after drawing lessons from Operation Sindoor

India plans a major expansion of its space-based surveillance capabilities after shortcomings were revealed during Operation Sindoor. Under Phase-3 of the Space-Based Surveillance programme, the country will deploy over 50 advanced satellites, shifting from electro-optical systems to Synthetic Aperture Radar technology that enables night-time and all-weather

border monitoring, and battlefield awareness. Plans also include faster satellite-to-satellite data sharing, overseas ground stations, and protective "bodyguard satellites" to strengthen national security.

Sports

MS Dhoni Named Goodwill Envoy For Pune Grand Tour 2026

Former Indian cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has been appointed goodwill ambassador for the Bajaj Pune Grand Tour 2026, India's first international professional multi-stage road cycling race. The five-day Continental Road Cycling Race, classified as UCI 2.2, will be held in Pune from January 19 to 23 over a 437-kilometre course spanning the Deccan Plateau and Sahyadri ranges. Dhoni will help raise visibility for cycling and inspire wider participation, especially among young athletes.

Aaryan Varshney has earned the title of India's 92nd Chess Grandmaster

India's chess ascent continued as Delhi-based Aaryan Varshney became the country's 92nd Grandmaster after winning the Andranik Margaryan Memorial Tournament in Armenia. The 21-year-old secured his final GM norm with a round to spare, highlighting consistency and composure at the international level. His achievement makes him the eighth Grandmaster from Delhi and reflects India's rapidly strengthening chess ecosystem, marked by structured training pathways, international exposure, and a growing pool of young, world-class talent.

Vijender Singh joins the Asian Boxing Council as a member

Indian boxing legend Vijender Singh has been appointed to the Asian Boxing Council, marking his transition from elite athlete to sports administrator. A Beijing 2008 Olympic bronze medallist and India's first in boxing, he brings nearly two decades of international competitive experience. His inclusion strengthens India's presence in Asian sports governance and is expected to promote athlete-centric policies, improve competition structures and support balanced boxing development across established and emerging Asian nations.



Vidarbha makes history by winning its first Vijay Hazare Trophy title

Vidarbha created history by winning their maiden Vijay Hazare Trophy, defeating Saurashtra by 38 runs in the final at Bengaluru. Atharva Taide's superb 128 anchored Vidarbha's total of 317, while disciplined bowling led by Yash Thakur sealed the win. Saurashtra's resistance fell short as they were bowled out for 279. The victory marks Vidarbha's first List A title and underlines their rising strength in Indian limited-overs cricket.

Saina Nehwal has announced her retirement from competitive badminton

Saina Nehwal has officially retired from competitive badminton after battling chronic knee problems, including cartilage degeneration and arthritis, which prevented intense training. An Olympic bronze medallist at London 2012, she became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic badminton medal and later achieved a World No.1 ranking in 2015. Her career featured Super Series titles, Commonwealth Games golds, and World Championship medals. Honoured with major national awards, Saina's greatest legacy lies in transforming Indian badminton and inspiring generations, especially women, to pursue the sport professionally.

Uttarakhand has inaugurated the National Paralympic Powerlifting Championship

Uttarakhand hosted the National Paralympic Powerlifting Championship in January 2026, highlighting India's growing emphasis on inclusive sports. Inaugurated virtually by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami from GGS Indraprastha University,

Roorkee, the event provided a national platform for para-athletes to showcase strength, discipline, and resilience. The championship promoted empowerment of persons with disabilities, encouraged equal participation, and helped identify talent for future international competitions. By successfully hosting such events, Uttarakhand continues to strengthen its reputation as an emerging sports hub and a committed supporter of inclusive sporting opportunities.

Miscellaneous

Karnataka overhauls Jamma Bane land records to resolve long-standing issues in Kodagu

The Karnataka government has amended its land revenue law to reform Jamma Bane land records in Kodagu, with the Governor's assent granted on January 7, 2026. The amendment aligns Kodagu's traditional system with the Karnataka Land Revenue Act, 1964, enabling correction of outdated ownership entries. By empowering Tahsildars to update records after due enquiry, the reform aims to resolve long-standing inheritance issues, support digitisation under the Bhoomi Project, and provide indigenous communities with clear titles and better access to legal and financial services.



Dr Jitendra Singh launched *Gen V Bano* and *Mahatma* at India's first NAMO Book Festival

India marked a new literary milestone with the launch of the first NAMO Book Fest in New Delhi. At the inaugural event, Union Minister Jitendra Singh released two books, *Gen V Bano* and *Mahatma*, focusing on inspiration, leadership, and values. The two-day festival features curated works on ideas

and leadership, bringing together authors, thinkers, and young readers. It aims to promote reading culture, encourage intellectual dialogue, and inspire youth through discussions on governance, nation-building, and ethical leadership.

Sukhatme National Award for Statistics 2026

The Government of India has invited nominations for the Sukhatme National Award in Statistics 2026, instituted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Conferred biennially since 2000, the award honours eminent Indian statisticians aged 45 and above for lifetime contributions to official statistics. Nominations can be submitted online through the National Awards Portal till January 31, 2026. The award will be presented on Statistics Day, June 29, 2026, and includes a citation, shawl, and memento, recognising excellence and impact in the field of statistics.

New Framework Introduced for Netting of Foreign Portfolio Investor Funds

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed a new netting framework for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) that would allow them to offset cash obligations for trades executed on the same day instead of settling each transaction separately. This change is designed to reduce funding costs, improve operational efficiency, and make Indian markets more attractive for global investors. The proposal also forms part of broader market reforms to enhance competitiveness and ease regulatory processes.



Maharashtra cabinet clears the Rs. 4,775 crore Bembla River irrigation project

The Maharashtra Cabinet approved two key initiatives to boost rural development and employment. It cleared the Rs. 4,775 crore Bembla River Irrigation Project in Yavatmal, which will bring over 52,000 hectares under assured irrigation, improving farm productivity and incomes in Vidarbha. The Cabinet also approved MAHIMA, a new agency to facilitate overseas employment for skilled youth, aiming to reduce unemployment, increase remittances and link Maharashtra's workforce with global job markets.

Indian Railways confers its highest honour on Chandana Sinha

Indian Railways has conferred its highest award on RPF officer Chandana Sinha for her outstanding work in preventing child trafficking. Through vigilant identification, coordinated rescues and child-friendly protocols, she helped save hundreds of vulnerable children at railway stations and trains. Working closely with NGOs and welfare agencies, her efforts strengthened the Railways' role in child protection. The honour highlights humanitarian service as a core value of Indian Railways and encourages wider adoption of similar practices.

Jharkhand implements the PESA Act after a 25-year delay

Jharkhand has notified PESA rules nearly 25 years after gaining statehood, aiming to enhance tribal self-governance in Fifth Schedule Areas. The PESA Act, 1996 extends the Panchayati Raj system to tribal regions, empowering Gram Sabhas over land, water, forests and customary laws. While the government terms it historic, tribal groups argue the rules dilute PESA's spirit through administrative control and limited authority over minerals and funds, raising concerns that autonomy may remain symbolic.

Valentino Garavani dies at 93, marking the close of a legendary chapter in global fashion

Legendary Italian designer Valentino Garavani has passed away at 93, ending a six-decade influence on global fashion. Founder of the Valentino fashion house in 1960, he blended French couture with Italian tailoring, creating timeless designs symbolised by the

and Hollywood

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couture with elegance and craftsmanship. Though he retired in 2008, his brand and design philosophy continue to inspire, securing his lasting legacy in luxury fashion.

Vice-President unveils the Hindi edition of Palanivelu GUTS

The Vice-President released the Hindi edition of Palanivelu GUTS, the autobiography of renowned surgeon Dr C. Palanivelu, highlighting themes of courage, ethics and service. The book traces his journey from humble beginnings to global recognition, emphasising individual effort and national unity. The Vice-President praised Palanivelu's pioneering role in laparoscopic surgery, respect for mentors and commitment to affordable healthcare, noting that the Hindi edition will inspire a wider audience beyond the medical community.

Ilaiyaraaja set to be honoured with the Padmapani Award at the Ajanta–Ellora International Film Festival 2026

Legendary composer Ilaiyaraaja will receive the Padmapani Award at the 11th Ajanta–Ellora International Film Festival in early 2026, honouring his exceptional contribution to Indian cinema. The prestigious award recognises artists with lasting cultural impact and includes a citation, memento and cash prize. With over four decades of work and music for more than 1,000 films, Ilaiyaraaja's innovative blending of Indian and Western musical traditions has shaped generations of filmmakers and musicians.

233-Year-Old Copy of Valmiki Ramayana Donated to Ram Katha Museum in Ayodhya

A rare 233-year-old Sanskrit manuscript of the Valmiki Ramayana has been permanently gifted to the International Ram Katha Museum in Ayodhya, marking a major step in preserving India's literary heritage. Donated by the Central Sanskrit University, the manuscript dates to 1792 CE and includes the Tattvadipikatika commentary by Maheshvara Tirtha. Written in Devanagari, it contains five key kāṇḍas of the Ramayana. The transfer enhances scholarly access, supports cultural conservation, and reinforces Ayodhya's global significance as a centre of Ramayana tradition.

Reorganisation Act, 1971. The day highlights a key milestone in India's federal journey, granting these regions political autonomy and administrative authority. Formerly Union Territories or part of Assam, the three states gained greater scope to preserve their distinct cultures and identities. The occasion reflects democratic empowerment, regional integration, and the ongoing development of India's northeastern states within the Union.

Eco-Sensitive Zone Status Granted to Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified an Eco-Sensitive Zone extending up to one kilometre around Rajasthan's Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary in the Aravalli Range. The move aims to protect the region's fragile ecology by regulating development, mining, and industrial activities near the sanctuary. Rich in biodiversity, the area supports species such as leopard, hyena, pangolin, nilgai, chinkara, and several bird species. Alongside conservation, the ESZ framework promotes sustainable livelihoods for local and indigenous communities through eco-friendly practices, ensuring balanced environmental protection and development.

First Dog Sanctuary in Punjab Opens in Ludhiana to Curb Stray Dog Menace

Punjab has inaugurated its first Dog Sanctuary in Ludhiana as a pilot initiative to address stray dog management through humane and lawful methods. Launched to reduce dog bite incidents and improve public safety, the facility will house and care for stray dogs in line with Supreme Court guidelines and Animal Birth Control rules. Emphasising sterilisation, vaccination, and ethical handling, the project balances animal welfare with urban safety concerns. The government plans to evaluate its effectiveness before expanding similar sanctuaries across other districts of the state.

Assam has introduced a scheme providing Rs. 25,000 per month as financial support to research scholars

The Assam government has announced a new monthly financial assistance scheme for research scholars under the Atal Vichal Agragami Assam programme, to

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month to regular scholars and Rs. 40,000 to Divyang scholars, aiming to reduce financial constraints and promote quality research. Announced by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the initiative focuses on inclusion, innovation, and human capital development, strengthening Assam's academic ecosystem and supporting long-term, research-driven growth.

The SAMPANN Pension Portal has been integrated with UMANG to provide easier access to pension-related services

India has strengthened digital governance by integrating the SAMPANN pension system with the UMANG platform, benefiting nearly four lakh Department of Telecommunications pensioners. The move allows retirees to access Pension Payment Order details and Life Certificate validity online, reducing the need for physical visits. Developed by the Office of the Controller General of Communication Accounts, SAMPANN manages the entire pension lifecycle digitally. Through UMANG and DigiLocker support, the integration improves accessibility, transparency, and efficiency, particularly for senior citizens, aligning with Digital India's goal of inclusive and citizen-centric service delivery.