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E-MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2026

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RRB Group-D	22,195	2 Mar 2026
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KETAN SINGLA
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT
Assistant Director
Ministry of Youth Affairs



AMANPREET SINGH
B.Sc.(Ag), PAU
Assistant Director
Sports Authority of India



I came to bharti sir when I was at the crossroads of my career. It was his motivation coupled with guidance that I took the decision to appear for the civil services and finally cracked it in my very first attempt. I owe my success to him a lot. Thank you sir for being the guiding light for me and many others like me. Aditya uppal (civil services exam 2013 AIR 202) (Indian revenue service)



Aditya Uppal, IAS
Rank 19, 2015



Himanshu Gupta, IAS
Rank 7, 2011

My association with PANACEA for about 5 months was very fruitful. I got good motivation to achieve my goals. Thank you bharti sir for your constant support. I suggest students to make a goal in life and PANACEA is a good centre to guide you.
Himanshu

Gallery



Lovish Garg, IPS Rank 184, 2022



हिमांशु गुप्ता, ज़िला कलक्टर - जोधपुर



Punjab PCS SUCCESS

Gallery



Sachin Pathak, **SDM**
Rank 3, 2021



Deepkaran Toor, **DSP**
Rank 21, 2021



Harpinder Kaur, **DSP**

I would like to thank the divine, my family & all my teachers, who constantly motivated me to work towards my goal. I must specially mention Dr. Dinesh Bhatti Sir, who was my mentor on this path, for his unshakable belief in my abilities.

Harpinder K. Gill



Dr. Ankit Bansal
PCS



Meenakshi Gupta
PCS (J)



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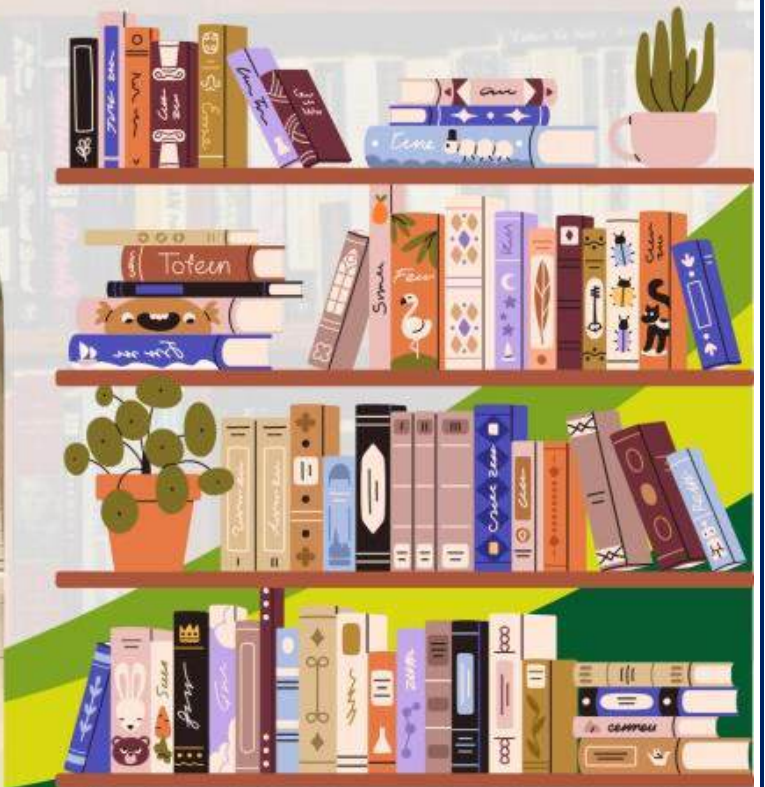
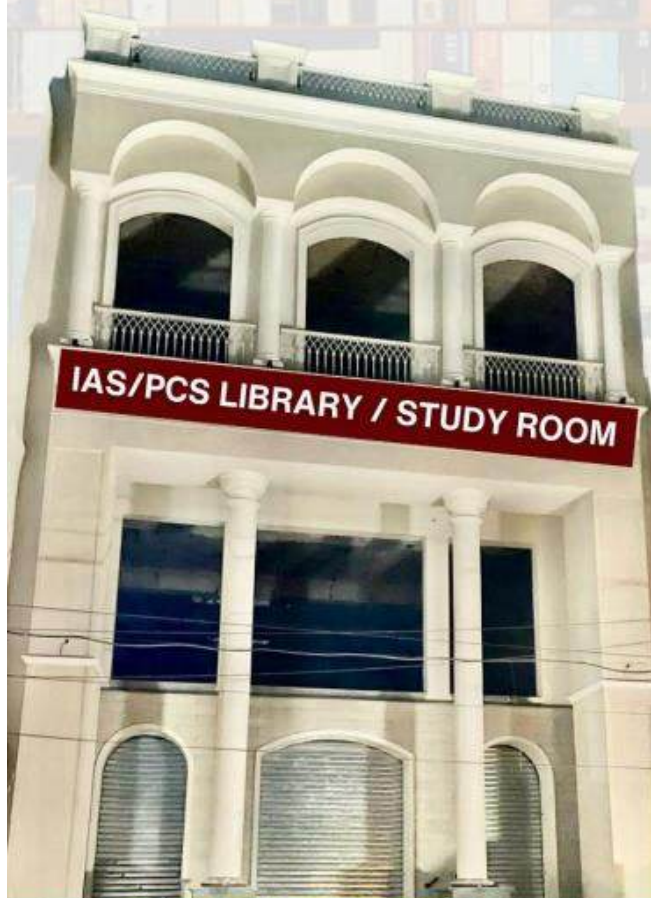
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147. Biswa Bandhu Sen

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2. Ayush Raina
3. Ketan Singla
4. Ramanpreet Kaur
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8. Shruti Bharti
9. Chhavi
10. Pinki Saini
11. Harshi Gagat
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- SEBI - Grade A Officer

Insurance Exams

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- GIC AO & Assistants

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- Co-operative Inspectors
- High Court Clerks
- Taxation Inspectors
- Police SI & Constables
- PUDA, GLADA & PSPCL
- Tehsil Welfare Officer etc.
- Revenue Patwari
- Naib Tehsildar
- Municipal Corporation
- Agricultural Devt. Officer
- Labour Inspector
- Section Officer

Central Govt. Exams

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- SSC - CHSL for +2
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- EPF Clerk
- EPF Asstt. Commissioner
- FCI
- PSUs & Railway
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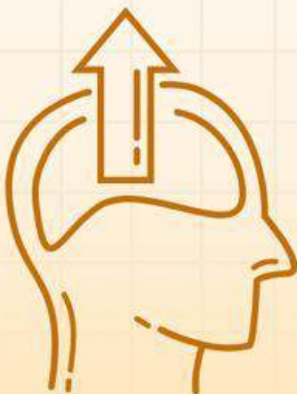
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6

Once you achieve a goal, set your sights higher. Use your success as a stepping stone for better opportunities and higher job roles.



1. NATIONAL NEWS

1. A Call for Ban on 10-Minute Deliveries

Background

Gig workers associated with major food and grocery delivery platforms staged nationwide strikes during Christmas and New Year, demanding a ban on the 10-minute delivery model. The central concern is that hyper-fast delivery targets compromise road safety, undermine worker dignity, and threaten sustainable livelihoods.



What is the 10-Minute Delivery Model

The model promises ultra-fast doorstep delivery through algorithm-driven task allocation. It relies on dark stores, dense delivery networks, and real-time tracking. Rider performance is governed by strict time targets, reinforced through incentives for speed and penalties for delays.

Key Trends

Since 2021, speed has emerged as a primary competitive differentiator among delivery platforms. Algorithmic control over riders has intensified, particularly during festivals and late-night demand spikes. Similar hyper-speed delivery systems have triggered protests globally, reflecting growing worker resistance.

Case for a Ban

1. Road Safety Risks

The pressure to meet rigid deadlines encourages traffic violations and unsafe riding practices, increasing the risk of accidents.

2. Occupational Health Concerns

Sustained time pressure leads to physical strain, chronic fatigue, stress, and mental burnout among delivery workers.

3. Labour Dignity and Human Rights

Workers are treated as interchangeable units, often without access to basic amenities such as rest areas, toilets, shade, or reasonable breaks.

4. Externalisation of Costs

While platforms maximise profits, riders absorb fuel expenses, vehicle maintenance, and accident-related costs, even as per-delivery earnings decline.

5. Regulatory Gaps

The model circumvents employer obligations related to social security and is misaligned with India's labour protection framework.

Challenges in Regulation

Consumer dependence on instant convenience complicates reform. Algorithmic systems remain opaque, masking penalties through rankings and incentives. Companies may exploit regulatory differences across states, while workers fear that reforms could reduce already fragile incomes.

2. Nimesulide Oral Dose Above 100 mg Banned



Nimesulide is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) commonly used for pain relief and management of fever (pyrexia). The primary safety concern associated with the drug is hepatotoxicity, with the risk of liver damage increasing significantly at higher doses.

Recent Government Action

The Central Government has banned the manufacture, sale, and distribution of all oral immediate-release formulations of Nimesulide exceeding 100 mg. The prohibition has come into force with immediate effect and applies nationwide.

Rationale for the Ban

High-dose (above 100 mg) immediate-release oral formulations have been found to pose a serious risk to human health, particularly due to their association with liver toxicity. The government has noted that the continued availability of such high-dose formulations is unjustified, especially when safer alternative analgesics are widely available. The measure is part of a broader effort to strengthen drug safety and public health protection.

Legal Basis

The prohibition has been issued under Section 26A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, which empowers the Central Government to ban drugs that are likely to involve risk to human beings or that lack therapeutic justification, in the public interest.

Decision-Making Process

The decision followed scientific and regulatory review, including recommendations from the Indian Council of Medical Research and consultations with the Drugs Technical Advisory Board. Based on these inputs, the Union Health Ministry concluded that high-dose oral Nimesulide presents avoidable health risks and that safer substitutes are available.

International and Historical Context

Concerns regarding Nimesulide's safety are long-standing. In 2007, the European Medicines Agency determined that the drug's risks outweighed its benefits. Nimesulide has never been approved for use in several major jurisdictions, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Australia. In India, earlier regulatory action included a 2011 ban on its paediatric use, reflecting heightened concern for vulnerable populations.

Significance

The ban reinforces India's commitment to evidence-based drug regulation, prioritising patient safety over continued use of higher-risk formulations when safer therapeutic options exist.

3. Passenger Assistance Control Room (PACR)



The Ministry of Civil Aviation has established a 24x7 Passenger Assistance Control Room (PACR) to strengthen aviation grievance redressal and provide real-time assistance to air travellers, particularly during flight delays, cancellations, and large-scale disruptions.

What is PACR

PACR is a permanent, round-the-clock integrated control centre that continuously monitors aviation operations. It functions as a single coordination point to ensure real-time resolution of passenger grievances related to airlines, airports, and flight operations.

Objectives

The initiative aims to place passengers at the core of aviation services by enabling fast, transparent, and accountable grievance handling. It also seeks to ensure a coordinated and timely response during crises, such as weather disruptions, technical failures, or airspace constraints.

Key Features

- **Integrated Stakeholder Hub**
PACR brings together key aviation stakeholders under one operational framework, including the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, the Airports Authority of India, and airlines, enabling faster coordination and decision-making.
- **AirSewa Integration**
The control room is seamlessly linked with the AirSewa platform, allowing complaints to flow directly into a unified response mechanism.
- **Omni-channel Grievance Intake**
Passenger complaints are received through multiple channels, including phone calls,

digital platforms, and AirSewa, and are converted into actionable cases without duplication or delay.

- **Data-driven Monitoring**

Real-time dashboards track grievance categories, response timelines, and stakeholder actions, improving accountability and systemic responsiveness.

- **Passenger Charter Compliance**

PACR ensures adherence to passenger rights related to delays, cancellations, refunds, and baggage handling, as laid down in aviation regulations.

Significance

PACR enhances passenger trust by making grievance redressal more responsive and visible. It supports the governance needs of India's rapidly expanding aviation sector by improving service quality, regulatory oversight, and crisis management.

About AirSewa

Launched in 2016, AirSewa is India's dedicated online grievance redressal and passenger information platform, accessible through a web portal and mobile applications on Android and iOS. It serves as the primary digital interface between air passengers and aviation authorities.

4. Market Access Support (MAS) Intervention

Launch and Policy Framework

The Market Access Support (MAS) Intervention has been launched by the Government of India under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM). The framework was approved by the Union Cabinet on 12 November 2025. MAS is implemented as part of the NIRYAT DISHA sub-scheme.

Under the broader NIRYAT framework:

- **Niryat Protsahan** focuses on financial support, including affordable trade finance, interest subvention, factoring, exporter credit cards, collateral support, and credit enhancement for MSMEs.
- **Niryat Disha** provides non-financial support such as quality and compliance assistance, branding, participation in trade fairs, logistics and transport facilitation, and district-level capacity building.

Objectives

The intervention aims to strengthen international market access for Indian exporters, with a specific focus on MSMEs, first-time exporters, and firms operating in priority sectors. It seeks to improve buyer connect, enhance India's global market presence, and diversify export destinations.

Implementing Structure

MAS is jointly implemented by the Department of Commerce, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, and the Ministry of Finance. Implementation is carried out in coordination with Indian Missions abroad, Export Promotion Councils (EPCs), Commodity Boards, and relevant industry associations.

Supported Market Access Activities

The intervention supports a range of export promotion activities, including Buyer–Seller Meets, participation in international trade fairs and exhibitions, Mega Reverse Buyer–Seller Meets hosted in India, and trade delegations to priority as well as emerging markets.

Planning and Participation Norms

A rolling advance calendar of market access events covering three to five years is envisaged to provide predictability to exporters. At least 35 percent participation from MSMEs is mandatory. The programme prioritises new geographies and smaller markets to promote export diversification. Trade delegations are benchmarked at a minimum of 50 participants, with flexibility provided based on market and sectoral requirements.

5. Jal Seva Aankalan – Rural Drinking Water Service Assessment

Context

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has launched Jal Seva Aankalan to assess how rural drinking water services function on the ground. It focuses on service delivery, not just infrastructure. The launch was done by Union Jal Shakti Minister C. R. Patil.

What is Jal Seva Aankalan

- Jal Seva Aankalan is a village-level, citizen-led digital assessment.
- It evaluates the actual performance of rural drinking water services.
- The tool is hosted on the Jal Jeevan Mission portal.
- The completion deadline is 26 January 2026.

Purpose

- The aim is to create a community-owned assessment system.
- It shifts focus from asset creation to sustained water supply.
- It empowers Gram Panchayats and Village Water & Sanitation Committees (VWSCs).

Key Features

- The assessment is village-led, not survey-driven.
- It replaces costly external evaluations.
- It promotes transparency and local accountability.

Assessment Process

- The process is based on village-level discussions.
- Participants include VWSC members, Panchayat Secretary, system operators, women, and vulnerable groups.
- Findings are placed before the Gram Sabha for approval.
Data is uploaded to:
 - JJM Panchayat Dashboard
 - eGramSwaraj
 - Meri Panchayat App

A 30-day citizen feedback window is provided.

Results are visible to District Collectors, Zila Parishad CEOs, and State authorities.

Parameters Assessed

The assessment covers:

- Regularity and adequacy of water supply
- Drinking water quality
- Operation and maintenance
- Source sustainability
- Institutional and management systems

Role Framework

At the **district level**, Zila Parishads handle planning and coordination.

At the **block level**, training is provided, especially to Panchayat Secretaries.

At the **village level**, communities monitor and participate actively.

Expected Outcomes

- Service review becomes part of Gram Sabha processes.
- Problems are identified early.
- Water service performance becomes publicly visible.
- Planning becomes evidence-based.
- Community ownership is strengthened.

About Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

JJM was launched on 15 August 2019.

Its goal is 55 litres per capita per day (LPCD) of safe drinking water.

Coverage is through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs).

Implementation is by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under MoJS.

The mission rests on political will, people's participation, collaboration, and resource optimisation.

Ministry of Jal Shakti

Union Minister: C. R. Patil

Ministers of State: Veeranna Somanna, Raj Bhushan Choudhary

6. Anti-Terror Conference (ATC) 2025

The Anti-Terror Conference (ATC) 2025, organised by the National Investigation Agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs, was held in New Delhi from 26 to 28 December 2025 and was inaugurated by Amit Shah.



The conference focused on strengthening India's counter-terrorism and organised crime framework through better coordination and technology adoption.

Key launches included the updated NIA Crime Manual to standardise investigations, the AI-enabled Organised Crime Network Database (OCND) to map criminal and terror linkages using FIRs and charge sheets, and the Lost, Looted & Recovered Weapons Database (LLRWD), India's first national digital system to track government weapons lost, stolen, or recovered from police, armed forces, and CAPFs.

The LLRWD enables agencies to quickly trace seized weapons, prevents re-circulation of stolen arms, and strengthens terror and organised crime investigations, thereby reinforcing India's internal security architecture.

7. Romeo Juliet Clause in POCSO Act



The Supreme Court of India has flagged the misuse of POCSO in consensual adolescent relationships and urged the Union Government to examine the feasibility of introducing a "Romeo-Juliet clause."

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 is a special law enacted to protect children below 18 years from sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation.

Age of Consent in India

The age of consent is 18 years. Any sexual activity involving a person below this age is treated as an offence under POCSO, even if the relationship is consensual.

Core Issues Highlighted by the Court

The Court noted that the current legal framework leads to the criminalisation of consensual adolescent relationships, even when the age gap is minimal. It also highlighted the harmful impact of criminal proceedings—including police investigation, arrest, trial, and incarceration—on young persons. Further, the Court observed that POCSO has been “weaponised”, with instances of age misrepresentation and use of the law by families to break relationships they disapprove of, such as inter-caste or inter-faith relationships.

What is a “Romeo–Juliet” Clause?

A Romeo–Juliet clause provides a close-in-age exemption, ensuring that teenagers of nearly the same age in a mutually consensual relationship are not treated as criminals, even if one partner is below the legal age of consent.

Why is it Called “Romeo–Juliet”?

The term is derived from Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, symbolising young love rather than criminal intent.

Objective of the Clause

The proposed clause aims to balance child protection with adolescent realities, preventing misuse of the law while retaining strong safeguards against sexual exploitation.

8. Orobanche Threat to Mustard



Orobanche, locally called margoja and scientifically known as *Orobanche aegyptiaca*, is a parasitic weed severely affecting mustard crops in India. It attaches to mustard roots below the soil surface, siphoning off water and nutrients, which causes plants to become weak, yellow, and stunted, ultimately leading to heavy yield losses.

Why is it a Serious Problem?

Orobanche is difficult to detect early because it initially grows underground. By the time it appears above the soil, substantial damage has already occurred. Each plant produces thousands of tiny seeds that can survive in soil for up to 20 years and spread through wind and water, making fields with repeated mustard cultivation especially vulnerable.

Impact on Farmers and Oilseed Security

Farmers in Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh report sharp declines in mustard yields, forcing many to cut back cultivation. This is a major concern as mustard is India’s most important indigenous edible oil crop, crucial for reducing dependence on imported edible oils.

Control Measures and Way Forward

Conventional herbicides are largely ineffective and may damage the mustard crop. A promising solution is herbicide-tolerant mustard hybrids, which enable selective spraying against Orobanche. Scientists are also exploring GM mustard varieties for more durable, long-term control.

9. National IED Data Management System (NIDMS)

The National IED Data Management System (NIDMS) is a national-level digital platform designed to collect, store, analyse, and share data on Improvised Explosive Device (IED) incidents across India, strengthening the country's counter-terrorism intelligence framework. NIDMS has been developed by the National Security Guard, through its National Bomb Data Centre.

Why Was NIDMS Launched?

The system aims to enhance internal security and counter-terrorism by ensuring that all IED-related information is centrally recorded, scientifically analysed, and shared in real time among relevant security agencies.

How Does NIDMS Work?

NIDMS functions as a two-way online platform where details of any IED or blast incident anywhere in India can be uploaded. The system analyses the type of explosive, method of detonation, attack patterns and modus operandi, and identifies possible links with past incidents.

Who Can Access NIDMS?

Access is provided to key security agencies, including the National Investigation Agency, State Police Forces, Anti-Terrorism Squads (ATS), and the Central Armed Police Forces.

10. BRICS India 2026 Logo



Context

India has officially launched the BRICS India 2026 logo and website, marking the start of preparations for assuming the BRICS Chairship in 2026, a milestone year that marks 20 years of BRICS.

What Does the Logo Represent?

The logo serves as the official visual identity of India's BRICS Chairship, reflecting India's vision of global cooperation, inclusivity, and development-

oriented multilateralism.

Host and Chairship Details

India will serve as Host and Chair of BRICS for the entire year 2026. The grouping has evolved from the first BRIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in 2006 into a major Global South platform.

Theme and Symbolism

Inspired by India's national flower, the Lotus, the logo symbolises resilience, renewal, and unity in diversity. Its core message, "Togetherness for global welfare," reflects India's philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (One Earth, One Family).

Key Design Features

The lotus-shaped design represents India's civilisational identity, while the Namaste gesture at the centre symbolises respect and dialogue. The five coloured petals denote the founding BRICS members—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—highlighting equality and collective leadership.

11. BHASHINI Samudaye



BHASHINI Samudaye is being organised in New Delhi by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to strengthen India's Indian-language artificial intelligence ecosystem and promote inclusive digital public infrastructure.

What is BHASHINI Samudaye?

It is a collaborative ecosystem platform under BHASHINI, focused on co-creation, participatory governance, and large-scale adoption of Indian-language AI tools, datasets, and services. It brings together academia, startups, civil society organisations, researchers, and technology developers.

Institutional Framework

The initiative is led by the Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) under MeitY as part of the National Language Translation Mission (NLTM). BHASHINI functions as a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for language technologies, enabling interoperability and nationwide deployment across sectors.

12. Kashmir Markhor

The Kashmir Markhor, India's rarest wild goat, is facing the risk of local extinction, with only about 200–300 individuals left in the wild. It is a subspecies of markhor (*Capra falconeri*), known for its massive spiral horns and agility on steep cliffs. The species is strictly endemic to Jammu & Kashmir, making it conservation-critical.



Its habitat lies in the Pir Panjal range, with remaining populations mainly in Kazinag National Park (primary stronghold), Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary, Tattakuti Wildlife Sanctuary, and Khara Gali Conservation Reserve. It prefers steep rocky slopes, conifer forests, and alpine meadows, which provide both food and protection.

13. UIDAI launches Aadhaar Mascot “Udai”

The Unique Identification Authority of India has launched Aadhaar mascot ‘Udai (उदय)’ to make Aadhaar-related services more people-friendly and accessible. Udai acts as a resident-facing communication companion, helping citizens understand Aadhaar updates, authentication, offline verification, selective data sharing, and responsible use of Aadhaar in a simple and relatable manner.



14. India–AI Impact Summit 2026



AI
IMPACT
SUMMIT
भारत 2026 INDIA

India will host the India–AI Impact Summit 2026 on 19–20 February 2026 in New Delhi, marking the first global AI summit hosted in the Global South. Announced by the Prime Minister at the France AI Action Summit, it focuses on responsible, inclusive, and development-oriented AI, with strong emphasis on Global South priorities. The summit is guided by the Three Sutras Framework: People (human-centric AI), Planet (sustainable and climate-aligned AI), and Progress (AI for equitable growth in health, education, agriculture, and governance).

15. District-Led Textiles Transformation (DLTT) Plan

The Ministry of Textiles has launched the District-Led Textiles Transformation (DLTT) Plan to convert 100 districts into Global Export Champions and upgrade 100 Aspirational Districts into self-reliant textile hubs.

The plan uses data-driven district scoring and follows a two-pronged strategy:

- Champion Districts for scale, Industry 4.0, and export linkages
- Aspirational Districts for skilling, formalisation, SHGs, and micro-enterprises

Special focus is given to Eastern and North-Eastern India under Purvodaya, with GI tagging and tribal development, supported by government–industry–academia convergence.

16. India becomes first country to commercially produce bio-bitumen

India has become the first country to commercially produce bio-bitumen for roads, an eco-friendly alternative to petroleum bitumen. The technology was developed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR-CRRI, and CSIR-IIP. Bio-bitumen can replace 20–30% of fossil bitumen, reduces emissions, lowers costs, and improves durability. A 100-metre trial stretch on NH-40 (Jorabat–Shillong, Meghalaya) validated its field performance.



17. Indian Railways becomes world's largest electrified rail network

Indian Railways has become one of the largest electrified rail network globally, with 99.2% of its broad-gauge network electrified by November 2025, under Mission 100% Railway Electrification.

The shift reduces emissions, fuel imports, and costs, with electric traction being ~70% cheaper than diesel, supported by rapid renewable energy integration and modern electrification technologies.

18. Remarkable New Species Discovered in India (2025)

Species	Type	Location Found	Key Significance
Bridgeoporus kanadii	Macro-fungus	Arunachal Pradesh (on fir trees)	Massive, leathery fungus; exceptionally sturdy, capable of supporting human weight
Rhinophis siruvaniensis	Shieldtail snake (non-venomous)	Western Ghats, Kerala	New burrowing snake species belonging to the Uropeltidae family
Neelus sikkimensis	Springtail (Collembola)	High-altitude regions of Sikkim	First Indian record of the genus <i>Neelus</i>
Parasynnemellisia khasiana	Fungus (new genus & species)	Bamboo forests, Meghalaya	Represents a completely new genus adapted to humid bamboo ecosystems
Dolomedes indicus	Fishing spider	Western Ghats, Kerala	First confirmed fishing spider species discovered in India
Ophiorrhiza mizoramensis	Flowering shrub (Rubiaceae family)	Mizoram	New plant species; provisionally assessed as Critically Endangered

19. 1,000 Years Survival of Somnath Temple



The Prime Minister highlighted the completion of 1,000 years since the 1026 CE attack by Mahmud of Ghazni, underscoring the civilisational resilience of the Somnath Temple. Somnath is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva, revered across Hindu tradition and often called the “Eternal Shrine” due to its repeated destruction and reconstruction.

The temple is located at Prabhas Patan near Veraval in Gujarat, on the Arabian Sea coast, at the Triveni Sangam of Kapila, Hiran, and Saraswati rivers. Historical records show that the temple was destroyed and rebuilt at least six times during medieval invasions, symbolising cultural continuity.

Architecturally, it is built in the Chaulukya (Solanki) style, featuring a lofty shikhara, intricate stone carvings, and a grand garbhagriha. The present structure was inaugurated in 1951 by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and today the temple is managed by the Somnath Trust, chaired by the Prime Minister of India.

20. India's First Urban Night Safari – Lucknow

Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) is set to host India's first Urban Night Safari at the Kukrail Forest Area, along the Kukrail River on the city's outskirts. Unlike conventional wildlife parks, this project focuses on education, conservation awareness, and low-impact eco-tourism, rather than entertainment.



The safari will allow urban residents, students, and families to observe nocturnal animal behaviour without travelling to remote forests. Key features include restricted safari routes, low-intensity lighting, eco-friendly structures, and guided night ecology programmes.

Existing conservation facilities for crocodiles, gharials, and turtles will be upgraded.

The project is significant as it represents India's first attempt to integrate nocturnal wildlife education within a city ecosystem, offering a model for sustainable urban planning and biodiversity coexistence.

21. Lok Sabha Digital Attendance System



The Lok Sabha is set to launch a seat-based biometric digital attendance system to end the practice of “ghost attendance” in Parliament. Under this system, Members of Parliament must mark attendance only from their designated seats using thumb biometric verification, replacing the earlier lobby register method.

Key Features and Significance

Attendance can be recorded only inside the House, and proxy or mark-and-leave practices are not possible. The system automatically locks after adjournment, and MPs' daily allowance will be strictly linked to actual House presence. Announced by Speaker Om Birla, the reform aims to enhance transparency, discipline, and productivity, and forms part of the broader e-Parliament reforms.

22. Environmental (Protection) Fund, 2026

The Environmental (Protection) Fund, 2026 is a statutory fund created under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and further strengthened by the Jan Vishwas Act, 2023.

The rules governing the fund were notified in January 2026. It is administered by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and is primarily meant to channel environmental penalties towards restoration and regulatory control.

The fund receives money from penalties, interest, and other prescribed receipts. These resources are used for pollution mitigation, site remediation, environmental monitoring, clean technology research and development, and capacity building. Revenue from the fund is shared in a 75:25 ratio between States/UTs and the Centre. Governance is ensured through Central and State Project Management Units (PMUs), with oversight by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and monitoring through a CPCB online portal. Overall, the fund reinforces the polluter pays principle and strengthens Centre–State cooperation in environmental protection.

23. Domestic Workers and Labour Law Coverage



A committee constituted on the directions of the Supreme Court of India has examined the need for a separate law for domestic workers and submitted its report to the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The committee concluded that no separate legislation is required, as domestic workers are already covered under the existing labour law framework. The emphasis, therefore, should be on effective implementation rather than introducing a new law.

Coverage under the Four Labour Codes

Domestic workers are protected under the four Labour Codes. The Code on Wages, 2019 ensures minimum wages, timely payment, and gender-neutral wage provisions. The Industrial Relations Code, 2020 governs employment conditions and dispute resolution mechanisms. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSH Code) focuses on workers' safety, health, and welfare. The Social Security Code, 2020 extends social security benefits to organised, unorganised, gig, and platform workers.

Significance

The report reflects a legal consolidation approach, highlighting the need for inter-ministerial coordination and better enforcement of existing laws. It is particularly significant for informal labour and women workers, who form a large proportion of domestic workers in India.

24. Atal Pension Yojana (APY)



The Atal Pension Yojana (APY) is a social security scheme aimed at providing old-age income security to workers in the unorganised sector. Launched on 9 May 2015 and operational from 1 June 2015, the scheme has been approved for continuation by the Union Cabinet of India and extended till FY 2030–31, under the chairmanship of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi. It is administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) under the National Pension System (NPS). APY targets individuals aged 18–40 years and guarantees a monthly pension of ₹1,000 to ₹5,000 after the age of 60. As of January 2026, the scheme has over 8.66 crore subscribers, with government support provided for awareness, capacity building, and gap funding.

25. Indian Skimmer Conservation Project in the Ganga Basin

The Indian Skimmer conservation project in the Ganga Basin is being implemented by the Bombay Natural History Society with support from the National Mission for Clean Ganga. The Indian Skimmer (*Rynchops albicollis*), listed as Endangered (EN) by the IUCN, relies on large, slow-flowing rivers with sandbars and islands and breeds along the Ganga, Chambal, Yamuna, and their tributaries.



India hosts around 90% of the global population, making conservation critical. As a flagship and indicator species for river health, its decline signals threats like habitat degradation, dams, sand mining, and altered river flows, underscoring the need for basin-level ecological protection.

26. Dugong Conservation Centre



The Dugong Conservation Centre has been in the news after the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) sought a design revision of the Dugong Centre at Manora (Thanjavur), Tamil Nadu. Dugongs, also known as sea cows, are strictly marine mammals found in warm, shallow coastal waters of the Indian and western Pacific Oceans, especially in seagrass meadows, lagoons, estuaries, and nearshore zones.

Dugongs feed exclusively on seagrass, making them a keystone species and an important ecosystem engineer that supports seagrass regeneration. Scientifically known as *Dugong dugon*, they can grow up to 3 metres and weigh over 400 kg. Listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, their conservation is vital for maintaining coastal marine biodiversity.

27. Coconut Root Wilt Disease

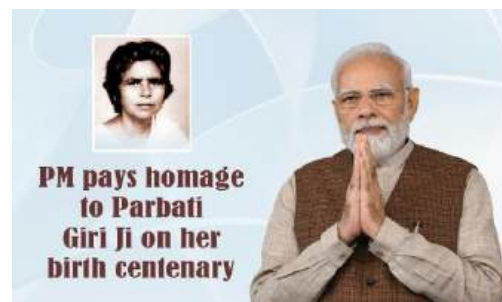
Coconut Root Wilt Disease is a chronic phytoplasma disease that affects coconut palms, causing severe yield loss, though it is usually non-fatal. It was first reported over 150 years ago from Erattupetta in Kerala and is now endemic to Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka.



The disease spreads through sap-sucking insect vectors, mainly *Stephanitis typica* and *Proutista moesta*. Key symptoms include drooping and weakening of leaflets, yellowing from leaf tips inward, and inward curling of leaves. Its spread is accelerated by continuous coconut belts, wind, and climate stress, posing a major threat to coconut-based livelihoods in southern India.

28. Parbati Giri Birth Centenary Tribute

The birth centenary of Parbati Giri, popularly known as the “Mother Teresa of Western Odisha,” is being observed to honour her life of sacrifice, nationalism, and social service. She was born on 19 January 1926 in Samlipadar village, Bargarh district (Odisha).



Early Life and Freedom Struggle

Parbati Giri dropped out of school at the age of 11 and was deeply inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and Rama Devi of Bari Ashram. She joined the Indian National Congress in 1938 and travelled across villages to spread awareness about nationalism, Gandhian values, and social reform. She actively participated in the Khadi Andolan, promoted spinning of the charkha, and wore khadi as a way of life.

During the Quit India Movement (1942), she led rallies with the Tricolour, raised anti-British slogans, and mobilised women in Western Odisha. She was arrested and imprisoned for two years for her revolutionary activities and symbolically defied colonial authority in Bargarh.

Social Reform and Legacy

After Independence, Parbati Giri devoted herself to social service, leading major relief work during the 1951 Odisha famine. She worked for the improvement of jail conditions, eradication of leprosy, and welfare of the poor, destitute, and marginalised. Her lifelong service earned her the titles “Mother Teresa of Western Odisha” and “Banhi Kanya,” symbolising her courage, compassion, and enduring nationalist spirit.

29. India’s First Vande Bharat Sleeper Train



India has launched its first Vande Bharat Sleeper Express, marking a major upgrade in long-distance rail travel. The train began its first commercial run on 22 January 2026 and is operated by Indian Railways under the Northeast Frontier Railway. It runs on the Kamakhya (Guwahati)–Howrah route, covering about 972 km in nearly 14 hours, making it the fastest train on this route and saving around 3 hours compared to the Saraighat Express. The Vande Bharat was first introduced in 2019 on the New Delhi–Varanasi route, and the sleeper version extends its benefits to overnight, long-distance passengers.

30. Amrit Bharat Express Launches

The Amrit Bharat Express, launched by Indian Railways on 30 December 2023, is designed as an affordable, non-AC long-distance sleeper service. As of January 2026, 30 trains are operational, with 9 new services added. These trains are tailored for high passenger volumes, especially during festive seasons, and connect the Northeast, East, Central, West, and South India.



With a focus on low fares, high capacity, and basic comfort, the Amrit Bharat Express improves employment mobility, tourism, trade, and access to education and healthcare. It is a key component of the Amrit Kaal vision, aiming for inclusive, reliable, and affordable rail travel across India.

31. National Legislative Index (NLI)



The National Legislative Index (NLI) is a proposed performance assessment framework announced by Om Birla at the 86th All India Presiding Officers' Conference. It aims to objectively assess and compare the functioning of Parliament and State Legislatures using quantifiable indicators such as the number of sittings, legislative output, committee work, and House time utilisation.

The proposal responds to concerns like declining sitting days, frequent disruptions, weak committee scrutiny, poor accountability, and lack of transparent, comparable public data on legislative performance. By encouraging benchmarking, healthy competition, accountability, and transparency, the NLI seeks to discourage disruptions, improve deliberation, and ultimately strengthen constitutional democracy and outcome-oriented governance in India.

32. Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, replacing the 2016 rules. Effective from 1 April 2026, the rules introduce stricter segregation, accountability, and digital monitoring across urban and rural local bodies to address India's rising solid waste generation (about 1.85 lakh tonnes/day, CPCB 2023–24).

Key Provisions

•**Four-stream segregation at source:** Mandatory segregation into Wet, Dry, Sanitary, and Special Care waste. Wet waste must be composted or bio-methanated; dry waste sent to Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs); sanitary waste securely wrapped and stored separately; and special care waste handed over only to authorised agencies.



- **Polluter Pays Principle: Environmental compensation** for non-compliance, with guidelines by the Central Pollution Control Board and enforcement by State Pollution Control Boards/Committees.
- **Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs):** Entities with $\geq 20,000$ sq m floor area, $\geq 40,000$ litres/day water use, or ≥ 100 kg/day waste are classified as BWGs—covering housing societies, government buildings, and universities (~30% of total waste).
- **Extended BWG Responsibility (EBWGR):** BWGs must process wet waste on-site or obtain a responsibility certificate if on-site processing is not feasible.
- **Digital governance:** A centralised online portal will track waste generation, collection, and disposal, replacing physical reporting with digital audits.
- **RDF mandate:** Industries such as cement and waste-to-energy plants must raise Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) use from 5% to 15% over six years. RDF is a high-calorific fuel made from non-recyclable municipal waste, reducing fossil fuel use.
- **Landfill restrictions:** Landfills limited to inert and non-recyclable waste; higher fees for dumping unsegregated waste.
- **Legacy waste:** Time-bound biomining and bioremediation of old dumpsites with quarterly reporting.
- **Hilly and island areas:** Local bodies may levy user fees on tourists and regulate visitor inflow based on waste-handling capacity.
- **Institutional mechanism:** State-level committees, chaired by the Chief Secretary, to oversee implementation.

33. Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988

The Supreme Court of India delivered a split verdict on the constitutional validity of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, which was inserted by the 2018 Amendment. The provision requires prior approval from the competent authority before initiating any enquiry or investigation against a public servant for actions taken in the discharge of official duties. The challenge was brought by the Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL), which argued that the provision shields corruption and weakens accountability. Due to divergent opinions, the matter has been referred to the Chief Justice of India for constitution of a larger Bench.

What Section 17A Provides

- Mandatory prior sanction/approval before enquiry or investigation against public servants for official decisions.

- Government's stated objective: protect honest officers, prevent frivolous complaints, and avoid policy paralysis.

Divergent Judicial Opinions

- **B. V. Nagarathna (Held Section 17A unconstitutional):**
 - Violates Article 14 by giving unequal protection, mainly to higher decision-makers.
 - Arbitrary and against rule of law: blocks even preliminary enquiry without approval.
 - Contrary to PC Act's objective of detecting and punishing corruption.
 - Rejected the policy paralysis argument, stating honest officers do not need such statutory shields.
- **K. V. Viswanathan (Upheld constitutionality with safeguards):**
 - Possibility of misuse does not make a law unconstitutional.
 - Prior approval helps prevent administrative paralysis and frivolous FIRs.
 - Called for a balance between accountability and administrative autonomy.
 - Suggested independent screening via Lokpal/Lokayukta and prior fact-finding before sanction.

Key Constitutional Issues

- Article 14 (Equality before law)
- Rule of Law vs executive discretion
- Separation of Powers
- Accountability vs administrative autonomy

Challenges and Way Forward

- Risk of shielding corruption due to delays or denial of sanction.
- Potential executive interference in approval decisions.
- Unequal protection between higher and lower officials.
- Suggested reforms include time-bound sanctions, independent scrutiny, and possible legislative review of Section 17A.

34. New Aadhaar App (UIDAI)

The Government of India launched the New Aadhaar App in January 2026, developed by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). It introduces a privacy-first, consent-based approach, allowing residents to update certain details, including mobile numbers from home.



What is the New Aadhaar App?

The New Aadhaar App is a next-generation, secure mobile platform that replaces the older mAadhaar app. It focuses on data minimisation, user consent, and privacy, in line with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act.

Aims and Objectives

- **Eliminate photocopies:** Prevent misuse of Aadhaar during routine identity checks at hotels, airports, etc.
- **Resident-centric identity:** Give users full control over what data is shared and with whom.
- **Ease of living:** Reduce the need for physical visits to Aadhaar Seva Kendras for routine updates.

Key Features

- **Secure Offline Verification (No Internet Required):**
Identity verification without sharing the **12-digit Aadhaar number**.
 - *Share ID:* Password-protected file with limited fields (e.g., Name & Age).
 - *QR scanning:* Instant, digitally signed proof of identity.
- **Mobile Number & Address Update from Home:**
 - Update via **Face Authentication** through the app.
 - **Fee:** ₹75
 - **Timeline:** Changes reflected within ~15 days.
- **One Family – One App:**
Manage up to **five Aadhaar profiles** on a single smartphone—useful for children and elderly dependents.
- **Selective Data Sharing:**
Users can share **only required fields** (e.g., Photo & Age for tickets, Name & Address for hospitals), with Aadhaar number fully masked.
- **Biometric Lock/Unlock:**
One-click locking of fingerprints and iris data to prevent unauthorised use.

35. PANCHAM Digital Chatbot (Ministry of Panchayati Raj)



PANCHAM is a WhatsApp-based AI chatbot launched by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on the eve of India's 77th Republic Day. It creates a direct two-way digital bridge between the Central Government and over 30 lakh elected Panchayati Raj representatives, marking a first-of-its-kind initiative in grassroots governance. The chatbot acts as a digital companion for rural local bodies, reducing dependence on complex apps or intermediaries, and has been developed in collaboration with UNICEF as the knowledge partner.

The primary objective of PANCHAM is information saturation, ensuring 100% awareness of government schemes at the village level. It supports 22 Indian languages through the BHASHINI AI language engine and offers voice-based assistance, enabling representatives to ask and receive responses via voice notes, thereby addressing literacy barriers. Through WhatsApp, users can access scheme FAQs, guidelines, updates on programmes such as e-GramSwaraj, SVAMITVA, and RGSA, as well as bite-sized training videos on tasks like geo-tagging of Panchayat assets. Overall, PANCHAM enhances

transparency, women's empowerment, and grassroots governance by reducing middlemen and enabling real-time feedback to policymakers.

36. Sampoornta Abhiyan 2.0

Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0 is a mission-mode saturation campaign launched by NITI Aayog and inaugurated by its CEO B. V. R. Subrahmanyam. The campaign targets 112 Aspirational Districts and 513 Aspirational Blocks across the country. It is being implemented from 28 January 2026 to 14 April 2026, coinciding with B. R. Ambedkar Jayanti.

The core objective is to achieve 100% saturation of key development indicators related to health, nutrition, education, sanitation, and livestock, ensuring last-mile delivery of government schemes and accelerating inclusive development in lagging regions.



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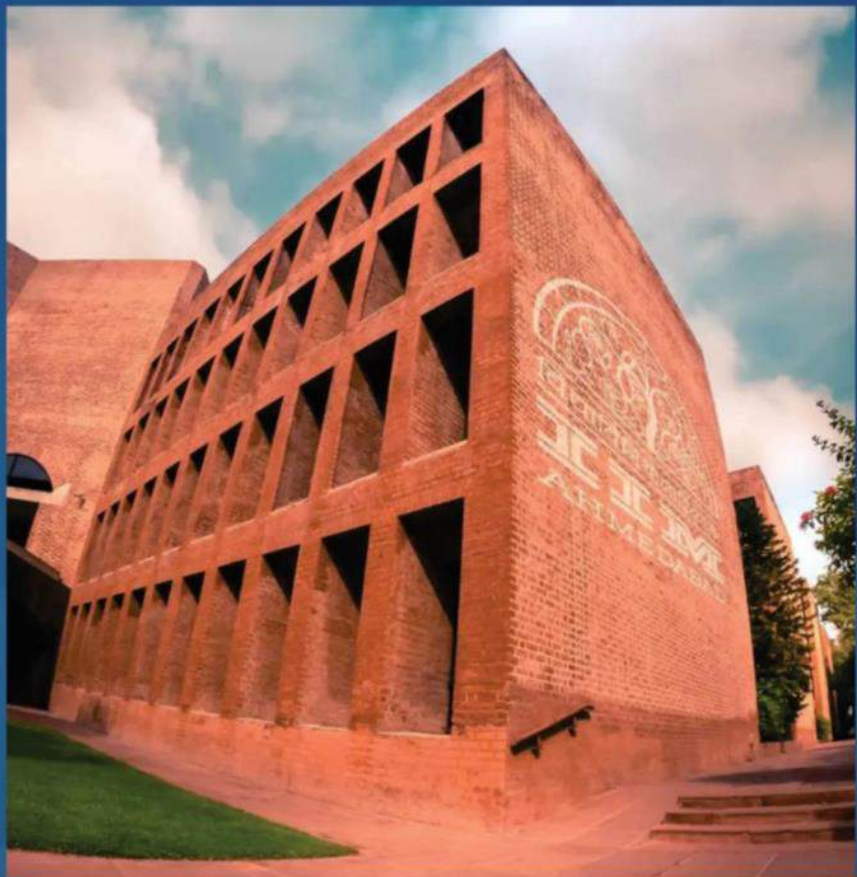
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2. STATE NEWS

37. Narsapuram Lace Craft – GI Revival (Andhra Pradesh)



The Narsapuram Lace Craft of Andhra Pradesh has recently regained national attention after being highlighted by the Prime Minister in *Mann Ki Baat* as a symbol of women-led empowerment and cultural heritage, alongside the grant of a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

It is a traditional handmade crochet lace craft produced using fine threads and a single crochet hook, requiring high precision, patience, and skill. Practised mainly in West Godavari and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema districts, with centres such as Narsapur, Palacole, Razole, and Amalapuram, the craft was introduced in 1844 by European missionaries who trained local women. Despite surviving famines, economic depressions, and social change, it evolved into a globally recognised textile art. Today, it provides livelihoods to thousands of rural women, supports local economies, boosts handicraft exports, and represents the living cultural identity of Andhra Pradesh.

38. Batadrava Than Redevelopment – Assam

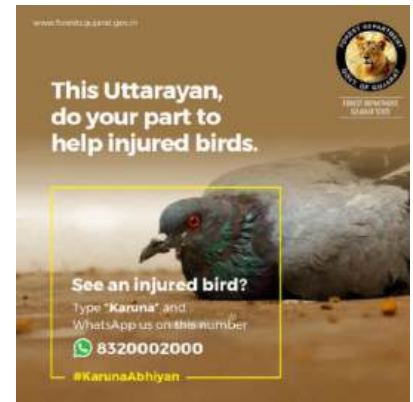
The redeveloped Batadrava Than at Borduwa in Nagaon district, Assam, was inaugurated on 29 December 2025 by Amit Shah. Batadrava Than is the sacred birthplace of Srimanta Sankardeva and a major centre of Assamese Vaishnavite culture, associated with literature, music, dance, and spiritual traditions. The redevelopment project, named *Mahapurush* Srimanta Sankardeva Abhirbhav Kshetra, involves an investment of over ₹222 crore and covers about 162–165 bighas. It aims to transform the site into a world-class spiritual and cultural tourism hub. Key features include a 25-metre-high Guru Asana symbolising Sankardeva, a cultural complex with theatres, research and exhibition centres, performance spaces for Sattriya dance and music, landscaped gardens, modern visitor amenities, and a layout inspired by a sacred tree theme. Sankardeva (1449–1568) was a saint, poet, and social reformer who founded Ekasarana Dharma, promoted equality and ethical living, and contributed immensely to Assamese culture through Sattriya dance, Borgeet, and Ankia Naat.



39. Parvati–Arga Bird Sanctuary Declared Eco-Sensitive Zone – Uttar Pradesh

The Parvati–Arga Bird Sanctuary in Gonda district, Uttar Pradesh, has been declared an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The

sanctuary is a Ramsar Site spread over about 1,084 hectares and serves as an important habitat for migratory birds from Central Asia and Tibet, while supporting rich biodiversity and ecological balance. An ESZ is a regulated buffer area around protected forests and wildlife areas, notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, to minimise human impact, promote sustainable development, and strengthen conservation. ESZs generally extend up to 10 km, though the size can vary. Activities such as mining, large industries, polluting factories, and major construction are restricted, while farming, ecotourism, small local businesses, and roads are permitted under regulation. The declaration aims to balance conservation with responsible livelihoods and ecotourism.



40. PARAM Rudra Supercomputer Launched – IIT Patna, Bihar



The PARAM Rudra supercomputer was launched at Indian Institute of Technology Patna on 26 December 2025 under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM), with the launch presided over by Amitesh Kumar Sinha, Additional Secretary, MeitY. The name combines “PARAM,” meaning supreme, and “Rudra,” a Vedic name of Lord Shiva. Built using indigenous Rudra servers and a domestic software stack, the system strengthens self-reliance in high-performance computing.

It will benefit around 60 faculty members and 400 students across 10 departments and support advanced research in AI and data science, quantum computing, computational fluid mechanics, material science, molecular electronics, astrobiology, astrochemistry, and nano-bio research. The National Supercomputing Mission, launched in 2015, is jointly overseen by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, and implemented by C-DAC. Its objectives include building Indian-made supercomputers, reducing dependence on foreign technology, creating a national supercomputing grid linking universities and research institutions, and training skilled manpower in high-performance computing.

41. Karuna Abhiyan

Karuna Abhiyan is a state-wide wildlife rescue and rehabilitation campaign of Gujarat, reviewed by the Chief Minister of Gujarat during the Uttarayan festival. It was triggered by a sharp rise in bird injuries caused by sharp kite strings (manja), highlighting the state’s proactive approach to festival-linked wildlife protection.

Launched in 2017, the campaign focuses on protecting birds and animals injured during festivals, with special emphasis on the Uttarayan kite-flying season. It operates one of India’s largest coordinated wildlife rescue networks, involving 700+ veterinarians, 8,600+ trained volunteers, and 1,000+ rescue and treatment centres across the state.

42. Kathputli Puppetry



Kathputli is one of Rajasthan's oldest living folk art traditions. Kathputli Nagar in Jaipur, home to around 250 families of traditional puppeteers, has gained attention as a rare surviving cultural settlement where hereditary artists continue to preserve and transmit this unique puppetry tradition across generations.

43. Traditional Indelible Ink

Traditional indelible ink is used during elections to mark voters and prevent repeat voting. It has been in the news recently due to its use in the Maharashtra civic polls, where it was highlighted as a key measure to ensure free, fair, and credible local body elections. First used in 1962 during India's third General Election, the ink was reintroduced by the Maharashtra State Election Commission.

The ink is manufactured exclusively by Mysore Paints and Varnish Limited, and its formula was developed by the National Physical Laboratory. It contains a silver nitrate-based chemical stain that reacts with keratin and light, making it resistant to washing or chemical removal. The mark lasts 3–4 days on skin and 2–4 weeks on nails and is applied on the left index finger (nail and cuticle). Its continued use reinforces electoral integrity and voter confidence, especially in large-scale civic elections like those in Maharashtra.



44. Sammakka–Saralamma Jatara (Telangana Kumbh Mela)



The Sammakka–Saralamma Jatara, also known as Medaram Jatara, is a biennial tribal festival held in the Magha month, with the 2026 edition on 28 January. It takes place at Medaram and is organised by the Koya tribal community. Recognised as one of the world's largest indigenous gatherings, it was declared a State Festival in 1996.

Beliefs, Rituals, and Significance

The Jatara is rooted in kinship-based worship, not temple-centric rituals, reflecting an animist tribal tradition without Vedic or Brahmanical influence. The deities—Sammakka, Saralamma, Pagididda Raju, and Govinda Raju—are revered as symbols of resistance

against Kakatiya rulers. Key rituals include offering “Bangaram” (jaggery) equal to body weight, a sacred dip in Jampanna Vagu, and the ceremonial bringing of deities from Chilakalagutta hill to the gaddes (platforms).

The festival stands as a powerful symbol of Adivasi identity, memory, and resistance, reflecting tribal cosmology and clan-based faith, while increasingly attracting non-tribal participation.

45. Asiatic Wild Dog (Dhole) spotted



The dhole has been camera-trapped for the first time in Ratapani Tiger Reserve, underscoring the reserve’s growing ecological value and the importance of habitat connectivity for conserving wide-ranging carnivores.

The Asiatic Wild Dog, or Dhole (*Cuon alpinus*), is a highly social, pack-hunting wild canid native to South and Southeast Asia. It is popularly known as the “whistling hunter” because pack members communicate using high-pitched whistle-like calls to coordinate hunts. The term “dhole” itself is derived from a word meaning bold or ruthless, reflecting its efficient and relentless hunting strategy.

Dholes prefer dense forests and hilly terrains with a strong prey base and require large, connected landscapes due to wide-ranging pack movements. In India, they are mainly found in central Indian forests and the Western and Eastern Ghats. The species is classified as Endangered (EN) on the IUCN Red List.

46. Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary declared Maoist-free (Odisha)

Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary was declared Maoist-free in January 2026, enabling improved wildlife monitoring, conservation activities, and eco-tourism development. Recent camera-trap surveys recorded over 70 leopards, indicating habitat recovery and a healthy prey base.

Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Nuapada district of western Odisha and was established in 1983. It is a biodiversity hotspot and a proposed Tiger Reserve, adjoining Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuary and Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary, thereby forming an important ecological corridor in Central India. The sanctuary covers about 600 sq km (proposed reserve area ~956 sq km) and features high-altitude plateaus, deep valleys, gorges, and canyons, along with 11 waterfalls.



Ecological Significance

The sanctuary forms the catchment of the Jonk River (a tributary of the Mahanadi) and is the source of the Sunder and Indra rivers. Vegetation is dominated by Dry Deciduous Tropical Forests with species such as Teak, Bija, Sissoo, and Sandalwood. It supports key fauna including Wild Water Buffalo, hard-ground Barasingha, Nilgai, and over 200 bird species, including the Forest Owlet.

47. Agarwood Value Chain Development Scheme in Tripura



A ₹80 crore Agarwood Value Chain Development Scheme was launched in Tripura with the foundation stone laid by a Union Minister, aiming to strengthen the sector from cultivation to global markets. The scheme focuses on farmer support, processing, value addition, branding, and exports, positioning the Northeast as a hub for high-value agarwood

products.

Agarwood (*Aquilaria malaccensis*; family Thymelaeaceae) is a rare, fragrant, resinous wood formed when *Aquilaria* (and *Gyrinops*) trees are infected by fungi or injured, triggering resin production as a defence. The resin-impregnated wood is intensely aromatic and extremely valuable. It is also known as Oud, Gaharu, or Aloeswood.

Uses and Value



Agarwood oil is widely used in luxury perfumes, incense, traditional medicine, and religious rituals. In Ayurveda and Asian medicine, it is used for digestive issues, anxiety, and respiratory ailments. Due to its rarity—only a small fraction of trees produce agarwood naturally—high-grade material can fetch thousands of dollars per kilogram, making it among the most expensive natural raw materials.

Distribution, Conservation, and Trade

Major producing regions include India (Northeast, especially Assam), Southeast Asia, and parts of East Asia. Overharvesting has severely depleted wild stocks; consequently, agarwood-producing species are protected under CITES, with international trade regulated. The Tripura scheme seeks to balance conservation with livelihoods by promoting sustainable cultivation and regulated value chains.

48. Aralam Butterfly Sanctuary (Kerala)



Aralam Butterfly Sanctuary is Kerala's first butterfly sanctuary, officially renamed from Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary during 2025–26 following a recommendation of the State Board for Wildlife, in recognition of its exceptional butterfly diversity. Located in Kannur district on the western slopes of the Western Ghats, the sanctuary borders Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary and adjoins Kottiyoor Wildlife Sanctuary.

Originally constituted in 1984 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the sanctuary is drained by the Cheenkanni River, an important tributary system in the region. Besides rich butterfly fauna, it supports Western Ghats endemics, including the Schedule I Slender Loris. The sanctuary strengthens pollinator conservation, enhances insect-focused protected area management, supports UNESCO Western Ghats biodiversity conservation, and promotes eco-tourism, positioning Kerala as a leader in innovative conservation approaches.

49. Smart Integrated Fishing Harbour at Mayabunder (A&N Islands)



In a major boost to India's maritime and fisheries infrastructure, the Department of Fisheries has sanctioned the development of a Smart and Integrated Fishing Harbour at Mayabunder in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

About Mayabunder

Mayabunder is a town and tehsil and the administrative headquarters of North and Middle

Andaman district. It functions as a key economic, fisheries, and tourism hub in northern Andaman.

- Location: Northern part of Middle Andaman Island
- Connectivity:
 - ~242 km from Port Blair by road (Andaman Trunk Road)
 - ~136 km by sea
- Geophysical setting: Lies in a seismically active zone and within a highly productive marine ecosystem

Important Geographical Features Nearby

- Karmatang Beach: Known as the "Turtle Paradise of Andaman", it is a globally significant nesting site for Olive Ridley and Leatherback turtles, making it an eco-sensitive zone.
- Interview Island: The largest wildlife island in the Andaman group, noted for freshwater springs and limestone caves, rare in island ecosystems.
- Avis (Aves) Island: An uninhabited coral island near Mayabunder, famous for coconut plantations and clear lagoons.

Key Features of the Smart Fishing Harbour

- **Integrated infrastructure:** Designed as a technology-driven fisheries ecosystem, not just a landing site.
- **Fish handling capacity:** Around 9,900 tonnes annually.
- **Vessel capacity:** Safe berthing and landing facilities for 430 fishing vessels.
- **IoT-enabled systems:** Digital traceability and real-time monitoring of fishing activities.
- **Sustainable fisheries management:** Supports action against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

- **Energy efficiency:** Use of green energy solutions and eco-friendly post-harvest handling to reduce losses.

50. Lakkundi Excavation (Karnataka)

Recent excavations at Lakkundi have uncovered Neolithic-era artefacts, pushing the site's history back to prehistoric times. The excavation, supervised by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) at the Kote Veerabhadreshwar Temple complex, has yielded finds such as a stone axe, grey clay pottery fragments, cowrie shells, and a cross-shaped stone pedestal with a Jain Jina carving. These discoveries confirm continuous human occupation from the Neolithic period to the early medieval era.

Located in Gadag district, about 12 km from Gadag town, Lakkundi (historically known as Lokkigundi) flourished between the 10th–13th centuries under the Kalyana Chalukyas and Hoysalas. It is renowned as the “village of a hundred temples and stepwells” and for the Lakkundi school of Chalukyan architecture, reflecting religious pluralism with Hindu temples, Jain basadis, stepwells, and a later Muslim dargah. The new prehistoric evidence strengthens Karnataka's case for UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination, adding deeper antiquity to Lakkundi's already rich cultural heritage.



51. New plant species *Hoya nagaensis* discovered in Nagaland

Researchers from Nagaland University have discovered a new flowering plant species named *Hoya nagaensis* from the Kavinhou Community Reserved Forest in Phek district, located in the Eastern Himalayan biodiversity region. The species belongs to the *Hoya* genus, known for its ornamental, waxy flowers, and shows distinctive leaf and floral morphology, clearly differentiating it from known species.



Hoya nagaensis inhabits a high-altitude temperate forest, a habitat that remains poorly explored scientifically. With an extremely restricted distribution—recorded from only one location—the species has been provisionally assessed as Critically Endangered, due to its narrow range and habitat pressures. The discovery further reinforces the Eastern Himalaya as a global biodiversity hotspot and highlights the importance of community-conserved forests in species conservation.

52. Maharashtra launches India's first Menopause Clinics

A Journey from Menstruation to Menopause



Maharashtra has launched India's first dedicated menopause clinics in government hospitals and urban health facilities, marking a major step in women's health care. The initiative recognises menopause as a natural yet health-sensitive life stage requiring focused and dignified care.

The clinics follow a one-stop care model, offering gynaecological consultation, screening, counselling, and medicines, with a strong

emphasis on mental health support for issues such as anxiety, stress, sleep disorders, and depression. Women are also screened for osteoporosis, cardiovascular risks, and hormonal imbalance.

By integrating physical and psychological care within the public healthcare system, the programme makes services free and accessible, helps mainstream menopause care, and sets a national precedent for gender-responsive, life-course-based healthcare.

3. INTERNATIONAL NEWS

53. Amazonian Stingless Bees Granted Legal Rights – Peru

In a landmark move, municipalities in Peru have passed an ordinance granting legal rights to Amazonian stingless bees, making them the first insects in the world to receive such recognition. Stingless bees are harmless insects that lack functional stingers and are among the oldest bee species, dating back nearly 80 million years. Of the roughly 500 species found worldwide, almost half inhabit the Amazon rainforest, with Peru alone hosting over 170 species. These bees are primary pollinators of tropical rainforests and are responsible for pollinating more than 80 percent of Amazonian plant species, while also supporting global crops such as coffee, cacao, avocados, and blueberries. They hold strong cultural, medicinal, and spiritual importance for Indigenous communities like the Asháninka and Kukama-Kukamiria, and their honey is known for antibacterial and antiviral properties. The legal recognition grants them the right to exist, regenerate natural cycles, live in pollution-free habitats, and receive legal representation when threatened. This decision sets a global precedent, strengthens conservation against deforestation and pollution, and reinforces the Rights of Nature approach by shifting environmental protection from a human-centric to an ecosystem-centric framework.



54. Singapore Changi Airport – Best International Airport 2025

Singapore Changi Airport has been named Best International Airport 2025 under leading global aviation rankings. The award is based on passenger experience, infrastructure quality, operational efficiency, innovation, and service standards. Changi stands out for its integrated transport, retail, and leisure ecosystem, the iconic Jewel complex with nature-inspired architecture, high punctuality, and strong emphasis on passenger comfort and sustainability. The recognition reinforces Changi's position as a global benchmark in civil aviation infrastructure and highlights how modern airports function as major economic and tourism hubs. It also serves as a reference model for India's ongoing airport modernisation and aviation sector reforms.



55. Pax Silica



Pax Silica is a US-led international coalition aimed at building secure and resilient global semiconductor and AI supply chains by reducing over-dependence on China, promoting innovation, and strengthening trusted partnerships across the full value chain—from critical minerals to chips and AI infrastructure.

It is in the news after Sergio Gor announced that India will be invited to join, reflecting India's growing role in global semiconductor and AI ecosystems. The initiative was formally launched at its inaugural summit in Washington, D.C., in December 2025.

The coalition addresses China's dominance of over 60% of lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements, which are vital for semiconductors, AI hardware, and clean energy. Current participants include Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Israel, United Arab Emirates, and Australia, with India proposed as a future member.

56. International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)



The 16th Assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) recently concluded in Abu Dhabi, calling for an accelerated global transition to renewable energy.

IRENA is the world's only intergovernmental organisation exclusively dedicated to renewable energy, serving as a global hub for policy advice, technology cooperation, data and analysis, and investment support in clean energy.

IRENA was founded on 26 January 2009 in Bonn, Germany, with its Statute entering into force on 8 July 2010. Its headquarters is located in Masdar City, Abu Dhabi, UAE. India is a founding member of the organisation.

57. Havana Syndrome

WHAT IS HAVANA SYNDROME?

No definitive cause has been found, but scientific studies have noted many of the acute symptoms are consistent with exposure to directed radio frequency energy

Acute symptoms (often occurring suddenly) **may include:**

- Pain in one or both ears
- Tinnitus, hearing loss
- Intense pressure or vibration inside the head
- Difficulty with memory or concentration
- Nausea
- Visual disturbances
- Unsteady gait, loss of balance, vertigo/dizziness

Chronic symptoms (can last weeks, months or longer) **may include:**

- Headache
- Insomnia
- Depression
- Impaired balance
- Impaired concentration, memory loss



Source: National Academy of Sciences



Havana Syndrome has regained attention after reports that the United States Department of Defense is testing a device emitting pulsed radio-frequency waves, which may explain unexplained illnesses among diplomats, intelligence officials, and military personnel.

What is it? Officially called Anomalous Health Incidents (AHIs), Havana Syndrome refers to unexplained neurological and physical symptoms, first reported in 2016 among US diplomats in Havana, Cuba, and later worldwide.

Symptoms: Severe headaches, dizziness and vertigo, nausea, tinnitus, memory and cognitive problems, balance issues, and visual disturbances; in some cases, resembling mild traumatic brain injury without visible trauma.

Key Features: Cases span Cuba, China, Europe, Russia, and the United States. There is no external injury, complicating diagnosis. US intelligence assesses a foreign attack as unlikely in most cases, though not ruled out; investigations continue.

Implications: Raises concerns about directed-energy or non-traditional weapons, exposes risks to diplomats abroad, complicates US relations with Russia and China, and has led to congressional inquiries, compensation measures, and long-term medical monitoring in the US.

58. Operation Hawkeye



Operation Hawkeye is a US-led counter-terrorism military operation that came into focus after large-scale air and precision strikes against ISIS targets in Syria. It was launched in December 2015 following an ISIS ambush near Palmyra that killed two US soldiers and a civilian interpreter. The operation aims to degrade residual ISIS capabilities and prevent its resurgence and is

executed by United States Central Command under the United States.

59. Doomsday Glacier (Thwaites Glacier)

The Thwaites Glacier, known as the “Doomsday Glacier”, is a major outlet glacier of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, draining into the Amundsen Sea. Recent studies show rapid fracture growth, with annual fracture length increasing from ~165 km (2002) to ~335 km (2022).

Roughly UK-sized, its complete collapse could raise global sea levels by ~65 cm. The weakening of its Eastern Ice Shelf (TEIS) threatens long-term ice-sheet stability.



60. Gaza Peace Board (Proposed)

The Gaza Peace Board is a proposed US-led international mechanism aimed at managing post-war reconstruction and stabilisation in Gaza following the Israel– Hamas conflict. The proposal has been put forward by Donald Trump and notably operates outside the UN framework, signalling an alternative governance and coordination model.



Composition and Role

India has received an invitation to join the initiative, along with around 60 invited countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Türkiye, and Canada. The proposed board would coordinate reconstruction efforts, mobilise international investment, and support the restoration of public services and economic revival in Gaza.

Objective and Significance

The primary objective of the board is to stabilise Gaza in the post-conflict phase by ensuring structured reconstruction and economic recovery. Its proposed structure reflects a US-driven, multilateral but non-UN approach to conflict recovery and regional stability.

61. Sunita Williams Announces Retirement from NASA



Sunita Williams has announced her retirement from NASA, concluding a distinguished career as one of the most experienced astronauts of Indian origin. During her service, she undertook multiple long-duration missions aboard the International Space Station (ISS) and is among the astronauts

with the highest cumulative spacewalk time by a woman.

Her career is noted for significant contributions to human spaceflight, space station operations, and scientific research in microgravity, inspiring millions globally, particularly in India, to pursue careers in space science and exploration.

62. Spain joins Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)

Spain has joined the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), a non-treaty, voluntary cooperation framework aimed at promoting a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific. The initiative views the Indo-Pacific as an interconnected maritime space linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans, a region that hosts over 50% of the world's population and nearly two-thirds of the global economy.



The IPOI was launched by India at the East Asia Summit in 2019 (Bangkok) and builds on India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision announced in 2015. It is structured around seven pillars, including maritime security, maritime ecology, disaster risk reduction, capacity building, and resource sharing. Spain's participation reflects growing European engagement in the Indo-Pacific and strengthens multilateral cooperation for maritime stability, sustainability, and governance.

63. Graça Machel wins Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace 2026

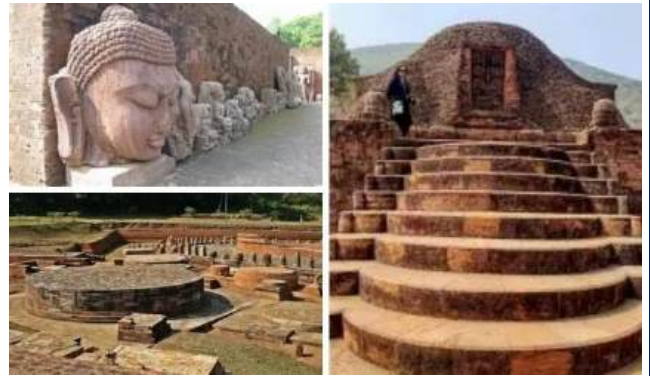
Graça Machel has been selected for the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, 2026. She is a globally respected humanitarian and women's rights advocate, and has served as First Lady of both Mozambique and South Africa, making her a prominent voice in peacebuilding and social justice.

Instituted in 1985 by the Government of India, the prize is an international annual award recognising outstanding contributions to peace, nuclear disarmament, equitable development, and human welfare. It is administered by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust, New Delhi, and reflects Indira Gandhi's global vision of international peace and social justice. The award is open to individuals or organisations worldwide, and recipients are selected by an international jury of 5–9 members through consensus, with the decision being final.



64. Buddhist Diamond Triangle Joins UNESCO Tentative List

The Buddhist Diamond Triangle of Odisha—comprising Lalitgiri, Udayagiri, and Ratnagiri—has been included in India's Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Located in Jajpur district, the serial nomination highlights Odisha as a major cradle of Buddhist learning and practice from the 2nd century BCE to the 13th century CE.



The three sites together reflect the evolution of Buddhism—from Hinayana (Theravada) at Lalitgiri, to Mahayana prominence at Udayagiri, and the rise of Vajrayana (Tantric Buddhism) at Ratnagiri. Archaeological remains include stupas, viharas, monasteries, inscriptions, relic caskets, and rich Tantric iconography, underscoring their outstanding universal value. Inclusion in the Tentative List is a key step toward full UNESCO World Heritage inscription, enhancing heritage conservation, global recognition, and cultural tourism in Odisha.

65. Bactrian Camels in Republic Day Parade

The Bactrian camel (*Camelus bactrianus*), a double-humped camel native to Ladakh, came into national focus after participating for the first time in India's Republic Day Parade, marching along Kartavya Path. The camels—locally known as Mundri camels—were named Galwan and Nubra, symbolising Ladakh's unique high-altitude heritage.

Historically linked to the Silk Route, Bactrian camels connected India with Mongolia and China for over 6,000 years. They are exceptionally adapted to extreme conditions: capable of carrying up to 150 kg, travelling 10–12 km at altitudes of 14,000–15,000 feet, and traversing rocky, snowy terrain. Their two humps store fat (not water), serving as an energy reserve. Research by the Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR) confirms their operational suitability in harsh Himalayan environments.



4. BOOKS AND AUTHORS

66. New Edition of Book 'History That India Ignored'

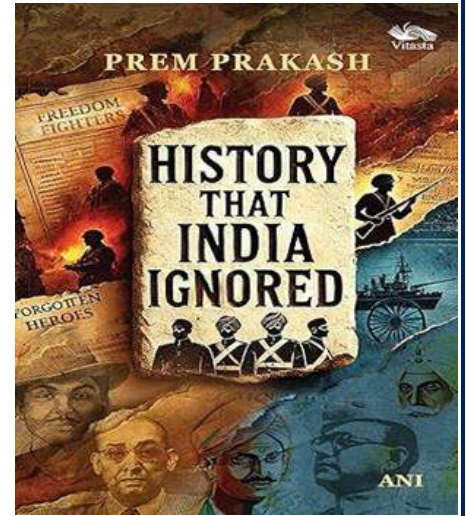
In January 2026, Goa Chief Minister (CM) Pramod Sawant launched the second edition of the book titled 'History That India Ignored', authored by Prem Prakash, a veteran journalist and the Chairman of Asian News International (ANI), in Panaji, Goa.

The book was first published in April 2025 by Vitasta Publishing Private Limited.

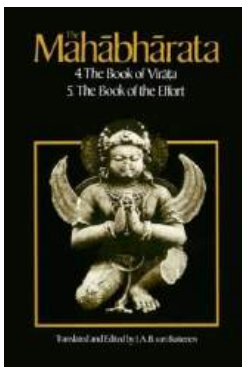
The book revisits India's freedom struggle from lesser-known angles. It highlights unsung heroes, revolutionary movements, the Indian National Army (INA), and overlooked uprisings like the Vellore Mutiny (1806) and the Battle of Imphal.

The book challenges mainstream narratives, showing that independence was shaped not just by popular non-violent movements but also by revolutionary resistance and marginalized contributors.

Significance: Reinforces the responsibility to preserve and teach overlooked historical events to students and history enthusiasts.



67. Mahamana Vangmay



The final (second) series of Mahamana Vangmay was released in New Delhi by the Vice President of India, C. P. Radhakrishnan. The first series had been released earlier in 2023 by the Prime Minister. Mahamana Vangmay is a comprehensive compilation of the writings of Madan Mohan Malaviya, one of India's foremost national leaders,

educationists, and social reformers. The collection spans 12 volumes and around 3,500 pages, and is published by the Mahamana Malaviya Mission in association with the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. It includes Malaviya's speeches, essays, letters, and editorial writings, covering themes such as education and nation-building, nationalism and the freedom struggle, ethics, social reform, and Indian cultural values. The work preserves Malaviya's intellectual legacy and serves as a valuable primary source for understanding constitutional thought, educational reform in colonial India, and the ethical foundations of Indian nationalism. Madan Mohan Malaviya, born in 1861 in Prayagraj, was the founder of Banaras Hindu University and a Bharat Ratna awardee (posthumously, 2015).

68. Book on Life of Droupadi Murmu Released in Visakhapatnam, AP

In January 2026, The Telugu book ‘Agni Sarassulo Vikasinchina Kamalam Droupadi Murmu’ (Lotus Blooming in the Fire of Coals), chronicling President Droupadi Murmu’s life from tribal roots to Rashtrapati Bhavan, was released at Andhra University in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh (AP).



Authored by former Member of Parliament (MP) Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad (Vishwa Hindi Parishad President), it was unveiled by a sanitation worker, symbolizing empowerment from humble origins.

The book was unveiled by Lakshamma, a woman sanitation worker who cleans the road at Andhra University, embodying Murmu’s empowerment narrative for marginalized communities.

69. Tirukkural



Tirukkural, authored by the revered Tamil poet–philosopher Thiruvalluvar, is one of the most important and influential works of classical Tamil literature. The text consists of 1,330 concise couplets (kurals), systematically organised into three broad sections—Aram (virtue and ethics), Porul (wealth, statecraft, and social life), and Inbam (love and human relationships). Through its brevity and depth, the Tirukkural offers practical guidance on moral conduct, good governance, justice, family life, and personal discipline.

Why in news: The Tirukkural was recently highlighted on Thiruvalluvar Day, leading to renewed public and academic attention on its ethical teachings and governance principles. Discussions and commemorations emphasised its relevance in addressing contemporary social challenges, such as integrity in public life, compassion, equality, and responsible leadership.

Universally admired for its timeless wisdom, secular outlook, and humanistic values, the Tirukkural transcends religious and cultural boundaries. It has been translated into numerous languages and is frequently compared with global ethical classics, earning its place as one of the greatest works of world literature. Even today, it continues to inspire policymakers, scholars, and citizens alike, reaffirming its enduring significance in modern society.

5. BANKING / ECONOMY

70. Copper Price Surge and Strategic Importance



Context

Copper prices crossed USD 12,000 per tonne in 2025, reaching record highs.

The surge is driven by global supply disruptions, US tariff uncertainty, and strong demand from AI infrastructure, clean energy, and electric vehicles.

What is Copper

Copper is a naturally occurring metal with the symbol Cu and atomic number 29. It is one of the best conductors of electricity and heat.

It is a foundational metal for modern industry, digital systems, and the green transition.

Key Properties

- Copper is highly conductive, ductile, and malleable.
- It resists corrosion and oxidation.
- It forms critical alloys such as brass and bronze.

Major Applications

Copper is essential for power grids, transformers, renewable energy, and battery storage. Electric vehicles use about twice as much copper as conventional vehicles.

AI data centres and digital infrastructure depend heavily on copper for wiring and cooling. It is widely used in construction, electronics, defence systems, and healthcare equipment.

Strategic Importance for India

India has recognised copper as a critical mineral.

The country depends on over 90% imported copper concentrate, creating supply vulnerability.

Securing copper is vital for India's energy transition, EV expansion, and digital growth.

Global Supply Concentration

Major copper producers include Chile, Peru, Democratic Republic of the Congo, China, and the United States.

71. Trade Watch Quarterly (5th Edition)

The NITI Aayog released the 5th edition of the Trade Watch Quarterly, a data-driven assessment of India's trade performance. This edition places special emphasis on the automobile sector.

Key findings include India's auto exports at USD 16.9 billion, accounting for around 1% of global auto imports, highlighting both progress and untapped potential. The report also notes that India's trade deficit in Q1 FY26 stood at USD 21 billion, underlining the need for export diversification and competitiveness.



72. HDFC Bank Integrates Digital Rupee

HDFC Bank has integrated the Digital Rupee (e₹) into its SmartGateway platform, enabling merchants to accept payments using India's official Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). The Digital Rupee, issued by the Reserve Bank of India, is the digital equivalent of physical cash, holding the same value as paper currency but existing electronically. This integration moves CBDC usage beyond pilots into real-world commercial transactions, strengthening India's digital payments ecosystem.



73. Moody's on India's Economy



Moody's projected India's real GDP growth at 7.3% for FY 2025–26., reflecting a positive outlook and rising demand across sectors such as insurance. As a global benchmark in credit ratings, Moody's combines quantitative financial ratios with qualitative risk analysis to guide investment, lending, and policy decisions for governments, banks, and corporations worldwide.

Background and Role

Founded in 1909 by John Moody, Moody's began with municipal bond ratings and later expanded to corporate bonds, structured finance, and sovereign ratings. Headquartered in New York City, Moody's provides credit ratings, research, risk analytics, and data solutions, with a strong global presence, including offices in India (Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad) through Moody's Analytics.

Rating Implications

A higher credit rating signals lower risk and reduced borrowing costs, while a lower rating indicates higher risk and potentially higher returns, influencing capital flows and financing costs for economies like India.

74. Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) – PLI Scheme



The Advanced Chemistry Cell–Production Linked Incentive (ACC-PLI) Scheme aims to promote domestic manufacturing of advanced battery cells in India. Announced in October 2021, it is implemented by the Ministry of Heavy Industries. The scheme targets the creation of 50 GWh battery manufacturing capacity to support electric vehicles (EVs) and grid-scale energy storage, while reducing import

dependence, especially on China.

With a total financial outlay of ₹18,100 crore, the ACC-PLI is one of India's largest manufacturing incentive schemes. Key beneficiaries include Ola Electric, Reliance New Energy, and Rajesh Exports, while Hyundai Global later exited the scheme.

Current status (2026): Implementation has been slow, with only about 1.4 GWh capacity commissioned against the 50 GWh target, raising concerns over execution challenges, timelines, and India's battery supply chain readiness.

75. PLI Scheme for White Goods

The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for White Goods supports domestic manufacturing of Air Conditioners and LED lights through output-based incentives. It was launched in FY 2021–22 and will remain operational till FY 2028–29. The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and monitored by the Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS).

The scheme focuses on building deep manufacturing capabilities by incentivising high-value components. For ACs, it targets compressors, copper tubes, aluminium foils, and key electronic parts. For LEDs, it covers core components such as chip packaging, ICs, drivers, and modules. Only greenfield and brownfield investments are eligible, ensuring real asset creation, reduced import dependence, and a stronger domestic value chain in white goods manufacturing.



76. State of Finance for Nature (SFN) 2026

The State of Finance for Nature (SFN) 2026 is a flagship report released by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) that tracks global financial flows affecting nature. The report highlights a stark imbalance: nature-negative finance stands at about US\$7.3 trillion annually, while nature-positive investments are only around US\$220 billion. To meet the

targets of the Rio Conventions, annual investment in Nature-based Solutions (NbS) must increase 2.5 times to about US\$571 billion by 2030.

Key Concepts Highlighted

•Debt-for-Nature Swaps

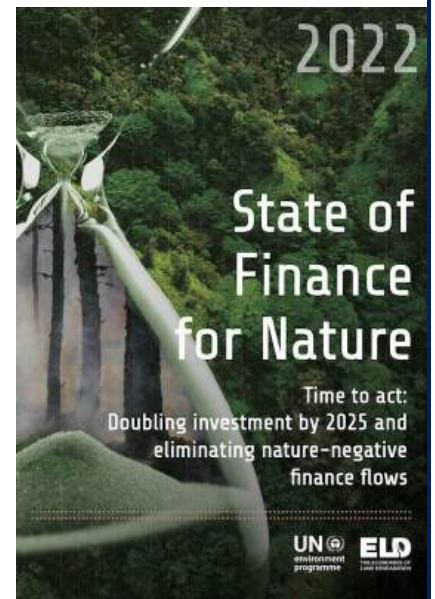
A debt-relief mechanism where a portion of a country's external debt is cancelled or restructured in exchange for commitments to invest in environmental protection. The savings are redirected to forests, oceans, wildlife conservation, and climate projects, and are commonly used by developing or debt-stressed countries.

•Biodiversity Bonds

A form of green/impact bond through which investors provide capital specifically for biodiversity conservation, supporting projects that protect ecosystems while offering financial returns linked to conservation outcomes.

•TNFD Adoption

Adoption of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) means companies and financial institutions report their dependencies and impacts on nature, improving transparency, risk management, and alignment of finance with nature-positive outcomes.



77. Narayan Ramachandran Committee



The Strategic Asset Allocation and Risk Governance (SAARG) Committee has been constituted by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA). It is chaired by Narayan Ramachandran, Country Head & CEO of Morgan Stanley India.

The committee will review and modernise the investment guidelines of the National Pension System (NPS) across government and non-government sectors. Its core objective is to align NPS investment architecture with global pension best practices, strengthen risk governance, and adapt portfolios to India's evolving capital markets to enhance long-term returns and resilience.

78. India–European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

India and the European Union have concluded a landmark Free Trade Agreement (FTA)—the largest such deal ever for either side—strengthening economic and political ties between the world's second- and fourth-largest economies.

Key Features of the India–EU FTA

•Strategic Market Access:



India gains preferential access in ~97% of EU tariff lines, covering 99.5% of trade value.

• **Boost to Labour-Intensive Sectors:**

Immediate zero-duty access for textiles, leather, gems & jewellery, among others.

• **Safeguards for Sensitive Sectors:**

Dairy, cereals, poultry, soymeal, and select fruits & vegetables protected via phased liberalisation.

• **Product-Specific Rules & MSME Flexibilities:**

Self-certification (Statement on Origin), quotas, and transition periods to support MSMEs.

• **Addressing Non-Tariff Barriers:**

Enhanced regulatory cooperation, customs facilitation, and streamlined SPS and TBT disciplines.

• **Services Trade Liberalisation:**

Stable access in 144 EU service sub-sectors, including IT, education, R&D, and professional services.

• **Ease of Mobility:**

Facilitates movement of corporate employees, business persons, and independent professionals.

Other Key Outcomes of the India–EU Summit

• **Joint India–EU Comprehensive Strategic Agenda (Towards 2030):**

Focus on prosperity & sustainability, technology & innovation, security & defence, connectivity, and global issues.

• **Security & Defence:**

Launch of negotiations for an India–EU Security of Information Agreement to enable sharing of classified information.

• **Emerging & Critical Technologies:**

Creation of EU–India Innovation Hubs and launch of an EU–India Startup Partnership.

• **Clean Energy & Climate:**

Formation of a Green Hydrogen Task Force under the EU–India Clean Energy and Climate Partnership.

• **Science & Technology Cooperation:**

Renewal of the India–EU S&T Agreement (2025–2030) and initiation of talks on India’s association with Horizon Europe.

Significance

The FTA is a transformational trade pact that deepens market access, boosts manufacturing and services, strengthens strategic cooperation, and anchors a long-term India–EU partnership amid shifting global economic and geopolitical dynamics.

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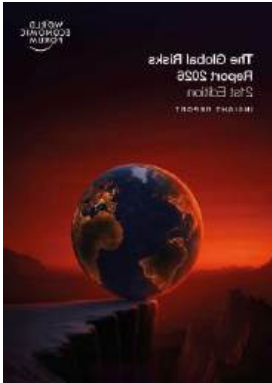


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6. SUMMIT, RANKS AND REPORTS

79. WEF Global Risks Report 2026



The World Economic Forum released the Global Risks Report 2026 (21st edition) in January 2026, based on the Global Risks Perception Survey (GRPS) and Executive Opinion Survey (EOS). The report identifies geoeconomic confrontation as the top global risk in 2026, followed by state-based armed conflict and extreme weather events, marking a shift from purely environmental risks to geopolitical and societal threats. In the long term (up to 2035), extreme weather remains the most severe risk. For India, key risks include cyber insecurity, income and wealth inequality, and weak public services and social protection.

80. Numbeo Safety Index 2026

The Numbeo Safety Index 2026, released in January 2026 by Numbeo, ranks Qingdao (China), Abu Dhabi, and Doha as the top three safest cities globally. Mangaluru is the safest city in India (Rank 46), followed by Ahmedabad and Jaipur. Among countries, the UAE, Qatar, and Andorra top the safety rankings. The index is based on user-generated perception data, reflecting public views on safety and crime.

81. ILO World Employment & Social Outlook / Employment & Social Trends 2026

The International Labour Organization released the World Employment & Social Outlook 2026, highlighting persistent stress in global labour markets. Global unemployment stood at 4.9% in 2025, with about 186 million people projected to be unemployed in 2026. A major concern is the jobs gap, where 408 million people want paid work but lack access. Employment quality has stalled, with working poverty rising to 7.9% (284 million workers), and informality affecting over 2.1 billion workers. Structural transformation has slowed, wage growth remains weak, and risks from AI, trade uncertainty, and inequality are increasing.

India-Specific Findings

For India, the report notes a strong growth outlook, placing it among the fastest-growing economies in the Asia-Pacific. While renewable energy jobs are expanding rapidly, India's share in global manufacturing remains low (around 3%), and a green skills gap persists as demand outpaces supply. These trends underline the need for skill development and quality job creation to convert growth into inclusive employment.

About the ILO

Founded in 1919 and a UN specialised agency since 1946, the ILO follows a tripartite structure involving governments, employers, and workers. Headquartered in Geneva, it has 187 member states and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969. Its flagship reports

include Employment & Social Trends, Global Wage Report, and World Social Protection Report.

82. India Ranked 16th in Responsible Nations Index 2026

In the Responsible Nations Index 2026, India ranks 16th globally, emerging as the top-ranked Asian country. Launched by the World Intellectual Foundation (WIF) with academic support from Jawaharlal Nehru University and methodology validated by IIM Mumbai, the index evaluates nations across internal, environmental, and external responsibility. It reflects a shift from power and GDP-centric assessments to ethics, sustainability, and global cooperation, aligning with the SDGs and positioning India as a responsible global actor.



83. IICDEM 2026 and Delhi Declaration 2026



The Election Commission of India concluded the International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM) 2026 in New Delhi, where over 40 Election Management Bodies (EMBs) unanimously adopted the Delhi Declaration 2026.

The Delhi Declaration 2026 is a consensus-based global framework aimed at strengthening democratic processes through cooperation, innovation, and accountability. It follows a five-pillar architecture spanning the entire electoral cycle—from voter registration to capacity building. The Declaration also ensures institutional follow-through, with periodic reviews and a follow-up meeting scheduled for 3–5 December 2026 in New Delhi, lending it sustained global legitimacy and impact.

84. Wings India 2026



Wings India is a biennial global civil aviation exhibition and conference, recognised as Asia's largest platform for civil aviation. It is organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, with Hyderabad as its permanent venue. The 2026 edition is being held from 28–31 January 2026 at Begumpet Airport, highlighting India's growing stature as a global aviation hub.

The event traces its origins to India Aviation (2008), which was later rebranded as Wings India. The inaugural 2008 edition was historic for hosting the first-ever landing of the Airbus A380 in India. Over time, Wings India has evolved into a comprehensive forum covering the entire aviation ecosystem.

The theme for 2026, "Indian Aviation: Paving the Future", spans aircraft design and manufacturing, MRO, innovation, safety, and sustainability. The event features 30+ static and flying aircraft displays, over 500 B2B and B2G meetings, CEO roundtables, and investor sessions, bringing together airlines, airports, OEMs, MROs, lessors, startups, regulators, and training institutions.

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7. AGREEMENTS / MOU

85. India–UAE High-Level Visit (January 2026)

A high-level visit between India and the United Arab Emirates took place on 19 January 2026. The UAE President, Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, visited India at the invitation of Narendra Modi. This was his third visit as President and fifth overall, with a focus on strengthening the India–UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.



Key Outcomes of the India–UAE High-Level Visit

•Dholera Special Investment Region (Gujarat):

An LoI was signed to support industrial development, infrastructure creation, and manufacturing investment in Dholera, positioning it as a major smart and industrial hub.

•Space Cooperation (IN-SPACE–UAE Space Agency):

Cooperation focuses on space infrastructure, satellite services, research, and startup collaboration, expanding commercial and strategic space engagement.

•Strategic Defence Partnership:

The two countries agreed to deepen defence ties through joint production, technology sharing, training, and enhanced security cooperation.

•HPCL–ADNOC LNG Deal:

A long-term agreement for 0.5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) LNG for 10 years from 2028, strengthening India's energy security.

•CEPA Expansion:

Both sides discussed expanding the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to achieve a USD 200 billion bilateral trade target by 2032.

•Supercomputing Cooperation (C-DAC–G42):

Collaboration in high-performance computing and AI to support advanced research, innovation, and digital transformation.

•Nuclear Energy Cooperation:

Joint work in Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and large nuclear reactors for clean, reliable, and sustainable energy.

•GIFT City Operations:

UAE entities will expand financial and business operations from GIFT City, reinforcing India's position as an international financial services hub.

86. Japan Foreign Minister's Visit to India (January 2026)

Japan's Foreign Minister, Toshimitsu Motegi, visited India from 15–17 January 2026 to deepen bilateral ties. During the visit, the 18th India–Japan Strategic Dialogue was held, and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) support for Indian infrastructure projects was reaffirmed.



The visit led to the launch of an FM-level AI Dialogue, the creation of a Joint Working Group on Critical Minerals, and the initiation of a private-sector economic security dialogue. These steps further strengthened the India–Japan Strategic Partnership, especially in areas of technology, supply chains, and economic security.

UNION PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION					
PROGRAMME OF EXAMINATIONS/RECRUITMENT TESTS (RTs) -2026					
Sl No.	Name of Examination	Date of Notification	Last Date for receipt of Applications	Date of commencement of Exam	Duration of Exam
1.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			10.01.2026 (Saturday)	2 Days
2.	Reserved for UPSC Examination			17.01.2026 (Saturday)	2 Days
3.	Combined Geo-Scientist (Preliminary) Examination, 2026	03.09.2025	23.09.2025	08.02.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
4.	Engineering Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2026	17.09.2025	07.10.2025	08.02.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
5.	CBI (DSP) LDCE	24.12.2025	13.01.2026	28.02.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAY
6.	CISF AC(EXE) LDCE-2026	03.12.2025	23.12.2025	08.03.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
7.	N.D.A. & N.A. Examination (I), 2026	10.12.2025	30.12.2025	12.04.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
8.	C.D.S. Examination (I), 2026				
9.	Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2026	14.01.2026	03.02.2026	24.05.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
10.	Indian Forest Service (Preliminary) Examination, 2026 through CS(P) Examination 2026				
11.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			06.06.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
12.	I.E.S./I.S.S. Examination, 2026	11.02.2026	03.03.2026	19.06.2026 (Friday)	3 DAYS
13.	Combined Geo-Scientist (Main) Examination, 2026			20.06.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
14.	Engineering Services (Main) Examination, 2026			21.06.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
15.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			04.07.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
16.	Central Armed Police Forces (ACs) Examination, 2026	18.02.2026	10.03.2026	19.07.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
17.	Combined Medical Services Examination, 2026	11.03.2026	31.03.2026	02.08.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
18.	Reserved for UPSC Examination			08.08.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
19.	Civil Services (Main) Examination, 2026			21.08.2026 (Friday)	5 DAYS
20.	N.D.A. & N.A. Examination (II), 2026	20.05.2026	09.06.2026	13.09.2026 (Sunday)	1 DAY
21.	C.D.S. Examination (II), 2026				
22.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			26.09.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
23.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			10.10.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
24.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			31.10.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
25.	Indian Forest Service (Main) Examination, 2026			22.11.2026 (Sunday)	7 DAYS
26.	S.O./Steno (GD-B/GD-I) LDCE	16.09.2026	06.10.2026	12.12.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS
27.	Reserved for UPSC RT/ Examination			19.12.2026 (Saturday)	2 DAYS

Note: The dates of notification, commencement and duration of Examinations/ RTs are liable to alteration, if the circumstances so warrant.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF EXAMINATIONS FOR THE YEAR 2026-2027

S.No.	Name of Examination	Tier/Phase	Date of Advertisement	Closing Date	Month of Exam
1.	JSA / LDC Grade Limited Departmental Competitive Examination, 2025 (for DoPT only)	Paper-I (CBE)*	16 March 2026	07 April 2026	May 2026
2.	SSA / UDC Grade Limited Departmental Competitive Examination, 2025 (for DoPT only)	Paper-I (CBE)*	16 March 2026	07 April 2026	May 2026
3.	ASO Grade Limited Departmental Competitive Examination, 2025	Paper-I (CBE)*	16 March 2026	07 April 2026	May 2026
4.	Combined Graduate Level Examination, 2026	Tier-I (CBE)*	March 2026	April 2026	May – June 2026
5.	Junior Engineer (Civil, Mechanical & Electrical) Examination, 2026	Paper-I (CBE)*	March 2026	April 2026	May – June 2026
6.	Selection Post Examination, Phase-XIV, 2026	CBE*	March 2026	April 2026	May – July 2026
7.	Combined Higher Secondary (10+2) Level Examination, 2026	Tier-I (CBE)*	April 2026	May 2026	July – September 2026
8.	Stenographer Grade 'C' & 'D' Examination, 2026	CBE*	April 2026	May 2026	August – September 2026
9.	Combined Hindi Translators Examination, 2026	Paper-I (CBE)*	April 2026	May 2026	August – September 2026
10.	Multi-Tasking (Non-Technical) Staff & Havaladar (CBIC & CBN) Examination, 2026	CBE*	June 2026	July 2026	September – November 2026
11.	Sub-Inspector in Delhi Police & Central Armed Police Forces Examination, 2026	Paper-I (CBE)*	May 2026	June 2026	October – November 2026
12.	Constables (GD) in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), NIA, SSF and Rifleman (GD) in Assam Rifles Examination, 2027	CBE*	September 2026	October 2026	January – March 2027

8. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS

87. Praveen Vaishitha Appointed Vigilance Commissioner



Praveen Vaishitha has been appointed as a Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission. The appointment strengthens the Commission's role in preventing corruption and promoting integrity in public administration through vigilance oversight across central government bodies.

88. ICICI Bank Re-appointed Sandeep Bakshi as MD & CEO till 2028

In January 2026, ICICI Bank Limited re-appointed Sandeep Bakshi as Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for another two years, with effect from October 04, 2026 to October 03, 2028.

•His reappointment is subject to further approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), stakeholders, and such other approvals as may be required.

Bakshi was appointed as the MD and CEO of the bank for the 1st time in October 2018 and later, his term was extended until October 2026.



89. ACC Appoints New Directors General of NIA, BSF & ITBP



In January 2026, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), headed by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, approved the proposal of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for the appointments of Rakesh Aggarwal as Director General (DG) of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), Praveen Kumar as DG of the Border Security Force (BSF), and Shatrueet Singh Kapoor as DG of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

90. India's Olympic Medallist Vijender Singh Appointed as Member of ABCO

In January 2026, the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) announced the appointment of India's Olympic Medallist and professional boxer Vijender Singh as a member of the Asian Boxing Council (ABCO).

About Vijender Singh: Olympic Medal:

He scripted history by winning India's 1st Olympic Medal in Boxing (Bronze medal) at the 2008 Olympic Games held in Beijing, China.

Asian Games: He also won a bronze medal at the 2006 Asian Games held in Doha, Qatar and a gold medal at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China.



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9. DEFENCE NEWS

91. Pralay Missile – Salvo Launch User Trials



The Defence Research and Development Organisation successfully conducted salvo launch user evaluation trials of the Pralay missile off the Odisha coast. In a salvo launch, multiple missiles are fired in quick succession or simultaneously to overwhelm enemy defences; in this trial, two missiles were launched rapidly from the same launcher. Pralay is an indigenously developed solid-propellant, quasi-ballistic surface-to-surface missile designed for the Indian Army and Indian Air Force. With a range of about 150–500 km, it follows an unpredictable manoeuvrable trajectory that complicates interception. Its solid fuel enables quick launch readiness, while advanced guidance allows high-precision conventional strikes. The successful trials validate combat readiness, strengthen conventional deterrence without nuclear escalation, and reinforce the Atmanirbhar Bharat missile ecosystem.

92. Pinaka LRGR-120 – Maiden Flight Test

DRDO conducted the maiden flight test of the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket (LRGR-120) at the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur (Odisha). LRGR-120 is a precision-guided rocket of the Pinaka Multiple Launch Rocket System, developed by DRDO laboratories ARDE and HEMRL. It has a range of up to 120 km and uses GPS/INS guidance, enabling in-flight course correction and much higher accuracy than conventional rockets. It can be fired from existing Pinaka launchers, is fully indigenous, and costs less than tactical missiles. The system enhances the Army's deep-strike artillery capability while reducing collateral damage and avoiding new infrastructure requirements.



93. MoPSW Shipbuilding Sector Boost Schemes

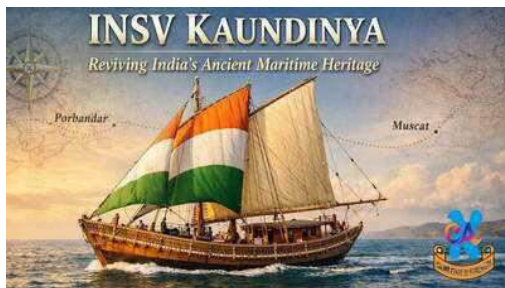
The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways notified two major shipbuilding schemes with a combined outlay of about ₹44,700 crore, valid till 2036 and extendable to 2047. The Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Scheme (SBFAS) provides 15–25% financial support per vessel and includes a Shipbreaking Credit Note offering 40% scrap value credit. The Shipbuilding Development Scheme (SbDS) focuses on greenfield shipbuilding clusters, shipyard modernisation, and the Indian Ship Technology Centre at IMU. Together, these schemes aim to revive domestic shipbuilding, cut import dependence, and strengthen maritime security and the blue economy.

94. Dhruv-NG Civil Helicopter – First Flight

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited conducted the inauguration and first flight of the Dhruv-NG civil helicopter at Bengaluru. Dhruv-NG is the civil variant of the Advanced Light Helicopter, powered by twin Shakti 1H1C engines, with a maximum take-off weight of 5,500 kg and capacity for up to 14 passengers. It is designed for roles such as VIP transport, air ambulance, tourism, offshore operations, disaster relief, and search and rescue. The platform provides an indigenous alternative to imported civil helicopters and strengthens India's civil aviation self-reliance and aerospace manufacturing ecosystem.



95. INSV Kaundinya – Maiden Voyage



The Indian Navy's INSV Kaundinya completed its maiden voyage from Porbandar to Muscat (Oman). The Indian Naval Sailing Vessel is a recreation of a 5th-century CE ship depicted in Ajanta cave paintings and is

built using the ancient stitched-plank ship technique, where wooden planks are sewn together with coir rope instead of iron nails. This produces a flexible, seaworthy hull suitable for rough seas. The voyage revives India's ancient maritime heritage, highlights historical Indian Ocean trade links, and strengthens cultural diplomacy and naval heritage awareness.

96. MPATGM – Successful Flight Test I



India successfully tested the Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM), a third-generation, indigenous ATGM, strengthening anti-armour capability and advancing Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence.

The test was conducted on 11 January at KK Ranges, Ahilya Nagar, Maharashtra, by the Defence Research and Development Organisation under the Ministry of Defence. The

missile accurately hit a moving armoured target, successfully demonstrating its top-attack capability.

MPATGM features fire-and-forget technology with an Imaging Infrared (IIR) seeker, ensuring precision strikes in day and night conditions. It can be tripod-launched or vehicle-mounted, offering operational flexibility.

The missile was developed by multiple DRDO laboratories, with the Thermal Target System provided by Defence Laboratory, Jodhpur, reflecting strong indigenous collaboration.

97. Indian Army Drone Warfare Force 'Bhairav'



Parade 2026.

The Indian Army has created a specialised drone warfare force named 'Bhairav', reflecting a shift towards technology-driven modern warfare.

Key features include over one lakh trained drone operators, 15 battalions already raised (with a target of 25), and its role as a bridge between Infantry and Para Special Forces. The force made its first public appearance at the Army Day

98. IAF Marks 25 Years of Tejas First Flight

The Indian Air Force commemorated 25 years of the maiden flight of Tejas, India's indigenous Light Combat Aircraft.

- First flight: 4 January 2001
- Pilot: Wing Commander Rajiv Kothiyal
- LCA programme launched: 1983
- 97 additional Mk-1A aircraft ordered in 2025

The milestone reflects India's long-term progress in aerospace self-reliance.



99. Suryastra Rocket System



The Indian Army signed a ₹293 crore emergency procurement contract with NIBE Ltd for the Suryastra long-range rocket launcher.

About Suryastra

Suryastra is India's first Made-in-India, multi-calibre, long-range rocket launcher system, developed by Pune-based NIBE Limited in

collaboration with Elbit Systems. It is based on Elbit's PULS (Precise & Universal Launching System) architecture and represents India's first domestically produced high-precision rocket launcher with a 300 km strike capability.

The system is designed for precision surface-to-surface strikes, offering engagement ranges of up to 150 km and 300 km. Trials have demonstrated very high accuracy. In addition, Suryastra can also launch loitering munitions up to 100 km, significantly expanding its operational envelope.

Key Capabilities

- **Multi-Calibre Capability:** A single launcher can fire multiple types of rockets and guided munitions, reducing logistical complexity and enhancing battlefield flexibility.
- **High Tactical Mobility:** Mounted on a BEML High Mobility Vehicle (HMV), it supports rapid deployment, shoot-and-scoot operations, and reduced vulnerability to enemy counter-battery fire across varied terrains.
- **Precision & Range:** Long-range precision strike capability with minimal collateral damage, suitable for deep-target engagement.

100. DOSTI-17 Trilateral Coast Guard Exercise



The DOSTI-17 exercise is the 17th edition of the trilateral Coast Guard engagement involving the Indian Coast Guard, Sri Lanka Coast Guard, and the Maldives National Defence Force Coast Guard. Hosted by the Maldives and inaugurated in Malé, the exercise concluded on 19 January 2026. It aims to enhance interoperability and maritime cooperation among the three nations.

The exercise focused on non-traditional maritime threats, Search and Rescue (SAR) operations, marine pollution response (MARPOL drills), and countering illegal activities at sea, strengthening collective maritime security in the Indian Ocean region.

101. Operation Trashi-I (Jammu & Kashmir)

Operation Trashi-I is a multi-day counter-terrorism operation launched in January 2026 in the Chatroo forest region of Kishtwar district, Jammu & Kashmir. It is being conducted jointly by the Indian Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police (including SOG), and the Central Reserve Police Force. Based on specific intelligence inputs about terrorist hideouts in dense forest areas, the operation aims to neutralise terrorists, destroy logistics bases, and dismantle forest hideouts. A key objective is to disrupt militant transit corridors linking Kathua–Udhampur–Doda–Kishtwar with the Kashmir Valley. The use of aerial surveillance, sniffer dogs, and human intelligence highlights a modern, intelligence-driven counter-insurgency approach in difficult terrain.



102. V-BAT Autonomous Drones

The Indian Army has officially selected Shield AI to supply its V-BAT autonomous drones under emergency procurement. This marks a major milestone in India's defence



modernisation, as it integrates Hivemind AI software for building sovereign autonomous military capabilities.

What is V-BAT?

- A Group 3 Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS).
- Uses a unique ducted-fan, tail-sitter design to launch and land vertically like a rocket, then transition to fixed-wing

horizontal flight for long-endurance surveillance.

- Requires no runway, catapult, or recovery net, enabling deployment from ship decks, rooftops, and remote forward posts.

Developed By

- OEM: Shield AI (USA)
- Indian Partner: JSW Defence, which is setting up a USD 90 million manufacturing hub in Hyderabad, positioning India as a global production base for V-BAT.

Aim & Objectives

- Provide persistent Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) in GPS- and communication-denied environments.
- Enable rapid deployment in high-threat zones without infrastructure dependence.
- Through the Hivemind SDK, allow Indian engineers to develop mission-specific AI behaviours suited to India's borders and operational needs.

Key Features

VTOL Capability

- Operates from a 12×12 ft clearing, ideal for Himalayan ridges and naval ship decks.
- Enclosed single-engine design ensures reliability in austere conditions.

Hivemind Autonomy Software

- Sense & Act: Fully autonomous navigation without GPS or human control.
- Threat Avoidance: Dynamically reroutes when exposed to electronic warfare.
- Team Operations: Enables multiple drones to collaborate autonomously on a mission.

Operational Specifications

- Endurance: 12+ hours
- Engine: Heavy-fuel engine (compatible with standard military fuels)
- Payload: High-definition ISR sensors and targeting systems

Significance for Indian Defence

- Well-suited for India's diverse terrain—from the LAC/LoC to the Indian Ocean

Region (IOR).

- Represents not just procurement but technology transfer and indigenisation.
- The Hyderabad manufacturing facility aligns with Atmanirbhar Bharat, making V-BAT "Made in India, for the world."

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10. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

103. Kaamya Karthikeyan Becomes the Youngest Indian to Ski to South Pole



Eighteen-year-old Kaamya Karthikeyan, Skier from Mumbai (Maharashtra), became the youngest Indian and second-youngest woman in the world to ski to the South Pole of 2,385-meter (m), on December 27, 2025, after trekking 115 Kilometer(km) in -30°C (degree Celsius) temperatures and gale-force winds while pulling a sled with expedition load.

In 2019, she became the youngest girl to scale Aconcagua (Argentina) of 6,962 m, the highest peak in South Africa. In 2023, she became the youngest Indian to summit Mount (Mt) Everest (Nepal and China) from the Nepal side.

In 2024 and 2025, she completed the seven summits challenge, finishing with Mt. Vinson in Antarctica, becoming one of the youngest climbers globally to achieve it.

104. IRFC Secures ‘Excellent’ Rating from DPE for 5th Consecutive Year

In January 2026, Indian Railways Finance Corporation (IRFC), a ‘Navratna’ Central Public Enterprise (CPSE) working under the Ministry of Railways (MoR), has been awarded ‘Excellent’ rating by the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) under the Ministry of Finance (MoF), for the Financial Year 2024-25 (FY25). This marks the 5th consecutive year for IRFC to achieve the highest performance rating ever since it was listed in FY21.

This sustained recognition indicates IRFC’s ability to navigate emerging challenges and maintain institutional strength, and deliver consistently strong performance.

During FY25, IRFC continued to bolster and diversify its lending portfolio in a structured manner, which is in alignment with “Whole-of-Approach”.

IRFC: Established in 1986, IRFC serves as the MoR’s dedicated financing arm, supporting railway projects and related infrastructure sectors. In its IRFC 2.0 phase, it reached the annual sanction target of Rs.60,000 crore by the third quarter (October–December) of FY26

105. NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang Conferred 2026 IEEE Medal of Honour

On January 6, 2026, Jensen Huang, Chief and Executive Officer (CEO), NVIDIA, was awarded the 2026 IEEE Medal of Honor, the highest recognition from Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

About IEEE Award 2026:

Jensen Huang received the award for his outstanding contributions to the field of Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) and accelerated computing, which have revolutionized

computing, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and High-Performance Computing (HPC) worldwide.

The 2026 award includes a USD 2 million cash prize, marking the second consecutive year that IEEE has attached a monetary award to this honor.

The IEEE Medal of Honour, established in 1917, is awarded annually to individuals who have made exceptional contributions or achieved outstanding accomplishments in electrical, electronics, and computer engineering.

106. Meera Syal Awarded Damehood (DBE)



British-Indian writer and actor Meera Syal was awarded Damehood (DBE) in King Charles III's New Year Honours List 2026, announced in December 2025. DBE stands for Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire, a high-ranking civilian honour conferred by the British monarch. The award recognises her outstanding contributions to literature, drama, and charitable work. As a recipient, she is formally entitled to use the title "Dame" before her name. The honour highlights the global cultural impact of the Indian diaspora, recognises minority voices in arts and literature, and strengthens cultural linkages between India and the United Kingdom.

107. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Confers Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar 2025 to 100 Railway Officials



On January 9, 2026, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Ministry of Railways (MoR), Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB), and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), conferred 100 railway officers and employees with the 70th Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar (AVRSP 2025) and awarded 26 shields to the top-performing railway zones.

•The award ceremony was held at the India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICEC), Yashobhoomi in New Delhi, Delhi.

The AVRSP is one of the highest service awards of Indian Railways (IR), recognizing exemplary service, innovation, courage, and institutional excellence.

During the event, a commemorative coin issued by the India Government Mint, Kolkata (West Bengal, WB), and a postal stamp released by the Department of Posts (DoP) under the Ministry of Communications were unveiled to celebrate the theme "100 Years of Electrification in Indian Railways."

•On January 9, 2026, Indian Railways marked the completion of 100 years of rail electrification. To date, over 68,700 route kilometres(km) have been electrified across India, with more than 72% of the work completed.

108.BSE Wins Asia Best Employer Brand Award 2026 at Hong-Kong Leadership Awards



In January 2026, the Bombay Stock Exchange Limited (BSE), Asia's 1st and oldest stock exchange, was conferred with the Asia Best Employer Brand Award 2026 at Hong Kong Leadership Awards & Chief Marketing Officer(CMO) Asia Awards held at InterContinental Grand Stanford, Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region (SAR), China.

•BSE received this award in recognition of its people-first approach, commitment to professional development and sustained efforts toward creating inclusive, high-performance environment.

This recognition reflects BSE's continued efforts to build a strong workplace culture, empower its workplace and foster excellence across the company.

109. Indian Mountaineer Aritra Roy Summits Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina

In January 2026, Indian mountaineer Aritra Roy summited Mount (Mt.) Aconcagua in Argentina (in South America), the highest peak outside Asia at 6,967.15 meters (m) above mean sea level, marks the fourth milestone in his ongoing Seven Summits challenge.



He summited after a 10.5-hour push, spent 45 minutes at the peak, and completed a 44-kilometre (km) climb in minus 40 degrees Celsius (−40°C) temperatures, snowstorms, and blizzards.

The route included Confluencia (3,340 meter, m), Plaza de Mulass (4,350 m), and three high camps at 5,050 m, 5,650 m, and 6,000 m.

The solo expedition was fully sponsored by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), a Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Previous Expedition: He previously summited Mount Kilimanjaro (Africa), Mount Elbrus (Europe), and Mount Everest (Asia), completing a solo ascent of Everest on May 19, 2025.

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



In January 2026, Indian Army (IA) officer Major Swathi Shantha Kumar from Bengaluru (Karnataka) received the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's Award 2025 in the Gender Category for her project "Equal Partners, Lasting Peace" while serving with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

About UN Secretary-General's Award:

Award Citation: Announced by Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of UN. The award recognises her leadership in advancing gender parity through effective deployment of the

Indian Engagement Team, enhancing patrols, community outreach, and trust-building in conflict zones.

Recognition: The UN Secretary-General's Awards are annual honours instituted by the United Nations to recognise outstanding contributions by UN personnel, peacekeepers, and teams demonstrating exceptional leadership, innovation, and commitment to UN values.

Purpose: The awards promote a culture of excellence and accountability, recognise initiatives with measurable impact on peace and development, and support core UN priorities such as gender equality, inclusion, sustainability, and innovation.

2025 Awards Categories: The 2025 awards covered categories including Innovation, Collegiality, Gender, Diversity & Inclusion, Multilingualism, and Leadership/Service Excellence.

111. Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards

The Jeevan Raksha Padak Series are civilian life-saving gallantry awards that recognise exceptional courage and selfless acts in saving human lives. Instituted in 1961 as an extension of the Ashoka Chakra gallantry framework, these awards honour civic bravery and humanitarian values displayed by ordinary citizens.



For 2025, the President of India approved 30 awards: 6 Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padaks, 6 Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padaks, and 18 Jeevan Raksha Padaks. Six awards were conferred posthumously, underscoring acts of supreme sacrifice.

- Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak: Awarded for conspicuous courage under very great danger to the rescuer.

- Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak: Recognises courage and promptitude under great danger.
- Jeevan Raksha Padak: Honours courage involving grave risk of bodily injury.

The awards are open to all persons, irrespective of gender or profession, and cover rescues during fires, drowning incidents, accidents, electrocution, mine disasters, and natural calamities. Each award includes a medallion and certificate, along with a one-time cash allowance of ₹2 lakh (Sarvottam), ₹1.5 lakh (Uttam), and ₹1 lakh (Jeevan Raksha). Collectively, the scheme promotes altruism, social responsibility, and courage in everyday life.

11. SCIENCE AND TECH

112. Anopheles stephensi – Urban Malaria Threat



India aims to achieve zero indigenous malaria cases by 2027 and complete elimination by 2030. These targets are under threat due to the rapid spread of *Anopheles stephensi*, often described as *Africa's new urban mosquito enemy*.

What is *Anopheles stephensi*

- It is a malaria-transmitting mosquito species.
- It is classified as a global invasive vector.
- It shows resistance to several insecticides, making control difficult.

Origin and Spread

The mosquito is native to South Asia and the Arabian Peninsula. It has recently spread to multiple African countries. It demonstrates rapid transcontinental invasion capability.

Habitat and Breeding Behaviour

Unlike traditional malaria vectors, it is urban and peri-urban adapted. It breeds in man-made water containers, such as overhead tanks, construction sites, discarded tyres, and stored household water. Its breeding pattern resembles dengue mosquitoes, complicating control strategies.

Key Features

It is highly adapted to cities. It transmits malaria efficiently. It colonises new regions very quickly.

Public Health Implications

It increases the risk of urban malaria resurgence. It poses a major challenge to malaria elimination goals. Control requires city-focused surveillance, integrated vector management, and multi-agency urban governance.

113. PathGennie Software for Drug Discovery

PathGennie is an open-source computational software developed to accelerate drug discovery. It was developed by the S. N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences under the Ministry of Science and Technology.

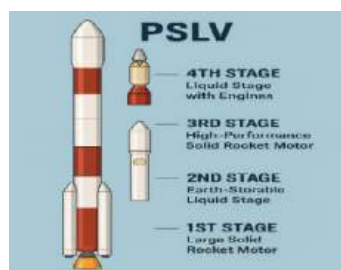
What PathGennie Does

The software studies how a drug molecule binds to a protein in the human body. Proteins control key biological functions such as enzyme activity and receptor signalling. If a drug does not bind properly, it fails early in development.

Significance for India

It makes drug discovery faster and cheaper. It reduces dependence on foreign proprietary software. It supports AI-driven biomedical research. It strengthens India's pharmaceutical and biotechnology ecosystem.

114. PSLV C62 mission failed at third stage



The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) recently faced a setback when the PSLV-C62 mission failed due to an anomaly in its third stage (PS3). This marks the second consecutive PSLV failure, following PSLV-C61 in May 2025, raising concerns about maintaining the reliability of India's long-serving launch vehicle.

PSLV is India's third-generation orbital launch vehicle, primarily designed to place satellites into Polar Orbits and Sun-Synchronous Orbits (SSO). Owing to its historically high success rate, it is globally regarded as ISRO's workhorse rocket.

The vehicle is developed and operated by the Indian Space Research Organisation, with major contributions from the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre and the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre.

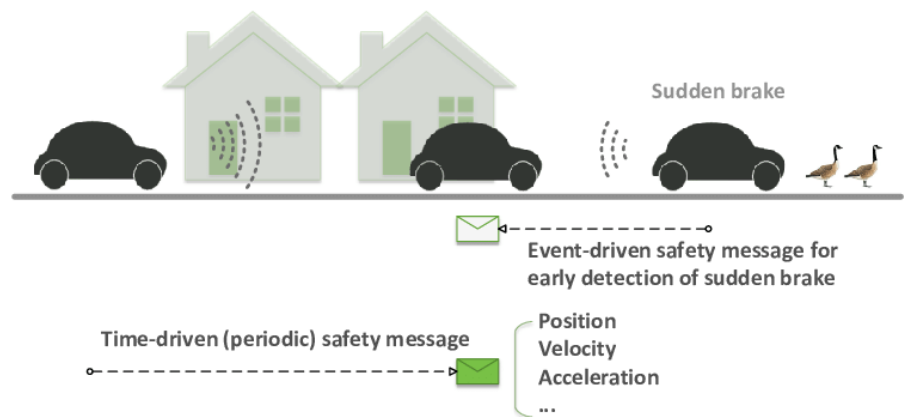
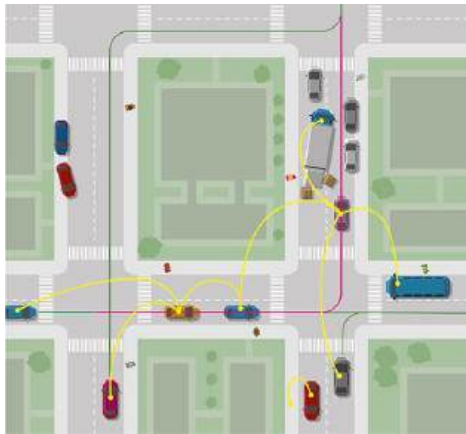
115. AyulSAT

AyulSAT, developed by OrbitAid Aerospace, marks India's first attempt at in-orbit satellite refuelling. The 25-kg tanker-cum-target satellite was launched aboard PSLV-C62 by Indian Space Research Organisation. OrbitAid is founded by Sakthikumar Ramachandran.

AyulSAT is designed to demonstrate in-orbit propellant transfer, along with power and data transfer, using a standardised docking and refuelling interface. Its objectives include proving docking readiness, enabling satellite life extension, on-orbit servicing, and reduction of space debris, thereby laying the foundation for a future on-orbit space economy.

Key features include internal refuelling between onboard tanks to study fluid behaviour in microgravity, use of the SIDRP (Standard Interface for Docking and Refuelling Port) for future satellite-to-satellite refuelling, and multi-utility transfer of fuel, power, and data. The satellite is RPOD-ready (Rendezvous, Proximity Operations and Docking) and will act as a target satellite, with a future chaser satellite expected to dock and refuel it by end-2026.

116. Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) Communication Technology



The Government of India has announced that Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) communication technology will be rolled out nationwide by the end of 2026 to reduce road accidents and enhance highway safety.

What is ADAS?

ADAS (Advanced Driver Assistance Systems) are electronic safety systems that use cameras, radar, and sensors to assist drivers with braking, steering, speed control, and situational awareness. ADAS supports the driver but does not replace human control.

What is V2V Communication?

Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) is a wireless communication technology that allows vehicles to directly exchange real-time information with nearby vehicles without using mobile networks or the internet.

Aim of V2V Technology

V2V aims to prevent road accidents and pile-ups, particularly on highways, by providing early warnings related to sudden braking, speed changes, and vehicles approaching from blind spots. It is especially useful in fog, dust storms, night driving, and low-visibility conditions.

How Does V2V Work?

Each vehicle is fitted with a small SIM-like communication device that continuously transmits and receives data such as location, speed, direction, and braking or acceleration status. Communication occurs using a dedicated radio frequency band (5.875–5.905 GHz) approved by the Department of Telecommunications.

Because it relies on short-range radio signals, V2V works even without mobile internet. When a collision risk is detected, the system instantly alerts the driver, and in vehicles equipped with ADAS, it can assist with automatic braking or evasive action.

Key Features

V2V provides 360-degree communication, real-time safety alerts for vehicles outside the driver's line of sight, and is highly effective in fog and low visibility. It is network-independent and ADAS-compatible, enabling smarter driving assistance.

Limitations

The effectiveness of V2V depends on mass adoption. It involves additional cost for buyers, has a limited operational range of a few hundred metres, and is not fully autonomous, as the initial phase focuses on warnings rather than full vehicle control.

Core Difference: ADAS vs V2V

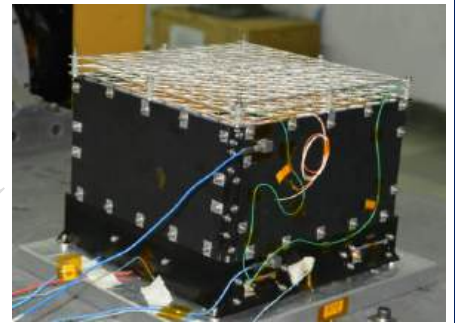
- ADAS: A vehicle-centric sensing and control system based on what the car's sensors detect.
- V2V: A communication-based system where vehicles share real-time information with each other.

117. Dust Experiment (DEX)

The Dust Experiment (DEX) is India's first cosmic dust detector, developed by Physical Research Laboratory and demonstrated by Indian Space Research Organisation aboard PSLV-C58 XPoSat (POEM).

DEX shows that one interplanetary dust particle enters Earth's atmosphere every ~16 minutes. It operates on the hypervelocity principle (>4 km/s), weighs 3 kg, consumes 4.5 W, and works in LEO (~350 km).

IDPs originate from comet debris, asteroid collisions, and cosmic erosion, contributing to the meteor layer.



118. Earth Observation Satellite EOS-N1 (Anvesha)



EOS-N1 (Anvesha) is an advanced hyperspectral Earth observation satellite to be launched by ISRO aboard PSLV-C62, along with 18 co-passenger payloads.

Using hundreds of spectral bands, it supports strategic surveillance, agriculture, urban planning, environmental monitoring, and disaster preparedness, significantly enhancing India's remote-sensing and reconnaissance capability.

119. INS Sagardhwani – Sagar Maitri V Mission

INS Sagardhwani was flagged off from Southern Naval Command for the 5th edition of Sagar Maitri (SM-5). The mission is jointly implemented by the Indian Navy and DRDO, underscoring India's focus on scientific-maritime cooperation.



About INS Sagardhwani

INS Sagardhwani is a marine acoustic research vessel, designed by NPOL, Kochi and built by GRSE, Kolkata. Commissioned in July 1994, it serves as India's primary platform for long-term oceanographic observation and maritime/acoustic research.

Sagar Maitri Initiative

Sagar Maitri is a joint scientific-maritime cooperation initiative, aligned with MAHASAGAR, with a regional focus on Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) countries. It aims to promote collaborative research, capacity building, and data sharing in ocean sciences.

Objectives and Significance

The mission involves collection of oceanographic and acoustic data along designated tracks, strengthens scientific cooperation among IOR nations, and enhances Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA)—supporting maritime security and India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region).

120. Humanoid Robot “ASC ARJUN” (Indian Railways)

ASC ARJUN is an AI-powered humanoid robot deployed by Indian Railways for station security and passenger assistance. It has been deployed at Visakhapatnam Railway Station, marking a first-of-its-kind initiative in the Indian Railways network.

The robot assists the Railway Protection Force (RPF) in surveillance and crowd management. Indigenously designed and developed in Visakhapatnam by an Indian Railways technical team using home-grown technology, ASC ARJUN is equipped with AI-based face recognition and crowd monitoring systems to detect intrusions and suspicious behaviour. It sends real-time alerts to RPF control rooms during emergencies and is fitted with fire and smoke detection sensors for early response.



ASC ARJUN also enhances passenger services by providing automated announcements in English, Hindi, and Telugu. With semi-autonomous patrolling and obstacle avoidance, it enables round-the-clock platform monitoring. Overall, the deployment highlights technological innovation, indigenisation, and strengthened public safety at high-footfall railway stations.

121. New Cave Art Discovery at Muna Island, Indonesia



Rock art dated to at least 67,800 years ago has been discovered on Muna Island, Indonesia, making it the oldest known cave art in the world. Located in Southeast Sulawesi Province, Muna Island is known for its limestone landscapes and rich archaeological heritage. This discovery predates both European cave art and previously known western Indonesian rock art, pushing back the timeline of early human artistic expression. Notably, some of the hand stencils show intentionally modified fingers, suggesting

advanced symbolic behaviour rather than accidental markings. The findings provide strong evidence of complex artistic, cultural, and cognitive abilities of early *Homo sapiens*, highlighting that sophisticated symbolic expression emerged much earlier than previously believed.

122. Penguins (Family Spheniscidae) – Indicator Species

The "Nihilist Penguin" is a viral video, originating from Werner Herzog's 2007 documentary *Encounters at the End of the World*, featuring a solitary Adelie penguin walking away from its colony toward inland mountains—a 70-km "death march" away from food and safety. It became a meme in 2026 symbolizing burnout, existential despair, and rebellion against futile societal routines.

Penguins are flightless aquatic birds belonging to the family Spheniscidae, with 18 known species, found exclusively in the Southern Hemisphere. While Antarctica hosts the largest populations, some species inhabit temperate and tropical regions, such as the Galápagos Islands.

The Emperor penguin is the largest species, whereas the Little Blue penguin is the smallest. Penguins use their wings as flippers for swimming and can reach speeds of up to 36 km/h. They are carnivorous, feeding mainly on fish, krill, and squid, which they swallow whole. Most penguins live in large colonies for warmth and protection; notably, male Emperor penguins incubate eggs on their feet during Antarctic winters. They communicate through distinct vocal calls, can drink seawater using salt-excreting glands, and serve as key indicator species of marine ecosystem health. However, climate change and melting ice pose serious threats to their survival.



123. Day Zero

"Day Zero" refers to the point at which a city's usable water supply drops below a critical threshold, forcing authorities to shut off regular tap water. At this stage, water is supplied only through rationed emergency distribution points with strict per-person limits, while essential services such as hospitals, sanitation, and firefighting are prioritised.

The term gained global attention during Cape Town's near Day Zero crisis in 2018 and is now used by the United Nations to describe systemic urban water collapse, not just short-term droughts. Day Zero typically results from long-term stressors—including climate change, groundwater over-extraction, rapid population growth, and weak water governance—rather than a single failed monsoon.

Its impacts can be severe: public health emergencies from unsafe water and poor sanitation, economic disruption, and social unrest, with the urban poor affected most. For countries like



India, the concept underscores the urgency of sustainable water management, aquifer protection, and climate-resilient urban planning to avert future crises.

12. SPORTS NEWS

124. Asian Games Gold Medalist Runner Jinson Johnson Announces Retirement

On January 7, 2026, Olympian and Asian Games gold medalist runner Jinson Johnson announced his retirement from competitive middle-distance running, bringing his distinguished 15-year international career to a close.

He began his athletics journey in 2007 by winning a school national medal in Kolkata (West Bengal, WB), marking his entry into competitive middle-distance running. He Represented India at the Olympic Games, World Athletics Championships, Asian Games, and Commonwealth Games.

•He also represented India at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in the 800 meter (m) event, becoming the first Indian male runner to qualify for the Olympic 800m since Sriram Singh in 1980.

125. PM Narendra Modi Virtually Inaugurates 72nd National Volleyball Tournament in Varanasi, UP

On January 04 2026, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi inaugurated the 72nd edition of the National Volleyball Tournament (Senior National Championship) at Dr. Sampurnanand Sports Stadium in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (UP) via video conferencing.

The tournament was organized by the Volleyball Federation of India (VFI) in collaboration with the UP government.

The tournament, scheduled to be held till January 11, 2026, is expected to witness the participation of over 1,000 players, representing 58 teams, from across the country.

Mascots: For the 72nd Senior National Volleyball Championship, the organizers unveiled two mascots: 'Nandu', inspired by the Nandi bull for strength, and 'Neera', the Ganga River Dolphin symbolizing environmental awareness.

126. 2025 World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships



The 27th edition of the International Chess Federation or Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE) World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship 2025 held at Sports and Events Complex, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar from 25-30 December 2025.

• Norwegian chess Grandmaster (GM) Magnus Carlsen clinched his sixth World Rapid

championship title in the Open category, while Russian GM Aleksandra Goryachkina from Russia took the maiden FIDE Women's World Rapid Championship .

- GM Magnus Carlsen clinched his ninth World Blitz Championship title in the Open category, while in the women's section, Bibisara Assaubayeva of Kazakhstan won the FIDE Women's World Blitz Championship 2025.

127. Highlights of 2025 FIDE World Rapid & Blitz Chess Championship:

Event: Annual rapid & Blitz chess championship organized by FIDE, featuring top global players.

Prize Fund: The EUR 1 million prize fund was split into EUR 700,000 for Open and EUR 300,000 for Women, evenly divided between Rapid and Blitz, with first prizes of EUR 70,000 (Open) and EUR 40,000 (Women), and EUR 50,000 and EUR 36,000 for second and third places respectively.

Format:

- **Rapid format:** Consisted of 13 rounds in the Open section and 11 rounds in the Women's section.
- **Blitz format:** Featured Swiss-system rounds followed by knockout stages.

Rapid Open Section:

Champion: Magnus Carlsen of Norway secured his sixth World Rapid title (2014, 2015, 2019, 2022, 2023, 2025) with a score of 10.5 out of 13 points.

Silver: GM Vladislav Artemiev (Russia) scored 9.5 points.

Bronze: Indian GM Arjun Erigaisi scored 9.5 points, finished third on tie-breaks.

Indian Players: Aravindh Chithambaram (16th), Nihal Sarin (19th), D. Gukesh (20th), all with 8.5 points.

Rapid Women's Section:

Champion: GM Aleksandra Goryachkina (Russia) scored 8.5/11 points and claimed the title by defeating Zhu Jiner (China) 1.5–0.5 in a blitz playoff.

Silver: GM Zhu Jiner (China) finished runner-up.

Bronze: Indian GM Koneru Humpy scored 8.5 points, placed third on tie-breaks, extending her World Rapid medal record following golds in 2019 and 2024.

Indian Players: B. Savitha Shri – 4th, R. Vaishali – 5th, Divya Deshmukh – 8th.

Blitz Open Section:

Champion: GM Magnus Carlsen defeated GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzbekistan) 2.5–1.5 in the final to win his ninth World Blitz title, marking his 20th World Championship crown across Rapid, Classical, and Blitz, and completing the 2025 Rapid–Blitz Double Crown.

Silver: GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzbekistan) finished runner-up in the final, earning his first-ever medal in the World Blitz format.

Bronze: Indian GM Arjun Erigaisi and GM Fabiano Caruana (United States of America, USA) shared the bronze medals, with Erigaisi also becoming only the second Indian after GM Viswanathan Anand to win both World Rapid & Blitz medals in the Open category.

Note: 12-year-old FIDE Master Sergey Sklokin (Russia/Armenia) defeated Indian GM Gukesh Dommaraju at the 2025 FIDE World Blitz Championship, highlighting the volatility of Blitz chess.

Blitz Women's Section:

Champion: GM Bibisara Assaubayeva (Kazakhstan) won her third World Blitz title by defeating GM Anna Muzychuk (Ukraine) 2.5–1.5 in the final, also earning qualification for the 2026 FIDE Women's Candidates Tournament.

Silver: GM Anna Muzychuk (Ukraine) finished runner-up, securing her fifth career medal in the World Blitz format.

Bronze: GM Zhu Jiner (China) and GM Eline Roebers (Netherlands) shared the bronze medals.

128. Khelo India Beach Games 2026: Karnataka Emerges Overall Champion

In January 2026, Karnataka emerged as the overall champions of the Khelo India Beach Games (KIBG) 2026, the second edition of India's national multi-sport beach competition, held at Ghoghla Beach in Diu, Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (DNHDD).

•The KIBG 2026, held from January 5-10, 2026, organised by the UT of DNHDD under the technical supervision of the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and various national sports federations.

129. About Khelo India Beach Games (KIBG) 2026:

Sports: Featured six medal events, including Beach Volleyball, Beach Soccer, Sepak Takraw, Beach Kabaddi, Pencak Silat, and Open Water Swimming, alongside demonstration events such as Mallakhamb and Tug-of-War.

Participants: Over 1,100 athletes from 30 states and UTs competed in the event.

Mascot: Diu is adorned in a festive spirit for KIBG 2026, with the mascot 'Pearl', a cheerful and energetic dolphin, welcoming athletes, support staff, volunteers, and all stakeholders of the Games.

Overall Standings: Karnataka emerged as the overall champions of the KIBG 2026, securing a total of 11 medals, including 3 gold, 2 silver, and 6 bronze.

•Tamil Nadu (TN) finished in second place with 8 medals (3 gold, 2 silver, and 3 bronze), while Manipur claimed the third spot with 7 medals (3 gold, 2 silver, and 2 bronze).

About Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS):

Union Minister – Mansukh Mandaviya (Constituency-Porbandar, Gujarat)

Minister of State (MoS) – Raksha Khadse (Constituency- Raver, Maharashtra)

130. Saina Nehwal Announces Retirement



Saina Nehwal has announced her retirement from professional badminton, bringing an end to a historic career in Indian sports. A former World No. 1, Saina was one of India's most successful badminton players and played a crucial role in popularising the sport in the country.

She is an Olympic bronze medallist (London 2012), a Commonwealth Games gold medallist (2010), and has won multiple international titles, including Super Series championships. Her achievements paved the way for future generations of Indian shuttlers and marked India's rise on the global badminton stage.

13. IMPORTANT DAYS

131. World Braille Day 2026 – January 4

The United Nations (UN's) World Braille Day is observed annually across the globe on 4th January to mark the birth anniversary of Louis Braille and underscores the importance of the Braille system for the visually impaired.

•January 4, 2026, marks the observance of the 8th World Braille Day and the 217th birth anniversary of Louis Braille.

UN's Role in Promoting Braille:

Convention: The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) recognizes Braille as essential for communication, education, and freedom of expression for visually impaired individuals.

Standardization: UNESCO initiated efforts in 1949 to standardize Braille and helped universalize the Braille alphabet by 1950.

Recognition: In 2005, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) officially declared Braille to be as legitimate a language as any other.

World Blind Union: World Blind Union (WBU) promotes and supports Braille literacy initiatives worldwide.

132. National Siddha Day 2026 – January 6

National Siddha Day is observed annually across India to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sage Agathiyar, regarded as the father of the Siddha system of medicine, which coincides with the Ayilyam star in the Tamil month of Margazhi.

- The 9th National Siddha Day falls on 6 January 2026.
- 2026 Theme: “Siddha for Global Health”

According to Tamil tradition, Siddha medicine is based on the teachings of 18 Siddhars, with Agathiyar, the first Siddhar, revered as the father of Tamil literature. Siddha medicine focuses on maintaining harmony between the body, mind, and nature, guided by the core principle that “Food is Medicine; Medicine is Food.”

On 3rd January 2026, the Vice President of India, Chandrapuram Ponnusami (C. P.) Radhakrishnan, inaugurated the 9th Siddha Day celebrations at Kalaivanar Arangam in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, TN.

The event was jointly organised by the Ministry of AYUSH, the National Institute of Siddha (NIS), the Central Council for Research in Siddha (CCRS), and the Directorate of Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy (DIMH), Government of TN.

133. World Day of War Orphans 2026 – January 6

World Day of War Orphans is observed annually on January 6 across the globe to raise awareness about the children who have lost one or both parents to war, armed conflict, or political violence.

- A war orphan is a child who loses one or both parents in military service, while United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) defines an orphan as any child under 18 who has lost one or both parents from any cause.

134. Earth’s Rotation Day 2026 – January 8

Earth’s Rotation Day is annually observed across the globe on 8th January to highlight the significance of Earth’s rotational motion and to commemorate French physicist Léon Foucault’s historic 1851 pendulum experiment, which first publicly demonstrated the Earth’s rotation.

- 8 January 2026, marks the observance of the 175th anniversary of Léon Foucault’s demonstration.

135. 140th Foundation Day of the Indian National Congress

The Indian National Congress observed its 140th Foundation Day on 28 December 2025, marking a major milestone in India's political history. The Congress was founded on 28 December 1885 at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College, Bombay (now Mumbai), by A. O. Hume, with W. C. Bonnerjee as its first President. Initially created as a platform to articulate Indian grievances against British rule, the Congress later transformed into a mass nationalist movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. It led key freedom movements such as Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, Quit India, and the Purna Swaraj resolution of 1929. After independence, the Congress played a central role in constitution-making, establishing parliamentary democracy, and promoting planned economic development. Its legacy lies in shaping India's freedom struggle, political institutions, and democratic culture.

136. Santali Language Day and Ol Chiki Script Centenary

Santali Language Day is being celebrated along with the centenary of the Ol Chiki script, which was created in 1925. Santali is the language of the Santhal tribal community and belongs to the Munda branch of the Austroasiatic language family. It is recognised in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution through the 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003. The Ol Chiki script was developed by Pandit Raghunath Murmu as the first indigenous script designed specifically for Santali. It is phonetic and scientific, accurately reflecting spoken sounds. Santali speakers are mainly found in Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, and Bihar, with smaller populations in Nepal and Bangladesh. The language and script preserve tribal oral traditions, folk songs, folklore, and indigenous knowledge systems, and serve as strong symbols of tribal identity, dignity, and cultural continuity. Constitutionally, their recognition strengthens linguistic diversity, promotes inclusive cultural nationalism, and aligns with cultural rights under Articles 29–30, especially for Scheduled Tribes.



137. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas – January 9

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), also known as Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Day, is biennially observed across India on 9 January to recognise and honour the significant contributions of the overseas Indian community to the nation's development.

Observed annually on 9th January since 2003 to mark Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi's return from South Africa in 1915 to lead India's freedom struggle.

PBD Convention: It is the MEA's flagship event, first introduced in 2003 by the Government of India (GoI) under Prime Minister (PM) Atal Bihari Vajpayee, celebrates and engages the overseas Indian community for their contributions to India's development.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA), India's highest honour for overseas Indians, is presented by the President of India during the PBD Convention's Valedictory Session and is awarded to NRIs, Person of Indian Origin (PIOs), or organizations/institutions run by them for exceptional contributions.

138. World Hindi Day 2026 – January 10

World Hindi Day, also known as Vishwa Hindi Diwas, is annually observed across the globe on 10 January to promote awareness of the Hindi language and to honour the contributions of Hindi speakers around the world.

January 10 marks the first use of Hindi in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1949.

Conference Legacy: The date commemorates the first World Hindi Conference held from 10–12 January 1975 in Nagpur, Maharashtra, inaugurated by former PM Indira Gandhi.
National Observance:

In India, Hindi Diwas, or Hindi Day, is observed annually on 14 September to mark the 1949 decision of the Constituent Assembly to adopt Hindi in the Devanagari script as one of the 22 official languages of India.

139. National Road Safety Week 2026 – January 11-17

National Road Safety Week is observed annually across India from January 11-17 to raise awareness about road safety by emphasizing responsible driving, pedestrian protection, and the importance of improved road infrastructure.

- 2026 marks the observance of the 37th National Road Safety Week

Inception: The first National Road Safety Week was introduced by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in 1989.

Expansion: The observance was extended to a month-long campaign in 2021.

Support: The annual observance is led by the MoRTH with support from the National

Safety Council of India (NSC) under the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoL&E) to promote road safety awareness nationwide.

140. National Road Safety Month (NRSM) 2026:

Origin: The NRSM, introduced by MoRTH, was first observed in 2021.

2026 Observance: In 2026, NRSM is being observed from January 1 to 31, 2026 with the theme “Sadak Suraksha Jeevan Raksha(Road Safety, Life Safety)” to promote awareness among citizens and stakeholders.

141. UN Global Road Safety Week (UNGRSW):

Overview: The United Nations Global Road Safety Week (UNGRSW) is a biennial campaign, hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO), to raise awareness about road safety and reduce road deaths.

Timing: The week-long event is observed globally in May, with the 2025 edition held from May 12–18, 2025.

Resolution: The UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the “Improving Global Road Safety” resolution, aiming to prevent at least 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.

142. Road Safety Support Schemes in India:

Cashless Treatment: Road accident victims are eligible for free medical treatment up to Rs. 1.5 lakh for seven days on all road types, funded through the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (MVAFF).

Good Samaritan Scheme (Rah-Veer): It encourages bystanders to assist accident victims during the Golden Hour by offering a cash reward of Rs. 25,000 per incident (up to five times a year) along with a Certificate of Appreciation.

•It also provides legal protection under Section 134A of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, (MVAA) 2019, shielding helpers from police or hospital-related hassles.

About Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH):

Union Minister– Nitin Jairam Gadkari (Constituency-Nagpur, Maharashtra)

Minister of State (MoS)- Harsh Malhotra (Rajya Sabha- East Delhi, Delhi); Ajay Tamta (Constituency- Almora, Uttarakhand)

143. National Youth Day 2026 – January 12



National Youth Day, also known as Rashtriya Yuva Divas and Vivekananda Jayanti, is observed across India on 12th January to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, a renowned Hindu spiritual leader, philosopher, and social reformer who played a significant role in

shaping modern Indian thought.

- 12 January 2026 marks the 163rd birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.

The Department of Youth Affairs (DYA) under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) organised the 2nd edition of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders' Dialogue (VBYLD 2026) from 9 to 12 January 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, Delhi, a reimagined national platform National Youth Festival, with the final day coinciding with National Youth Day.

The dialogue focused on ten national priority themes such as Fit Bharat, Start-up India, Youth in Democracy, Women-Led Development, Cultural Diplomacy, Innovation with Tradition, Aatmanirbhar Bharat, Sustainable Agriculture, Green Viksit Bharat, and a Future-Ready Workforce.

144. Armed Forces Veterans' Day 2026 – January 14

Armed Forces Veterans' Day is observed annually across India on 14 January to honour the courage, dedication, and sacrifices of veterans of the Indian Army(IA), Indian Navy(IN), and Indian Air Force(IAF) who have served the nation with distinction.

- January 14, 2026, marks the observance of the 10th Armed Forces Veterans' Day . The day was initially observed as a pan-India event in 2016–2017 under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and has been celebrated annually across the country since then. January 14 was chosen to mark the retirement of Field Marshal K. M. Cariappa, the first Indian Commander in Chief of the Army, on 14 January 1953.

145. Earth's Rotation Day 2026

Earth's Rotation Day was observed on 8 January 2026, marking 175 years of Léon Foucault's discovery. His Foucault Pendulum experiment (1851) demonstrated that the Earth rotates on its axis, without relying on telescopes or space technology. The day highlights the importance of experimental science in understanding planetary motion.

146. National StartUp Day – 16 January

National StartUp Day is observed on 16 January and is implemented by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. In 2026, it marks 10 years of the Startup India initiative, with celebrations scheduled at Bharat Mandapam. The day highlights the role of startups in promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth in India.

Startup India Initiative

Launched in 2016, the Startup India Initiative aims to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, ease of doing business, and job creation. Due to sustained policy support and a growing innovation ecosystem, India ranks as the world's third-largest startup ecosystem.

14. OBITUARY

147. Biswa Bandhu Sen

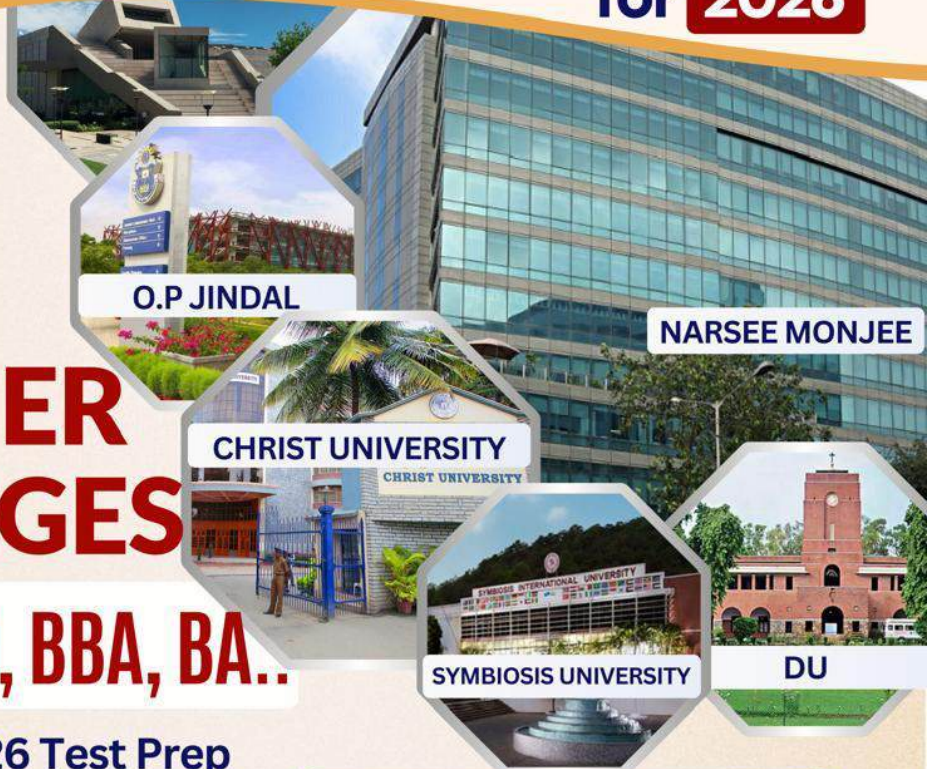
Biswa Bandhu Sen, the Speaker of the Tripura Legislative Assembly, passed away in December 2025 in Bengaluru at the age of 72. He served as the 11th Speaker of the Tripura Legislative Assembly, assuming office in March 2023. A four-time MLA from the Dharmanagar (56) constituency, he earlier held the post of Deputy Speaker from 2018 to 2023 and began his public service career as Vice-Chairman of the Dharmanagar Nagar Panchayat in 1988. Over his political career, he was associated with the Indian National Congress, the Trinamool Congress, and later the Bharatiya Janata Party. He was widely regarded for his administrative experience and role in maintaining legislative procedures and institutional functioning of the Tripura Assembly. His passing marks the loss of an experienced parliamentary figure in Tripura politics.



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