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RBI Assistant	650	8 Mar 2026
DSSSB (AE,JE,ASO,Legal Assistant)	911	25 Mar 2026
RRB Group D	22,195	9 Mar 2026
UPSC (Assistant Commandants)	349	12 Mar 2026
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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.
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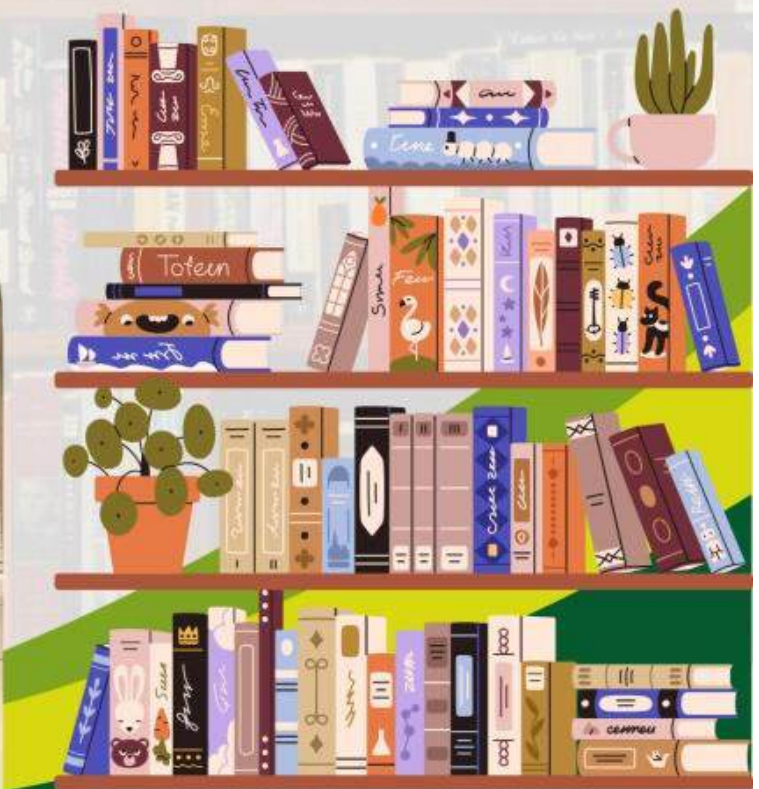
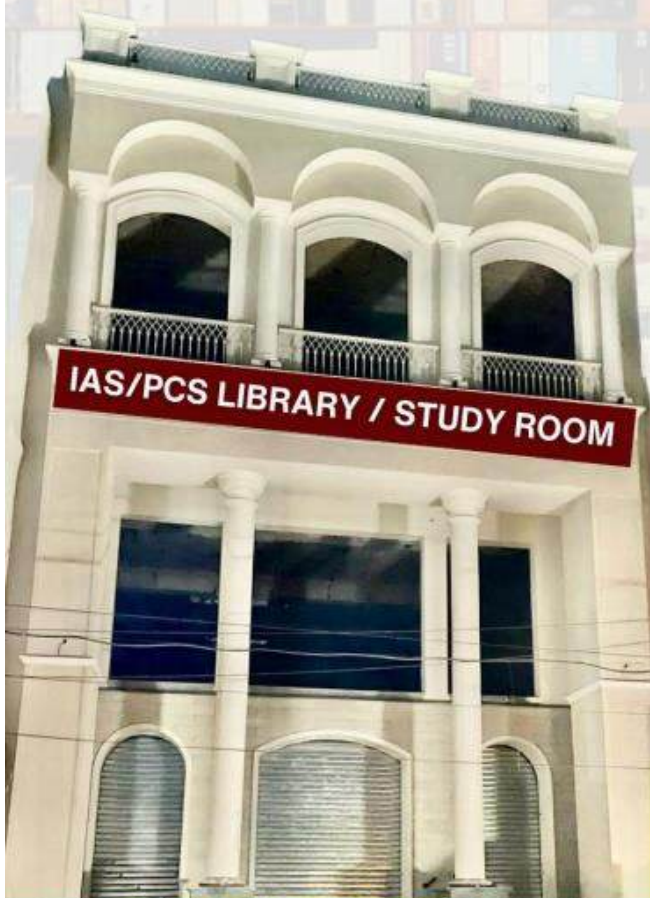


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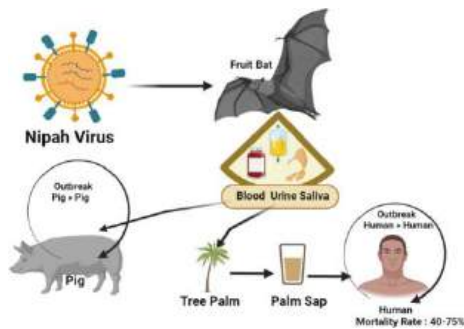
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Once you achieve a goal, set your sights higher. Use your success as a stepping stone for better opportunities and higher job roles.



1. NATIONAL NEWS

1. Nipah Virus



Nipah virus disease is a zoonotic infectious disease that first appeared in domestic pigs in Malaysia and Singapore during 1998–1999. The virus was named after Kampung Sungai Nipah, a village in Malaysia where pig farmers were infected. It was first identified in 1998 during an outbreak among pig farmers. Since 2001, recurrent outbreaks have been reported in India and Bangladesh, establishing South Asia as an endemic region for the virus.

Nipah Virus in India

India reported its first outbreak in 2001 in Siliguri, West Bengal. Subsequent outbreaks have primarily occurred in Kerala, notably in 2018, 2019, 2021, and 2023. Kerala has experienced repeated clusters, largely attributed to the bat–human interface, including exposure to bat-contaminated fruits and close human contact. The state’s robust surveillance and rapid containment strategies have helped limit wider transmission, though sporadic cases continue to pose public health concerns.

Case Fatality Rate

Nipah virus infection has a high case fatality rate, estimated between 40% and 75%. Compared to many other viral diseases, Nipah virus is associated with significantly higher mortality.

Natural Host and Transmission

The natural reservoir of the Nipah virus is fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family, commonly known as flying foxes. These bats carry the virus without showing signs of illness. They are widely distributed across Asia and Australia. The presence of antibodies in some African fruit bats suggests the possibility of a broader geographic distribution of related viruses. Transmission to humans can occur directly from bats, through intermediate hosts such as pigs, or via human-to-human contact.

Incubation Period

The incubation period of Nipah virus infection is usually between 3 and 14 days. In rare cases, it may extend up to 45 days. Individuals do not show symptoms during the incubation period. Once symptoms appear, the disease may progress rapidly, often involving severe respiratory illness and encephalitis.

Nipah virus remains a significant public health threat due to its high mortality rate, zoonotic transmission, and potential for outbreaks, particularly in regions with close interaction between humans and wildlife.

2. Turtle Trails

The Union Budget 2026–27 proposed the development of regulated “Turtle Trails” near Olive Ridley nesting beaches in Odisha, Karnataka, and Kerala.

Concept of Turtle Trails

Turtle Trails are designed as guided, low-impact ecotourism corridors near nesting beaches. These trails would regulate visitor access through defined pathways, trained guides, limited footfall, and controlled timings. The broader objective is to strike a balance between conservation awareness, sustainable tourism, and community participation. Ideally, such models integrate local fisher communities and coastal residents into conservation-linked economic activities.



Ecological Concerns

Marine biologists and conservation experts have raised concerns regarding the ecological sensitivity of Olive Ridley nesting habitats, particularly Arribada (mass nesting) sites. During arribada events, thousands of female turtles simultaneously come ashore to lay eggs. These sites must remain strict no-go zones because artificial lighting, noise, and human movement can disorient nesting females and hatchlings. Hatchlings rely on natural light cues (moonlight and horizon glow) to reach the sea; artificial illumination can lead to mortality.

Conservation vs. Tourism Debate

Researchers caution against infrastructure development near critical rookeries such as Rushikulya in Odisha, one of India’s most significant mass nesting sites. Past ecotourism initiatives in ecologically fragile zones have sometimes resulted in habitat degradation due to poor regulation, commercialization, and increased human pressure. Experts argue that conservation priorities must supersede tourism ambitions in such sensitive habitats.

3. Bharat Taxi



Bharat Taxi was launched on 5 February 2026 by Union Minister Amit Shah at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, marking India’s first cooperative-based ride-hailing platform. The service has completed its pilot phase and is currently operational in Delhi-NCR, with plans for expansion to other cities.

Bharat Taxi is a cooperative ride-hailing service operated by Sahakar Taxi Cooperative Limited.

It is backed by the Ministry of Cooperation, though it is not government-owned. The model draws support from established cooperatives such as Amul, reflecting a broader push to expand the cooperative movement into urban service sectors.

The initiative seeks to provide an alternative to private app-based aggregators by emphasizing cooperative ownership and equitable income distribution.

How is it Different from Ola and Uber?

For Drivers

- No-commission model – drivers retain the full fare amount
- Possibility of a minimal fixed platform charge (₹25–30 per day) in the future
- Access to government-backed loans for vehicle purchase
- Focus on driver dignity, ownership, and income security

Unlike conventional aggregator models that deduct commissions, Bharat Taxi follows a cooperative structure where drivers are stakeholders rather than gig workers.

For Passengers

- Fixed and transparent fares
- No surge pricing during peak demand
- Real-time ride tracking and verified drivers
- 24×7 customer support with multilingual assistance
- Safety coordination with Delhi and Gujarat Police

Significance

Bharat Taxi represents a structural shift in India's gig economy by introducing a cooperative ownership model in urban mobility. It aims to enhance driver earnings, ensure price stability for passengers, and promote inclusive economic participation through the cooperative framework.

4. National Commission for Women (NCW)

The National Commission for Women (NCW) recently marked its 34th Foundation Day, commemorating its establishment on 31 January 1992.

Establishment and Legal Basis

The NCW was constituted under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 and formally established on 31 January 1992. It is a statutory body created to safeguard and advance the constitutional and legal rights of women in India.



National Commission of Women

Composition

The Commission consists of:

- One Chairperson
- Five Members (with mandatory representation from SC/ST communities)

Members are appointed by the Central Government.

Functions and Powers

The NCW plays both advisory and quasi-judicial roles. Its key functions include:

- Reviewing constitutional and legal safeguards for women
- Recommending legislative reforms
- Handling complaints and taking suo motu cognizance of issues affecting women
- Advising the government on policy matters
- Inspecting jails, remand homes, and other custodial institutions
- Conducting research and awareness programs

The Commission has powers equivalent to a civil court while investigating matters, including summoning individuals and examining evidence.

Significance

Over three decades, the NCW has functioned as a national-level institutional mechanism to address gender injustice, recommend reforms, and strengthen the protection framework for women's rights. Its Foundation Day highlights its ongoing role in promoting gender equality and legal empowerment in India.

5. Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) Guidelines

India has released its first National Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) Guidelines, establishing a standardized scientific framework for identifying victims of mass fatality incidents.

What is DVI?

Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) is a scientific and systematic process used to identify individuals who have died in major disasters.

It is applied in situations such as:

- Air crashes
- Floods and earthquakes
- Fires and industrial accidents
- Terror attacks

The primary objective is to ensure accurate identification, proper legal documentation, and dignified handover of remains to families.

Issuing Authority

- Issued by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
- Supported by the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU)
- Aligned with INTERPOL standards for international best practices

Key Features of the Guidelines

The guidelines establish a uniform national Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and promote the use of modern forensic and digital technologies.

Four Core Steps in the DVI Process

1. Scene Recovery – Systematic recovery of bodies and collection of physical evidence from the disaster site.

2. Post-mortem Data Collection – Detailed forensic examination of the body after death.
3. Ante-mortem Data Collection – Gathering pre-death records such as medical history, dental records, fingerprints, and DNA samples from relatives.
4. Reconciliation – Scientific matching of ante-mortem and post-mortem data to confirm identity.

Identification Methods

Primary Identifiers:

- Fingerprints
- Dental records
- DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid)

Advanced Tools:

- Virtual autopsy
- Digital biometrics
- Forensic database integration

Significance

- Ensures dignity and respectful handling of the deceased
- Provides legal certainty to families
- Strengthens disaster preparedness and forensic capacity
- Recommends creation of a National Dental Data Registry to improve future identification processes

The guidelines mark a major step toward institutionalizing a scientific, standardized, and humane approach to mass fatality management in India.

6. SabhaSaar Initiative

SabhaSaar is an AI-powered digital platform launched on 14 August 2025 to automatically generate Minutes of Meetings (MoMs) from recordings of Gram Sabha and Panchayat proceedings. It is designed to modernize record-keeping and strengthen transparency in grassroots governance.



SabhaSaar

"हर चर्चा का सार, एक जगह!"

Implementation

- Implemented by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- Supported by the IndiaAI Mission
- Adopted by over 1.11 lakh Gram Panchayats as of January 2026

Technology Features

SabhaSaar uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) to convert voice recordings into structured written records.

- Provides automated voice-to-text transcription
- Supports 13 Indian languages through integration with Bhashini

- Ensures secure data handling in compliance with the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2025

Significance

The initiative enhances:

- Transparency in Gram Sabha proceedings
- Accountability through accurate documentation
- Administrative efficiency in rural governance
- Citizen participation by maintaining clear and accessible records

SabhaSaar represents a significant step toward AI-enabled digital transformation in local self-governance.

7. BHARAT SAMPARK

About the Initiative

BHARAT SAMPARK is a government outreach initiative led by the Ministry of Communications. It is designed to connect students from premier educational institutions with public policy, governance, and national development initiatives.

The programme creates a platform for meaningful engagement between young innovators and policymakers, particularly Union Ministers, on issues related to technology, logistics, digital infrastructure, and innovation.

Key Objectives

- Foster direct dialogue between students and government leadership
- Increase awareness of governance processes and public service delivery
- Encourage youth participation in nation-building initiatives
- Showcase reforms in the communications and logistics sectors

8. Rat-Hole Mining Tragedy in Meghalaya



A blast at an illegal rat-hole mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills killed 18 labourers. The incident occurred despite the 2014 ban imposed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), which was later upheld by the Supreme Court.

Rat-Hole Mining

Rat-hole mining is an unscientific and hazardous coal extraction method involving:

- Narrow horizontal or vertical tunnels

- Manual excavation with minimal safety measures
- Operations without valid licenses or environmental clearances

It is prevalent in Meghalaya due to thin coal seams that encourage small, tunnel-based extraction.

As of 2026 estimates:

- Around 6 million tonnes of coal are extracted illegally each year
- Over 30,000 such mines are believed to be operating

Environmental and Social Impact

1. Frequent fatalities due to collapses, explosions, and flooding.
2. Acid mine drainage, contaminating rivers such as the Kopili, harming aquatic ecosystems and water quality.
3. Revenue losses to the state due to illegal extraction.
4. Exploitation of migrant workers by coal syndicates operating outside regulatory oversight.

Legal Context

The practice was banned in 2014 by the NGT under environmental protection norms. The Supreme Court upheld the ban, yet enforcement gaps persist.

The regulatory framework is governed by the MMDR Act (Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957), which provides for licensing and oversight of mining activities.

9. Two New Wetlands Added to India's Ramsar List

On World Wetlands Day (2 February), the Union Environment Minister announced the inclusion of two new wetlands in India's Ramsar List.



1. Patna Bird Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh)

- Located in Etah district, Uttar Pradesh
- Established in 1991
- The smallest bird sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh
- Comprises seasonal wetlands that support migratory and resident birds

Key species:

Lesser Whistling-Duck, Graylag Goose, Comb Duck, Ruddy Shelduck, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Northern Shoveler, and Northern Pintail.

It is an important habitat for aquatic and migratory bird conservation in the region.

2. Chhari-Dhand Wetland Conservation Reserve (Gujarat)



- Located in Kutch district, Gujarat
- Situated at the edge of the Banni grasslands and marshy salt flats of the Rann of Kutch
- In Kutchi language: *Chhari* = “salty”, *Dhand* = “shallow wetland”

Ecological importance:

Habitat for endangered species such as:

- Dalmatian Pelican
- Oriental Darter
- Black-necked Stork
- Indian Skimmer

The region is also known for the mysterious “Chir Batti” (ghost lights) phenomenon observed in the Banni grasslands.

10. Right to Menstrual Health as a Fundamental Right



In *Dr. Jaya Thakur vs Government of India*, the Supreme Court delivered a landmark judgment recognizing menstrual health as an integral part of the Fundamental Right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution. The Court held that menstrual hygiene is directly connected to dignity, bodily autonomy, and health. It further linked this right to Article 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 21A (Right to Education), observing that the absence of

proper menstrual facilities leads to discrimination, absenteeism, and denial of equal educational opportunities for girls.

The Court directed governments to ensure the provision of free bio-degradable sanitary pads (ASTM D-6954 compliant) to girls studying in Classes 6–12. It mandated that all schools must have functional, gender-segregated and disabled-friendly toilets, with access to water and soap to maintain hygiene. Additionally, the Court ordered the establishment of

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) corners in schools to provide emergency supplies, awareness material, and a supportive environment for adolescent girls.

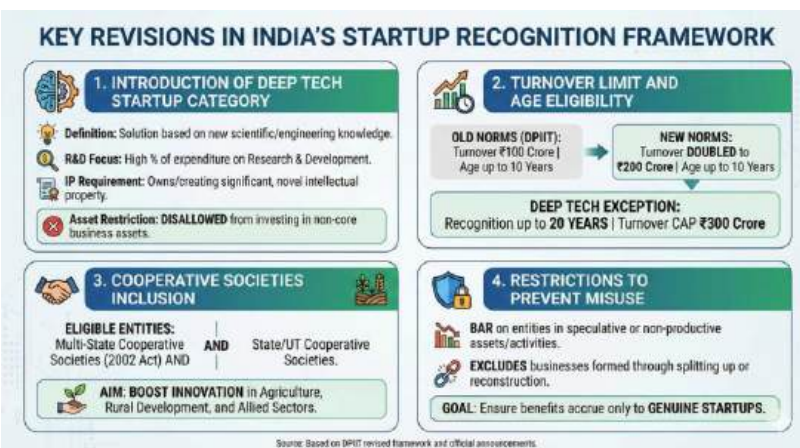
To ensure effective implementation, the Court prescribed enforcement mechanisms including:

- Annual inspections by District Education Officers
- Anonymous student feedback systems
- De-recognition of non-compliant private schools

The judgment recognizes that inadequate menstrual hygiene infrastructure contributes to frequent absenteeism and school dropouts, especially among adolescent girls. By ensuring safe sanitary products, proper sanitation, and awareness facilities, the ruling seeks to reduce health risks, prevent infections, and protect the privacy and dignity of students.

Overall, the decision elevates menstrual health from a welfare concern to a constitutional guarantee, reinforcing gender equality, educational access, and human dignity within the framework of fundamental rights.

11. India Revises Startup Recognition Framework under Startup India



India has revised the Startup Recognition Framework under the Startup India Action Plan as the initiative enters its second decade. The reform was prompted by the fact that in 2024, only about 10% of DPIIT-recognised startups were deep tech, a proportion considered inadequate for strengthening India's innovation, advanced manufacturing, and emerging technology ecosystem.

Key Revisions in India's Startup Recognition Framework

1. Introduction of a Deep Tech Startup Category

A dedicated sub-category for **Deep Tech Startups** has been introduced with clearly defined criteria:

- **Definition:** Must develop solutions based on new scientific or engineering knowledge involving long development cycles, extended gestation periods, high capital and infrastructure needs, and significant technical uncertainty.
- **R&D Focus:** High expenditure on Research and Development relative to revenue or funding.
- **IP Requirement:** Must own or be in the process of creating significant, novel intellectual property (IP) and demonstrate intent to commercialise it.
- **Asset Restriction:** Prohibited from investing in assets or activities not integral to their core business during the recognition period.

- **Authority:** The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is the final authority to determine startup or deep tech status, based on guidance from an Inter-Ministerial Board of Certification.

2. Revised Turnover and Age Eligibility

- **General Startups:**
 - Turnover limit increased from ₹100 crore to ₹200 crore.
 - Eligible for recognition up to 10 years from incorporation.
- **Deep Tech Startups:**
 - Recognition period extended from 10 to 20 years.
 - Turnover cap raised to ₹300 crore.

3. Inclusion of Cooperative Societies

- Multi-State Cooperative Societies (under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002) and Cooperative Societies registered under State/UT laws are now eligible.
- Objective: Promote innovation in agriculture, rural development, and allied sectors.

4. Safeguards to Prevent Misuse

- Bar on entities engaged in speculative or non-productive assets or activities, as notified by the government.
- Explicit exclusion of businesses formed through splitting up or reconstruction of existing enterprises.
- Aim: Ensure benefits reach genuine startups only.

12. Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA)



A historic tripartite agreement has been signed between the Government of India, the Government of Nagaland, and the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) for the creation of the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA). The move aims to address the long-standing political, administrative, and developmental aspirations of the people of Eastern Nagaland.

About Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO)

The Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) is an apex body representing eight recognised Naga tribes:

- Konyak
- Sangtam
- Chang
- Khiamniungan
- Yimkhiung
- Tikhir
- Phom
- Sumi

These tribes primarily inhabit the six eastern districts of Nagaland and have historically raised concerns regarding underdevelopment and limited administrative attention.

Districts Covered under FNTA

The Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority will cover:

- Tuensang
- Mon
- Kiphire
- Longleng
- Noklak
- Shamator

These districts collectively constitute the eastern region of Nagaland.

Key Features of FNTA

1. Autonomy and Powers

The Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA) has been granted executive and legislative powers over 46 subjects, including land, agriculture, rural development, and other areas of local governance. This framework enables the region to make policy decisions tailored to its specific socio-economic conditions and ensures greater administrative control over local affairs.

2. Administrative Structure

The FNTA will function through a mini-Secretariat established within the region itself, ensuring decentralised governance. The administrative setup will be headed by an officer of the rank of Additional Chief Secretary or Principal Secretary, providing senior-level oversight and coordination within the authority.

3. Financial Mechanism

Development funds for the region will be allocated in proportion to its population and geographical area, ensuring equitable distribution of resources. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) will bear the initial establishment expenditure of the FNTA. The financial design aims to ensure that funds earmarked for Eastern Nagaland are not delayed or diverted at the state level.

Significance

The creation of the FNTA addresses long-standing demands for enhanced autonomy in Eastern Nagaland and seeks to correct regional developmental imbalances within the state. It represents a negotiated institutional arrangement that strengthens cooperative federalism while preserving state integrity. Overall, the authority is expected to promote peace, administrative efficiency, stability, and inclusive development in the region.

13. New MHA Protocol on Vande Mataram and Jana Gana Mana

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued fresh instructions to States and government bodies mandating that when both the National Song and the National Anthem are part of an event, Vande Mataram must be played or sung first, followed by Jana Gana Mana. The protocol establishes a clear ceremonial order and reinforces respect for national symbols.

1. Sequence of Play

When both are performed at the same event, Vande Mataram (National Song) must precede Jana Gana Mana (National Anthem). This formalises the order of precedence in official ceremonies.

2. Mandatory Respect

The audience must stand to attention when the official version of Vande Mataram (approximately 3 minutes and 10 seconds) is sung or played.

However, if it is played as part of a newsreel, documentary, or film screening, the audience is not expected to stand, as doing so may interrupt the exhibition and cause confusion rather than enhance dignity.

3. Occasions for Playing

The National Song is mandated for specific high-level official functions:

- Presidential/Gubernatorial Events: On the arrival and departure of the President or Governor/Lieutenant Governor at formal State functions.
- Broadcasts: Immediately before and after the President addresses the nation on All India Radio or television.
- Flag Ceremonies: When the National Flag is brought on parade.
- Cultural Events: During unfurling of the National Flag at ceremonial functions (other than parades).

4. Musical and Band Protocol

When played by a band, Vande Mataram must be preceded by a roll of drums to alert the audience.

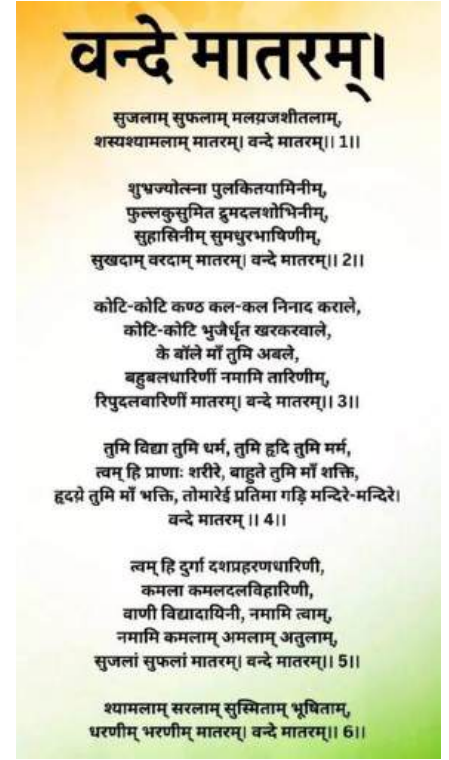
5. Instructions for Schools

The day's work in schools may begin with community singing of Vande Mataram. Authorities are directed to promote both the National Song and National Anthem to foster respect for national symbols.

The protocol aligns with Article 51A(a) of the Constitution, which makes it a Fundamental Duty to respect the Constitution, the National Flag, and the National Anthem.

Key Facts About Vande Mataram

Origin and Composition



Composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Vande Mataram was first published in *Bangadarshan* in 1875 and later included in the novel *Anandamath* (1882). It was later set to music by Rabindranath Tagore.

The song became a powerful symbol of unity, sacrifice, and devotion during India's freedom struggle.

National Status

On 24 January 1950, Rajendra Prasad announced that while Jana Gana Mana would be the National Anthem, Vande Mataram would be honoured equally as the National Song due to its historic role in the freedom movement.

The Constitution does not explicitly mention a National Song.

Role in the Freedom Movement

- In 1896, Rabindranath Tagore sang Vande Mataram at the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress.
- In 1905, it was adopted for all-India occasions at the Varanasi session of the Congress.
- It became the rallying cry of the Swadeshi and anti-partition movement, especially during protests against Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal.
- The slogan inspired revolutionaries in India and abroad. In 1907, Bhikaji Cama unfurled a tricolour flag bearing the words "Vande Mataram" in Stuttgart, Germany.
- Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes Demand Census Recognition

14. Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)



Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) have demanded constitutional recognition and a separate column in the 2027 Census to address long-standing historical injustice and policy invisibility. Their core concern is that the absence of clear enumeration results in inadequate welfare targeting and underrepresentation in policymaking.

Background

DNTs were historically labelled as "criminal tribes" under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, enacted by the British colonial government. The Act empowered authorities to treat entire communities as "criminal by birth," subjecting them to registration, movement restrictions, and constant surveillance.

The Act was further strengthened through amendments in 1924, intensifying state control and monitoring of these communities.

After Independence, the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed in 1952, and the affected communities were officially “denotified.” However, despite legal repeal, the social stigma of criminality and discriminatory policing practices persisted. Many DNT groups continue to face marginalisation, lack of documentation, poor access to education and healthcare, and exclusion from mainstream development schemes.

Core Issue

The demand for constitutional recognition and formal enumeration in the Census is aimed at ensuring targeted welfare measures, legal protection, and policy visibility for these historically disadvantaged communities.

15. NHAI’s Bee Corridor Initiative



The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has launched a first-of-its-kind initiative to develop “Bee Corridors” along national highways. This project aims to transform highways into ecological corridors by planting flowering trees, shrubs, and grasses that provide nectar and pollen for pollinators, especially bees. The initiative is part of India’s broader effort to promote sustainable infrastructure while

also addressing the decline in pollinator populations, which are essential for ecosystem balance and agricultural productivity.

Under this initiative, NHAI will plant native, nectar-rich species such as Neem, Jamun, Mahua, Palash, Siris, and Karanj. These species are climate-resilient and selected to ensure flowering across different seasons, providing a continuous food source for bees throughout the year. Flowering clusters will be strategically developed along highways and NHAI land, typically at intervals of around 500 meters to 1 kilometer, ensuring bees remain within their natural foraging range. Around 40 lakh trees are planned to be planted during 2026–27 as part of this program.

Ecological and Economic Significance

The Bee Corridor initiative has both ecological and economic benefits. Ecologically, it helps reduce habitat fragmentation by connecting green patches along highways, allowing pollinators to move safely and sustain biodiversity. It also strengthens ecosystem resilience and supports conservation of pollinator species, which play a vital role in maintaining plant diversity.

Economically, the initiative supports agriculture by improving pollination, which enhances crop yield and quality. It also promotes rural livelihoods by supporting beekeeping and honey production, aligning with the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission. Overall, the Bee Corridor initiative represents an innovative approach that integrates infrastructure development with environmental conservation and sustainable economic growth.

16. Hornbill Restaurants



“Hornbill Restaurants” are clusters of fruit-bearing trees planted to provide a steady food source for hornbills. This initiative is being implemented in the Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve to support the growing population of the Malabar Pied Hornbill.

Hornbills are primarily frugivorous (fruit-eating), and the availability of native fruiting trees is crucial for their survival and breeding.

By creating these tree clusters, forest authorities aim to strengthen habitat quality and reduce food scarcity.

The Malabar Pied Hornbill is found in the Western Ghats, northeast India, and Sri Lanka. According to the IUCN Red List, it is classified as Near Threatened due to habitat loss and deforestation. This conservation effort is intended to improve long-term survival prospects for the species.

17. India AI Impact Summit 2026

The India AI Impact Summit 2026 was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, from 16–20 February 2026. The summit brought together leaders, experts, and policymakers from over 100 countries, making it a major global platform for discussing the future of Artificial Intelligence. It was the first major AI summit focused on the needs and priorities of the Global South, highlighting India’s growing leadership in the AI domain.



The summit focused on promoting ethical, inclusive, safe, and human-centric Artificial Intelligence. Its theme, Sarvajana Hitaya, Sarvajana Sukhaya (for the welfare and happiness of all), emphasized the goal of using AI to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to technology. During the summit, the Prime Minister unveiled the M.A.N.A.V vision for responsible AI governance, which stands for Moral, Accountable, National sovereignty, Accessible, and Valid AI. This framework aims to ensure that AI development remains transparent, secure, and aligned with national and societal interests.

18. VoicERA and India’s AI Vision



A key highlight of the summit was the launch of VoicERA, an open-source Voice AI platform built on the BHASHINI infrastructure by the Digital India BHASHINI Division under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). VoicERA enables multilingual speech recognition and

conversational AI, allowing citizens to access government services using voice in Indian languages. This platform supports inclusive digital communication and strengthens India's mission to become a global leader in safe, trusted, and inclusive Artificial Intelligence.

19. SAHI and BODH: AI Framework for Healthcare

SAHI (Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare) and BODH (Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health) were launched by Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda at the India AI Impact Summit 2026. These initiatives aim to promote the safe, ethical, and inclusive use of Artificial Intelligence in India's healthcare system while ensuring reliability and public trust.



SAHI serves as the national policy framework or “rulebook” for AI in healthcare. It provides guidelines on governance, data management, validation, and monitoring of AI systems. Its main objective is to ensure ethical standards, accountability, and transparency while creating a roadmap for responsible adoption of AI in healthcare institutions across India.

Role of BODH Platform

BODH is a technical platform developed by IIT Kanpur in collaboration with the National Health Authority to test and evaluate AI models used in healthcare. It enables secure and unbiased testing using anonymized data, ensuring that AI tools are accurate, safe, and clinically reliable. The platform helps detect errors, reduce bias, and improve the performance of AI-based healthcare solutions without compromising patient privacy. Together, SAHI and BODH strengthen India's healthcare AI ecosystem by ensuring proper governance, technical validation, and trustworthy implementation of AI technologies.

20. AI-Preneurs of India



AI-Preneurs of India is a coffee table book launched by the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) under NITI Aayog. The book highlights India's growing leadership in Artificial Intelligence by showcasing 45 innovative AI startups that are solving real-world problems using advanced technologies.

The book features startups working in key sectors such as healthcare, education, sustainability, agriculture, and governance. These startups are using AI to improve public services, increase efficiency, and address societal challenges. It also promotes the use of ethical, responsible, and inclusive AI aligned with India's national AI vision.

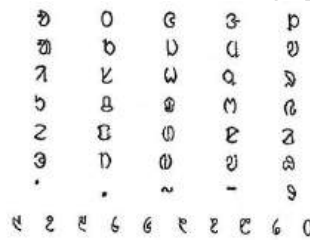
21. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is a statutory body established in 1986 under the APEDA Act, 1985. It functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and is responsible for promoting the export of agricultural and processed food products from India. In 2026, APEDA completed 40 years of its establishment, marking four decades of supporting India’s agricultural export growth.



APEDA plays a key role in registering exporters, ensuring quality standards, and facilitating the export of products such as basmati rice, fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products, and organic food items. It also provides financial assistance, infrastructure support, and guidance to improve export competitiveness. Through its initiatives, APEDA contributes to increasing India’s agricultural exports, strengthening global market access, and improving farmers’ income.

22. Centenary of Ol Chiki Script



The Ministry of Culture inaugurated the centenary celebrations of the Ol Chiki script on 16 February 2026 in New Delhi, marking 100 years since its creation in 1925. The celebrations highlight the cultural and linguistic

importance of the script and its contribution to preserving the identity of the Santhali-speaking community.

Ol Chiki is the official script of the Santhali language and was developed in 1925 by Pandit Raghunath Murmu. It was specifically created to provide Santhali speakers with their own writing system, enabling proper documentation, education, and promotion of their language. Before Ol Chiki, Santhali was mainly written using scripts such as Devanagari, Bengali, or Odia.

Cultural and Linguistic Significance

The Ol Chiki script plays a vital role in preserving Santhali literature, culture, and heritage. Santhali is one of the languages included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, and the development of Ol Chiki strengthened its recognition and usage. The centenary celebration reflects the government’s commitment to protecting indigenous languages and promoting India’s rich linguistic diversity.

23. PM RAHAT Scheme



The PM RAHAT (Road Accident Holistic Action for Treatment) Scheme has been launched to provide immediate financial and medical support to road accident victims. The main objective of the scheme is to prevent deaths caused by delays in medical treatment due to financial constraints, ensuring that victims receive timely and proper healthcare.

Under this scheme, accident victims are eligible for cashless treatment coverage of up to ₹1.5 lakh at designated hospitals. This helps reduce the financial burden on victims and their families while ensuring quick access to emergency medical services.

Significance of the Scheme

The PM RAHAT Scheme aims to strengthen India's road safety and emergency healthcare system. By ensuring timely treatment and financial protection, it supports accident victims, reduces mortality rates, and promotes a more responsive and inclusive healthcare framework.

24. Lakhpati Didi Initiative: Target Revised

The Government of India has revised the target under the Lakhpati Didi Initiative, aiming to support 6 crore Lakhpati Didis by March 2029. This is an increase from the earlier target of 3 crore, which was achieved ahead of the original deadline of March 2027. The initiative, launched in 2023, focuses on empowering women through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by helping them achieve sustainable livelihoods and financial independence.



A “Lakhpati Didi” refers to a woman SHG member with a sustainable annual household income of ₹1 lakh or more. The programme supports women through skill development, financial inclusion, market linkages, and promotion of income-generating activities such as small businesses and livestock management.

Implementation and Significance

The initiative is implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM). It aims to reduce rural poverty, promote women entrepreneurship, and strengthen economic empowerment of women, contributing to inclusive and sustainable rural development.

25. H125 Helicopter Project Launched in Karnataka



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron jointly launched the H125 helicopter assembly line in Karnataka. The facility is located at the Vemagal Industrial Area in Kolar district and marks India's first private helicopter manufacturing facility. This project represents a major milestone in India's defence and aerospace manufacturing sector.

The project is a joint venture between Airbus and the Tata Group, combining global technology with India's manufacturing capabilities. The H125 helicopter is known for its high-altitude performance and has proven capabilities, including operations and landings in extreme conditions such as Mount Everest.

The H125 project will strengthen India's defence manufacturing ecosystem and support the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative. It will also promote technology transfer, create employment opportunities, and enhance India's potential to export helicopters to global markets. The project highlights growing defence cooperation between India and France and boosts India's position as a hub for aerospace manufacturing.

26. Union Cabinet Approves Renaming Kerala as Keralam

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal to rename Kerala as "Keralam," replacing the English constitutional name with its traditional Malayalam form. The change will be implemented through the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026, which must follow the constitutional amendment process before becoming official.



The renaming reflects Kerala's Malayalam linguistic and cultural identity and is linked to the Aikya Kerala Movement of 1956, which aimed to unify all Malayalam-speaking regions into one state. It also aligns with the principle of linguistic reorganization of states introduced after independence.

Under Article 3 of the Constitution, Parliament has the power to change the name, area, or boundaries of a state. The proposal was earlier supported by resolutions passed by the Kerala Legislative Assembly and reviewed by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The bill can be introduced only with the President's recommendation, and the President must seek the views of the state legislature before final approval.

27. Fishing Cat Population in Kaziranga National Park



A first scientific assessment has recorded 57 individual fishing cats in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in Assam, confirming the park as a stronghold for this endangered species. The fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) is a wetland-dependent wild cat known for its ability to hunt fish and thrive in marshy habitats.

The fishing cat is classified as Vulnerable globally and is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, which provides the highest level of legal protection in India. It is also the State animal of West Bengal. The presence of a healthy population in Kaziranga highlights the importance of wetland conservation and strengthens efforts to protect this rare and ecologically significant species.

28. Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Programme

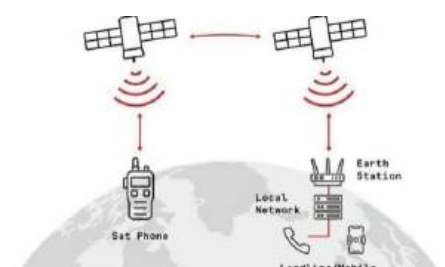


The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is a recombinant vaccine that protects against HPV infection, which is mainly spread through sexual contact. HPV is the primary cause of cervical cancer, the second most common cancer among women in India. Cervical cancer affects the cervix, which is the lower part of the uterus, and India reports around 80,000 cases and 42,000 deaths annually due to this disease.

To prevent cervical cancer, the Government of India is launching a nationwide HPV vaccination programme targeting adolescent girls, especially around the age of 14 years, as vaccination is most effective before exposure to the virus. The programme follows a single-dose schedule recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the vaccine will be provided free of cost at government health centres to improve public health and reduce cancer-related deaths.

29. Satellite Phones and National Security Concerns

Satellite phones are communication devices that connect directly to orbiting satellites instead of ground-based mobile towers. This allows users to communicate from remote and inaccessible areas such as oceans, mountains, and disaster zones where regular mobile networks are unavailable. They operate through Geostationary (GEO) or Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites and require a clear line-of-sight to the sky for



signal transmission. Satellite phones can provide voice calls, SMS, and limited data services, though they are expensive and have slower data speeds and signal delays compared to regular mobile networks.

Recently, the illegal use of satellite phones by vessels in Indian waters has raised national security concerns. Because satellite communications are difficult to monitor and track, they can be misused for unauthorized activities such as smuggling, illegal fishing, or security threats. However, satellite phones remain important for emergency response, maritime communication, and disaster management, especially in areas without conventional network coverage.

30. Statue of C. Rajagopalachari Unveiled at Rashtrapati Bhavan



A statue of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, popularly known as Rajaji, was unveiled in the Central Courtyard of Rashtrapati Bhavan. Rajaji was the first and only Indian Governor-General of independent India, serving from 1948 to 1950. He was a prominent freedom fighter, statesman, and close associate of Mahatma Gandhi.

The statue replaces the colonial-era statue of British architect Edwin Lutyens, symbolizing India's effort to remove colonial symbols and honour national icons. This initiative reflects the country's focus on recognizing leaders who contributed to India's independence and nation-building, while promoting national pride and historical legacy.

31. PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana is a flagship scheme launched in 2024 by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) to promote rooftop solar power in India. It is the world's largest domestic rooftop solar initiative, aiming to install rooftop solar systems in 1 crore households. Recently, around 30 lakh households have adopted rooftop solar under this scheme, marking significant progress toward clean energy goals.



The scheme provides free electricity up to 300 units per month to participating households and offers subsidies of up to 40% for rooftop solar installation. It is planned to run until FY 2026–27. The initiative helps reduce electricity costs for households, promotes renewable energy adoption, and supports India's transition toward sustainable and clean energy.

32. PMO Shifted to 'Sewa Teerth'

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has shifted from South Block to a new office named 'Sewa Teerth' in New Delhi, marking the end of its 78-year presence at South Block. This move is part of the Central Vista Redevelopment Project, which aims to create a modern, efficient, and integrated administrative complex for better governance.

South Block, built in 1931 and located on Raisina Hill, had served as a key administrative centre since India's independence, housing the PMO and several important ministries. The relocation to Sewa Teerth reflects India's efforts to modernize its governance infrastructure and improve administrative efficiency in line with contemporary needs



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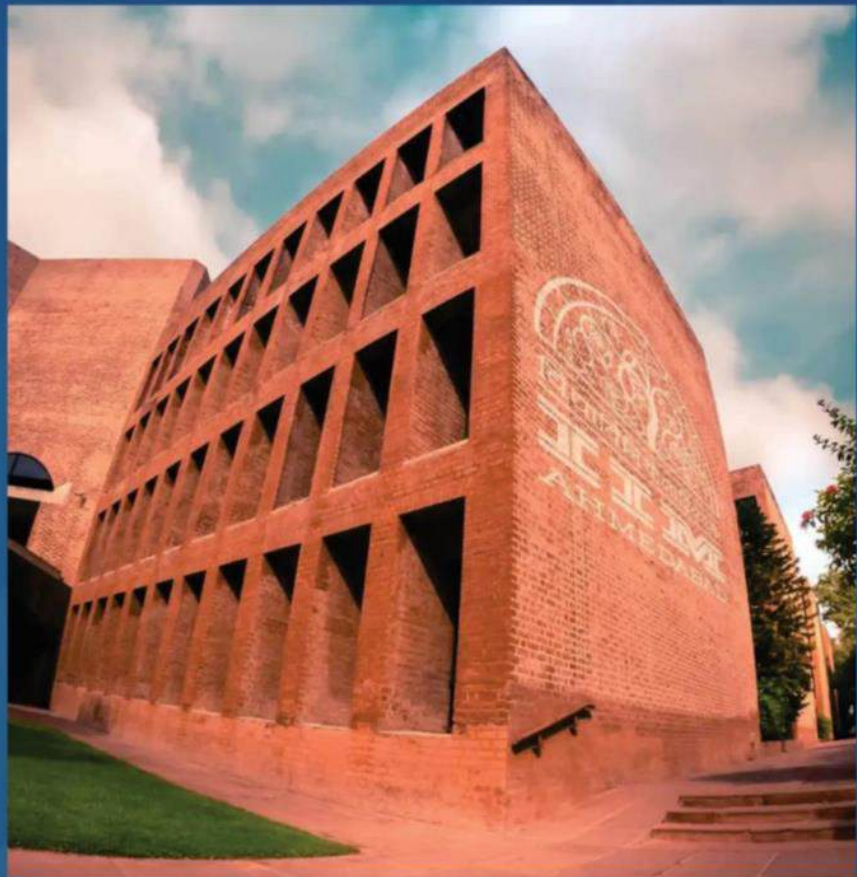
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2. STATE NEWS

33. Meghalaya's Living Root Bridges Nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Status

India has submitted a nomination dossier to UNESCO for Meghalaya's Living Root Bridges under the title "Jingkieng Jri / Lyu Chrai Cultural Landscape."

About Living Root Bridges (LRBs)

Locally known as Jingkieng Jri, these bridges are unique examples of indigenous bio-engineering practiced in Meghalaya.

Key Features

The living root bridges are made from the aerial roots of the India rubber tree (*Ficus elastica*). They were developed by the indigenous Khasi and Jaintia tribal communities and are mainly found in the East Khasi Hills and West Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya. To build these bridges, the roots of the trees are carefully guided across streams, intertwined, and strengthened with stones. Over time, the roots grow thicker and stronger, and it usually takes about 10–15 years for a bridge to become fully functional.



Ecological and Cultural Significance

These bridges have great ecological and cultural significance. They serve as important rural connectivity solutions in dense subtropical moist broadleaf forests. The bridges are climate-resilient and become stronger as they grow over time. They are naturally self-repairing and also help in carbon sequestration. Moreover, they reflect the traditional ecological knowledge and sustainable practices of local communities. Overall, living root bridges represent a rare example of living architecture that combines culture, ecology, and engineering.

They represent a rare example of living architecture, combining culture, ecology, and engineering.

Significance of UNESCO Nomination

If inscribed, the site would gain international recognition for its outstanding universal value as a cultural landscape, highlighting indigenous innovation and sustainable bio-engineering traditions.

34. Operation Kiya



Operation Kiya has recently been highlighted following an encounter in Basantgarh (Udhampur), Jammu and Kashmir, where security forces engaged infiltrated terrorists hiding in forested terrain.

About the Operation

Operation Kiya is a joint counter-terrorism operation conducted by security forces in Jammu and Kashmir.

It targets terrorists who infiltrate across the Line of Control (LoC) and take shelter in remote forest and mountainous regions.

Operation Kiya is aimed at tracking and neutralizing infiltrated terrorists while preventing the inter-district movement of militants. The operation also focuses on protecting civilian populations in vulnerable areas and strengthening surveillance along infiltration corridors. To achieve these objectives, security forces mainly employ a **cordon-and-search operation (CASO)** strategy, particularly in dense forests and hilly terrain. This strategy involves sealing off suspected zones, establishing layered cordons, blocking possible escape routes, and carrying out systematic search operations. The operation is significant because it enhances area domination in infiltration-prone regions, disrupts cross-border terror networks, and strengthens the internal security architecture in Jammu and Kashmir. By tightening security and surveillance, it also reduces the operational space available to militant groups. Overall, **Operation Kiya** reflects intensified counter-infiltration and counter-insurgency efforts in the region.

35. Discovery of Two New Marine Worm Species in West Bengal



Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), in collaboration with international researchers, have discovered two new species of marine worms belonging to the Nereididae (polychaete) family along the coast of West Bengal. The discovery highlights the rich but largely unexplored marine biodiversity of the northern Bay of Bengal.

Location of Discovery

The two new species were identified in the coastal waters of Digha and Bankiput, located in the Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal. These areas consist of mangroves, mudflats, and sandy coastal habitats that support diverse marine life.

About Nereididae (Ragworms or Clam Worms)

Nereididae are a family of marine polychaete worms commonly known as ragworms or clam worms. They are segmented worms characterised by long, slender bodies, a distinct head with eyes and tentacles, and parapodia (paired appendages) that help in movement and respiration.

Newly Discovered Species

1. *Namalycastis solenotognatha*

This species is named from the Greek words *solenotos* (channelled) and *gnatha* (jaw), referring to the unique canal-like structures in its jaw. It inhabits extreme environments such as sulfide-rich and organically enriched mudflats, particularly in areas associated with decomposing mangrove wood.

2. *Nereis dhritiae*

This species is named in honour of Dr. Dhriti Banerjee, the first woman Director of the Zoological Survey of India. It is typically found inside wooden dock piles on sandy beaches that remain submerged during high tide.

Ecological Significance

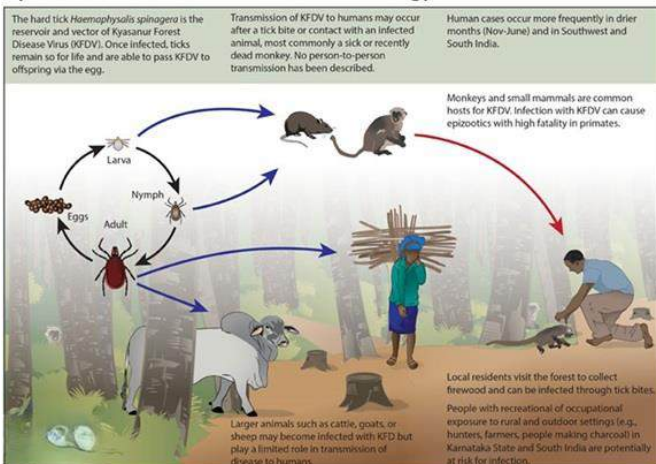
A key finding is that these worms can survive in highly polluted and human-impacted environments, making them important bioindicators for monitoring coastal ecosystem health. Nereidid worms play a crucial role in nutrient cycling and sediment aeration, helping maintain ecological balance. Their presence improves soil quality and supports marine biodiversity.

Importance of the Discovery

The discovery, published in the scientific journal *Zootaxa*, highlights the hidden biodiversity of India's coastal ecosystems despite heavy anthropogenic pressure. It also emphasises the importance of marine research and conservation for protecting fragile coastal environments.

36. Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)

Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD) Virus Ecology



Overview

Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), commonly known as “Monkey Fever,” is a tick-borne viral haemorrhagic disease found mainly in the forest regions of southern India. It was first identified in 1957 in the Kyasanur forest area of Karnataka, after which the disease was named.

Cause

KFD is caused by the Kyasanur Forest Disease virus, which belongs to the Flaviviridae family and Flavivirus genus, and is part of the Tick-Borne Encephalitis (TBE) complex.

Why it is called Monkey Fever

The disease is called Monkey Fever because outbreaks are often associated with sudden deaths of monkeys in forest areas. These deaths act as early warning signs of virus circulation in a particular region.

Transmission

KFD spreads through the bite of infected hard ticks, mainly *Haemaphysalis spinigera*, which act as the primary vector. Infection can also occur through direct contact with infected animals, especially sick or dead monkeys. The disease does not spread from person to person.

Symptoms

Symptoms usually appear within 3–8 days after infection and include high fever, headache, muscle pain, weakness, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea. In severe cases, haemorrhagic symptoms such as bleeding and neurological complications such as tremors, confusion, or unconsciousness may occur, and the disease can be fatal.

Treatment

There is no specific cure for Kyasanur Forest Disease. Treatment mainly involves supportive care such as maintaining fluid balance, providing oxygen support, managing blood pressure, and intensive care in severe cases.

Vaccination and Prevention

A vaccine for KFD is available in India and is recommended in endemic areas such as Karnataka, Kerala, Goa, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. Preventive measures include wearing protective clothing in forest areas, using tick repellents, avoiding contact with sick or dead monkeys, and ensuring vaccination in high-risk regions.

37. Kerala's Youngest Organ Donor – Aalin Sherin Abraham

Aalin Sherin Abraham, a 10-month-old infant from Kerala, became the youngest organ donor in the state. Her act of organ donation was honoured by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Mann Ki Baat programme in 2026.

In recognition of this extraordinary act, the Kerala government announced that a new transplant unit would be named after her. Prime Minister Modi praised her parents' decision as an act of extraordinary humanity and compassion.

This incident has helped raise awareness about organ donation and highlighted its importance in saving lives.



38. GI-Tagged Salem Sago Export to Canada



The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, facilitated the export of the first GI-tagged Salem Sago consignment from Tamil Nadu to Canada in February 2026. This marked the first direct international shipment of Salem Sago by a GI-authorized producer, strengthening India's efforts to

promote Geographical Indication (GI) products in global markets. The initiative is expected to enhance export opportunities and increase income for farmers and producers involved in sago cultivation and processing.

Salem Sago is a starch-based food product made from tapioca (cassava) roots and originates from Salem district in Tamil Nadu, which is known as the “Land of Sago.” The region produces over 80% of India’s sago, making it the country’s major production hub. Salem Sago received the GI tag in March 2023, recognizing its unique quality and regional identity. Apart from its use in food products such as sabudana, it is also used in textile, pharmaceutical, and other industrial applications.

The export of GI-tagged Salem Sago highlights the importance of GI certification in promoting regional products globally. It helps ensure better prices, protects product authenticity, and improves livelihoods of farmers and workers. The initiative also aligns with India’s strategy to expand value-added agricultural exports and strengthen rural economic development.

39. Beat the Heat Programme



The Beat the Heat Programme is a global climate initiative aimed at tackling extreme heat in urban areas. It was launched under the COP30 Presidency and is supported by the UNEP Cool Coalition. The programme focuses on reducing the impact of rising temperatures and promoting sustainable and climate-resilient cooling solutions in cities.

The initiative encourages measures such as tree plantation, cool roofs, and the adoption of energy-efficient cooling technologies. These steps help lower urban temperatures, reduce energy consumption, and protect vulnerable populations from heat-related risks. The programme also supports cities in improving heat-resilient urban planning and strengthening climate adaptation strategies.

Participation and Importance

In 2026, around 30 cities in Maharashtra joined the Beat the Heat Programme, highlighting India’s commitment to climate action and urban sustainability. The initiative plays an important role in protecting public health, reducing environmental impact, and building climate-resilient cities for the future.

40. Kamala Hydroelectric Project

The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has recommended environmental clearance for the Kamala Hydroelectric Project in Arunachal Pradesh. The project has been proposed by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Limited as part of efforts to enhance India’s renewable energy capacity and strengthen power infrastructure in the northeastern region.



The project will be constructed on the Kamala River, which is a major right-bank tributary of the Subansiri River, in the Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh. The Subansiri River itself is one of the important tributaries of the Brahmaputra River, making the region significant for hydropower development due to its strong river flow and terrain.

41. India's First National Cow Culture Museum



India's first National Cow Culture Museum will be established in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. The museum will be set up at Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Veterinary Science University and aims to showcase the cultural, economic, and agricultural significance of indigenous cattle in India.

The museum will highlight prominent indigenous breeds such as Gir, Sahiwal, and Tharparkar, emphasizing their role in dairy production, sustainable agriculture, and rural livelihoods. It will also focus on cattle conservation and promote awareness about the importance of native breeds in maintaining biodiversity and ecological balance.

The museum will feature digital exhibits and research-based displays for students, researchers, and tourists. By documenting the historical and scientific aspects of cattle rearing in India, it seeks to strengthen conservation efforts and support sustainable agricultural practices while preserving India's traditional livestock heritage.

42. Brahmaputra Underwater Road-cum-Rail Tunnel Project

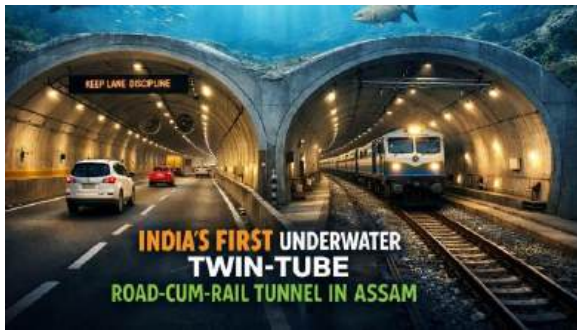
India is set to build its first underwater twin tube road-cum-rail tunnel beneath the Brahmaputra River in Assam. The tunnel will connect Gohpur on National Highway-15 with Numaligarh on National Highway-715, significantly improving connectivity between the north and south banks of the river. This ambitious infrastructure project will enhance transportation efficiency in the Northeast region.

The tunnel will have a total length of about 15.79 km and will include separate tubes for road and rail transport. It will be constructed using advanced Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) technology, ensuring safe, efficient, and modern underground construction. The project is designed to provide all-weather connectivity and reduce dependence on ferries and long surface routes.

Strategic and Economic Importance

The tunnel will reduce travel time, improve regional connectivity, and promote economic growth in Northeast India. It will also strengthen strategic and defence logistics by enabling faster movement of personnel and equipment near sensitive border areas. Overall, the project will play a key role in boosting infrastructure, trade, and national security in the region.

43. India's First Musical Road in Mumbai



India's first musical road has been developed on the Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj Coastal Road in Mumbai. The stretch is located between Nariman Point and Worli and introduces a unique blend of infrastructure and innovation aimed at enhancing the driving experience while promoting road safety.

The road uses specially designed rumble strips that create musical vibrations when vehicles pass over them at a specific speed. Drivers maintaining a speed of around 60–80 km/h can hear the tune “Jai Ho.” This feature encourages adherence to speed limits while adding an engaging element to the journey.

Innovation and Significance

The project was developed by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and is inspired by similar “melody roads” in countries such as Japan. As India's first musical road, it represents an innovative approach to urban infrastructure, combining traffic management, safety awareness, and creative engineering.

44. Assam Rifles Inducts Indigenous Dog Breeds

The Assam Rifles has begun inducting indigenous Indian dog breeds under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative to strengthen operational efficiency and promote self-reliance. As part of this effort, the force has already inducted the Tangkhul Hui breed from Manipur and plans to induct the Kombai breed from Tamil Nadu. This move highlights the growing recognition of native dog breeds for military and security purposes.



Training for these dogs is conducted at the Assam Rifles Dog Training Centre in Jorhat, Assam. Indigenous breeds are considered highly suitable for security operations because they are well adapted to Indian climatic conditions, possess strong endurance, and are more resistant to local diseases compared to foreign breeds.

Significance of the Initiative

The induction of indigenous dog breeds supports the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission by promoting local breeds and reducing dependence on imported dogs. Assam Rifles, which is India's oldest paramilitary force under the Ministry of Home Affairs, plays a crucial role in maintaining internal security and guarding border areas. This initiative strengthens operational capability while also encouraging conservation and recognition of India's native dog breeds.

45. Goa Releases Bird Atlas

Goa became the second state in India, after Kerala, to publish a Bird Atlas. It was officially released on 7 February 2026 during the Bird Festival of Goa. The atlas is an important scientific document that provides detailed information on the distribution and population of bird species across different regions of the state.

A Bird Atlas helps in biodiversity conservation by identifying bird habitats, migration patterns, and population trends. It plays a crucial role in ecological monitoring and helps scientists and authorities track environmental changes. The project also promotes citizen science by encouraging public participation in bird observation and wildlife conservation.

Importance for Conservation and Policy

The Bird Atlas supports government agencies and conservationists in planning effective habitat protection and environmental policies. It strengthens conservation efforts, raises awareness about wildlife protection, and contributes to preserving Goa's rich biodiversity.

46. Kalpetta Becomes India's First Fully Paperless District Court

Kalpetta, the judicial district in Wayanad, Kerala, has become India's first fully paperless district court. The initiative was virtually inaugurated by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and marks a major step toward digital transformation in India's judicial system.

All court processes in Kalpetta are now conducted digitally without the use of physical files. The court uses the District Court Case Management System (DCMS), developed by the Kerala High Court, to manage case records, filings, and proceedings efficiently. The system also includes AI-based tools that help in preparing case summaries and improving access to information.

Importance of the Initiative

The paperless system reduces paperwork, saves time, and improves efficiency in court operations. It also lowers administrative costs and delays while promoting eco-friendly "green jurisprudence." This initiative sets an example for other courts in India and supports the modernization of the country's judicial infrastructure.

47. Operation Demolishment



Operation Demolishment is a counter-insurgency drive launched by Indian security forces to dismantle Naxal propaganda infrastructure in affected regions. It targets memorials and symbolic structures built by Maoist groups to glorify leaders and influence local communities.

Recently, over 200 Naxal-linked memorials were demolished in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh by central forces and state police. The operation aims to weaken Naxal ideological presence and strengthen government control in Left-Wing Extremism-hit areas.

48. Our Lady of Grace Cathedral – UNESCO Heritage Award

Our Lady of Grace Cathedral in Vasai, Maharashtra, won the Award of Merit at the 2025 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards. These awards, established by UNESCO in 2000, recognize outstanding cultural heritage conservation projects across the Asia-Pacific region. They focus on technical excellence, cultural authenticity, and active community participation in preserving heritage sites.

The cathedral is a 16th-century Portuguese-era church, around 475 years old, reflecting India's colonial and religious history. It was recently restored through a community-funded conservation project, showcasing local involvement in heritage protection. The award highlights India's strong commitment to preserving its historical monuments and promoting cultural heritage conservation.



3. INTERNATIONAL NEWS

49. New START Treaty

The New START Treaty is set to expire in 2026 amid ongoing tensions between the United States and Russia, raising concerns about the future of nuclear arms control and global strategic stability.

The New START (New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) is a bilateral nuclear arms control agreement between the United States and Russia. It was signed in 2010 and entered into force in 2011. The treaty replaced the earlier START I agreement and aimed to continue structured nuclear arms reductions between the two largest nuclear powers.

Core Objective

The primary objective of New START is to limit and reduce deployed strategic nuclear weapons. Under the treaty, both the United States and Russia are allowed to maintain no more than:

- 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads each
- 700 deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and heavy bombers
- 800 deployed and non-deployed launchers combined

These limits apply specifically to deployed strategic systems capable of long-range nuclear delivery.

Verification and Transparency

The treaty includes robust verification mechanisms, such as:

- On-site inspections
- Data exchanges and notifications
- Monitoring of missile tests

These measures enhance transparency and reduce the risk of miscalculation between the two nations.

Global Significance

New START is the last remaining legally binding nuclear arms control treaty between the United States and Russia. It plays a critical role in maintaining strategic stability, supporting international nuclear non-proliferation efforts, and reinforcing global arms control architecture.

By capping deployed strategic arsenals and ensuring verification, the treaty contributes to global peace and reduces the risk of a renewed nuclear arms race.

50. Doomsday Clock



In January 2026, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the Doomsday Clock to 85 seconds to midnight, the closest ever to global catastrophe.

What is the Doomsday Clock?

Created in 1947 after World War II, the Doomsday Clock is a symbolic measure of how close humanity is to global disaster.

Midnight represents global annihilation, and the closer the clock moves to midnight, the greater the danger facing humanity. Earlier, this idea mainly focused on the threat of nuclear war between powerful nations. However, over time the concept has expanded to include other serious global risks. Today, it also takes into account dangers such as climate change, biological threats like pandemics, risks related to artificial intelligence (AI), and increasing global political instability that could threaten the future of the world.

Why Was It Moved in 2026?

The clock was advanced due to:

- Rising nuclear tensions (U.S., Russia, China)
- Weakening nuclear arms control (concerns over New START expiry)
- Ongoing wars (Ukraine, Middle East)
- AI integration into military systems and disinformation risks
- Continued climate crisis

51. Rafah Border Crossing



The Rafah border crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip has partially reopened after being largely shut since it was seized by Israel two years ago. Its reopening is significant for humanitarian access in Gaza.

The Rafah Border Crossing is located between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, at the southernmost edge of Gaza along Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. It is the only crossing point from Gaza that does not directly pass through Israel, which makes it

strategically and politically significant. Rafah is often referred to as Gaza's "lifeline" because it enables the entry of humanitarian aid, facilitates medical evacuations, and allows limited civilian movement when permissions are granted. Due to Gaza's restricted mobility and ongoing economic blockade conditions, the Rafah crossing plays a crucial humanitarian role for the population.

52. New Country Partnership Framework (NCPF)

India and the World Bank have signed a New Country Partnership Framework (NCPF) for 2026–2031, with a financial envelope of \$8–10 billion to support India's development priorities.

About the NCPF

The NCPF is a medium-term strategic engagement framework between India and the World Bank Group. It outlines priority sectors, reform areas, and financing commitments over a five-year period.

The 2026–2031 framework focuses on promoting private sector-led job creation, strengthening skill development and workforce upgradation, and reducing regulatory and financial barriers for MSMEs. It also aims to expand employment opportunities, particularly for youth and women. The framework is significant because it strengthens India–World Bank development cooperation, supports inclusive growth and labor-intensive sectors, and encourages entrepreneurship and MSME expansion. Overall, the National Country Partnership Framework (NCPF) acts as a roadmap for channeling multilateral financing and technical expertise toward sustainable and inclusive economic growth in India.

53. India Named 'Country of the Year' at BIOFACH 2026

India has been designated as the 'Country of the Year' at BIOFACH 2026, the world's leading trade fair for organic products.



BIOFACH is held annually in Nuremberg, Germany, and is organised at the Nuremberg Messe Exhibition Centre. The event serves as a global platform for organic producers, exporters, policymakers, and stakeholders to showcase innovations, certifications, and sustainable agricultural practices.

Being named 'Country of the Year' provides India a dedicated platform to highlight its organic farming potential, export capacity, certification systems, and traditional sustainable agricultural practices. It also strengthens India's position in the global organic products market and promotes trade partnerships in the organic sector.

54. 68th Annual Grammy Awards (2026)

The 68th Annual Grammy Awards were held on February 1, 2026, Arena in Los Angeles, California. The ceremony was hosted by Trevor Noah. The Grammy Awards are presented by the Recording Academy to recognize outstanding achievements in the music industry worldwide.

American rapper Kendrick Lamar won the most awards at the ceremony, securing five Grammy Awards. He also won the Record of the Year award for the song "Luther," featuring SZA. Billie Eilish won the Song of the Year award for her song "Wildflower."

A historic highlight of the event was the Dalai Lama winning his first Grammy Award at the age of 90 in the category of Best Audiobook, Narration, and Storytelling Recording. He received the award for his album "Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama," becoming one of the oldest Grammy winners.

55. Henley Passport Index 2026

India ranked 75th in the Henley Passport Index 2026, improving from 85th position in 2025. Indian passport holders currently enjoy visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 56 countries.

About the Index

The Henley Passport Index ranks passports based on the number of destinations their holders can access without requiring a prior visa. It is published by Henley & Partners using data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The index covers 199 passports and 227 travel destinations worldwide.

The index reflects a country's global mobility, diplomatic relations, and international standing. A higher rank indicates stronger global access and better travel freedom for citizens.

Global Rankings

Singapore ranked first in the Henley Passport Index 2026, with visa-free access to 192 countries. India shares the 75th rank with Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Madagascar, and Mauritania.

56. BAFTA Awards and Film 'Boong' Historic Win

About BAFTA Awards

The BAFTAs (British Academy Film Awards) are annual film awards presented by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA). They honour outstanding British and international films and are among the most prestigious film awards globally. The first ceremony was held in 1949 and was first televised in 1956 on the BBC. The award trophy features a theatrical mask design, symbolizing performing arts. The ceremony is usually held in February, and the recent venue was the Royal Festival Hall in London.

Boong Wins BAFTA Award 2026

The Manipuri-language film Boong won the Best Children's & Family Film award at the BAFTA Awards 2026 (79th edition). This marks a historic achievement, as Boong became the first Indian film to win in this category at the BAFTA Awards.

Film Details

Boong was directed and written by Laxmipriya Devi and produced by Farhan Akhtar, Ritesh Sidhwani, Vikesh Bhutani, Alan McAlex, and Shujaat Saudagar. The film is in the Manipuri language and represents cinema from Northeast India.

Significance

The award is a major international recognition for Indian regional cinema, especially highlighting talent from Northeast India. It showcases the growing global presence and cultural importance of Indian films beyond mainstream cinema.

57. Mumbai to Host Earthshot Prize 2026

Mumbai will host the Earthshot Prize 2026, an international environmental award founded by Prince William, Prince of Wales. The prize recognizes innovative solutions to global environmental challenges, and five winners will receive £1 million each to support their projects.

The Earthshot Prize 2026 will be held in Mumbai, India, during Climate Week. Hosting the event highlights India's growing leadership in climate action and environmental sustainability, and it brings global attention to innovative solutions for protecting the planet.

58. India Invited to G7 Summit 2026

French President Emmanuel Macron has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the G7 Summit 2026, which will be held in Évian, France. India's invitation reflects its growing global influence and its important role in addressing key international challenges such as

economic stability, climate change, and global security. Although India is not a permanent member of the G7, it is regularly invited as a guest country due to its strategic and economic importance.

About G7

The G7, or Group of Seven, is a forum of seven major developed economies: the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Canada. It was established in 1975 to coordinate economic policies and promote global cooperation. The summit focuses on major global issues including economic growth, international security, climate action, and sustainable development.

59. Iran Temporarily Closes the Strait of Hormuz

Iran temporarily closed the Strait of Hormuz, a critical maritime chokepoint located between Iran and Oman/UAE. This narrow sea passage connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, making it one of the most important global routes for energy transportation. The closure has raised serious concerns about global energy security and international trade.

About 20% of the world's oil trade passes through the Strait of Hormuz, making it vital for major oil-exporting countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and the UAE. Any disruption in this route can affect global oil supply, increase fuel prices, and create economic uncertainty. The strait's strategic importance makes it a sensitive region in global geopolitics.

Impact on India and Global Economy

India is heavily dependent on this route, importing around 50% of its crude oil and nearly 60% of its natural gas through the Strait of Hormuz. Any closure or disruption can increase import costs, affect energy availability, and impact India's economy. Therefore, the Strait of Hormuz remains a key strategic chokepoint influencing global energy markets and international stability.

60. Chabahar Port and Its Strategic Importance

Chabahar Port is located in Iran on the Gulf of Oman and has been developed with India's support to enhance regional trade and connectivity. The port plays a crucial role in improving India's access to Afghanistan and Central Asia without relying on land routes through Pakistan. This makes it strategically important for India's economic and geopolitical interests.

The port is part of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a major trade route connecting India with Iran, Central Asia, Russia, and Europe. It is operated by India Ports Global Limited (IPGL), reflecting India's direct involvement in managing and developing the port infrastructure.

Economic and Strategic Significance

Chabahar Port strengthens India's trade connectivity, reduces transportation costs, and improves access to new markets. It also enhances India's strategic presence in the region and supports regional stability and economic cooperation. The port is considered a key project in expanding India's global trade network and securing its long-term geopolitical interests.

61. Punch-kun: The Viral Baby Macaque



Punch-kun is a baby Japanese macaque living at Ichikawa City Zoo in Japan, who went viral in 2026 for his strong attachment to an orangutan stuffed toy. Videos and photos showing Punch-kun hugging and carrying the toy captured global attention and highlighted emotional behavior in primates. His story became popular on social media and news platforms, showcasing animal

bonding and zoo care.

A macaque is a type of monkey belonging to the genus *Macaca*, and they are among the most widespread primates in the world, especially across Asia. In contrast, orangutans belong to the great ape group, which also includes humans, chimpanzees, and gorillas. Punch-kun's attachment to an orangutan toy also symbolically connects two different primate groups—monkeys and great apes—helping raise awareness about primate species and conservation.

62. Speaker of the Knesset Medal

The Speaker of the Knesset Medal is the highest parliamentary honour awarded by Israel. It is presented by the Speaker of the Knesset, Amir Ohana, which is Israel's unicameral parliament. The medal recognises individuals who have made significant contributions to strengthening Israel's diplomatic, strategic, or cultural relations.



This honour reflects recognition from Israel's legislative institution rather than the executive branch. Recently, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi became the first-ever recipient of this medal after his address to the Knesset, highlighting the growing India-Israel strategic partnership in areas such as defence, technology, and innovation.

63. Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006 – 20th Anniversary



The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) marked the 20th anniversary of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006,

which is known as the “Seafarers’ Bill of Rights.” Adopted in 2006 by the International Labour Conference in Geneva, the convention establishes global standards to ensure decent working and living conditions for seafarers worldwide.

The MLC covers key aspects such as minimum age, wages, working hours, leave, and employment conditions. It also ensures access to health care, proper accommodation, and social security protection for seafarers. The convention applies to all seafarers regardless of their nationality or the flag of the ship, promoting fair treatment and improving safety and welfare in the global maritime sector.

64. Reintroduction of Giant Tortoises on Floreana Island



A total of 158 hybrid giant tortoises have been released on Floreana Island, part of the Galápagos Islands in the Pacific Ocean near Ecuador, to restore ecological balance. The Galápagos Islands are globally significant for their unique biodiversity and inspired Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. Due to their ecological importance, the islands were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978.

Giant tortoises play a crucial role as ecological engineers by dispersing seeds and shaping vegetation, which helps maintain healthy ecosystems. Many giant tortoise species are classified as Endangered or Critically Endangered by the IUCN. The reintroduction programme aims to restore the island’s ecosystem and revive traits of the extinct native tortoise lineage, which was driven to extinction in the 19th century.

4. BOOKS AND AUTHORS

65. Odisha Governor Released Two Books authored by Former AP Governor



In February 2026, Hari Babu Kambhampati, Governor of Odisha released two books authored by Biswabhusan Harichandan, former Odisha Cabinet Minister and former Governor of Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Chhattisgarh.

- The books were released titled ‘E Mati Katha Kahe’ in Odia language and ‘Buxi **Jagabandhu**: The Great Commander’ in English languages.

About Books:

Buxi Jagabandhu: The Great Commander: This book is a tribute to Odisha's Paika leader. It documents one of the earliest resistance movements against British Colonial rule.

E Mati Katha Kahe: It is a collection of essays which gives reflection on democracy, Odia identity, national leadership and spiritual traditions, including the Nabakalebara of Lord Jagannath.

66. Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan Releases Book on Sree Narayana Guru



In February 2026, Vice-President (VP) of India, Chandrapuram Ponnusami (C. P.) Radhakrishnan, released the book titled 'The Sage who Reimagined Hinduism: The Life, Lessons and Legacy of Sree Narayana Guru' authored by Member of Parliament (MP), Dr. Shashi Tharoor, at the India International Centre (IIC) in New Delhi (Delhi).

- The book was published by Aleph Book Company.

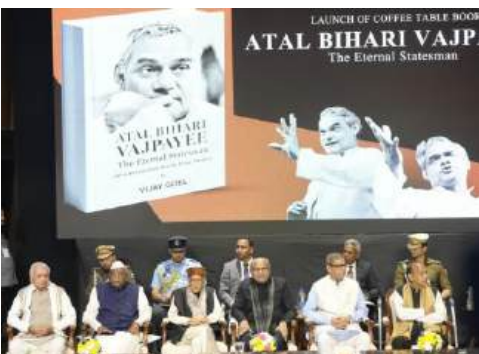
About Book on Sree Narayana Guru:

Subject: The book presents a detailed biography and analytical study of Sree Narayana Guru, the 19th-century spiritual leader and social reformer from Kerala who led a movement against casteism and social discrimination.

Philosophy: It highlights his core message, 'One Caste, One Religion, One God for humankind,' advocating equality, self-respect, social justice, and universal brotherhood.

Reforms: The work explores his inclusive temple consecrations, promotion of education for disadvantaged communities, and the establishment of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam in 1903 to advance socio-economic upliftment.

67. VP C.P. Radhakrishnan Releases Coffee Table Book on former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee



In February 2026, Chandrapuram Ponnusami (C.P.) Radhakrishnan, Vice President (VP) of India, released the coffee table book titled "Atal Bihari Vajpayee: The Eternal Statesman", authored by former Union Minister Vijay Goel, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS), at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The book was published by the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti (GSDS).

Key Details:

Significance: The book pays tribute to Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a Bharat Ratna awardee and former Prime Minister (PM) of India, through a rich collection of photographs and anecdotes that chronicle his journey as a poet, parliamentarian, and national leader.

Key Milestones: The book covers the major milestones achieved during his tenure as PM of India: Pokhran nuclear test (1998) and the visionary infrastructure initiative like Delhi Metro.

5. BANKING / ECONOMY

68. Orange Economy



The Union Finance Minister highlighted the Orange Economy in the Union Budget 2026, emphasizing its contribution to employment generation, innovation, exports, and India’s soft power.

Orange Economy

The Orange Economy, also known as the Creative Economy, refers to economic activities based on creativity, intellectual property, culture, and knowledge.

The term was coined by former Colombian President Iván Duque Márquez and Felipe Buitrago in their 2013 book *“The Orange Economy: An Infinite Opportunity.”*

The Orange Economy covers sectors such as:

- Film, music, and performing arts
- Publishing and media
- Advertising and design
- Fashion and handicrafts
- Gaming, animation, and digital content
- Software and creative technology services

These industries generate value primarily through ideas, talent, and intellectual property rather than traditional physical resources.

69. Biopharma SHAKTI

The Union Finance Minister announced Biopharma SHAKTI (Strategy for Healthcare Advancement through Knowledge, Technology & Innovation) to strengthen India’s biopharmaceutical sector.

Objective

The initiative aims to develop India into a global biopharmaceutical manufacturing hub by building a robust ecosystem for the domestic production of biologics and biosimilars.

It focuses on enhancing research capacity, advanced manufacturing infrastructure, innovation, and regulatory support to reduce import dependence and boost exports.

What are Biologics?

Biologics are medicines derived from living organisms or natural biological sources such as animal or plant cells and microorganisms.

They include:

- Vaccines
- Blood and blood components
- Monoclonal antibodies
- Proteins
- Gene therapies
- Somatic cell therapies

Biologics are typically more complex than conventional small-molecule drugs and require sophisticated production processes.

What are Biosimilars?

Biosimilars are highly similar versions of approved biologic medicines. They have no clinically meaningful differences in terms of safety, purity, and effectiveness compared to the original reference product.

They help improve affordability and access to advanced therapies while maintaining regulatory standards.

70. Bharat-VISTAAR



The Union Budget 2026–27 proposed the launch of Bharat-VISTAAR to strengthen agricultural development through digital public infrastructure.

What is Bharat-VISTAAR?

VISTAAR is envisioned as an open, interoperable, and federated public network dedicated to agricultural information and advisory services.

It aims to function as a digital backbone connecting farmers, agri-experts, institutions, startups, and government platforms.

Key Features

- **Open architecture:** Enables integration of multiple public and private service providers.
- **Interoperable framework:** Ensures seamless data exchange across platforms.
- **Federated model:** Decentralized structure rather than a single centralized database.
- **Verified content repository:** Hosts authenticated agricultural advisories, best practices, and technical knowledge.
- **Agri-skilling support:** Facilitates training, capacity building, and knowledge dissemination.

Objective and Significance

Bharat-VISTAAR seeks to:

- Improve access to reliable agricultural advisories
- Promote technology-driven farming practices
- Strengthen farmer skilling and productivity
- Create a collaborative ecosystem linking government bodies, research institutions, agri-startups, and service providers

It represents a move toward building a digital public infrastructure for agriculture, similar in spirit to India's broader DPI initiatives in finance and governance.

71. Grain ATMs



The Bihar government is setting up Grain ATMs to streamline and modernize ration distribution under the Public Distribution System (PDS).

Grain ATMs

A Grain ATM is an automated dispensing machine that distributes food grains such as wheat and rice directly to beneficiaries.

It functions similarly to a bank ATM but dispenses pre-allocated ration quantities using biometric authentication (such as Aadhaar-based verification).

Key Features

- Automated and contactless grain distribution
- Accurate weighing and dispensing
- Reduced human intervention
- Linked to beneficiary databases for transparency
-

Role of the World Food Programme (WFP)

The World Food Programme (WFP) launched a Grain ATM project in Odisha in 2024. According to WFP estimates, the system can reduce waiting time by up to 70% compared to traditional ration shops.

WFP developed the underlying technology in collaboration with the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and various state governments.

Significance

- Enhances efficiency in ration delivery
- Minimizes leakages and pilferage
- Improves transparency and accountability
- Reduces crowding and waiting time for beneficiaries

Grain ATMs represent a step toward digitized and technology-driven reform of India's food security delivery system.

72. SBI CHAKRA – Centre of Excellence

The State Bank of India (SBI) has launched CHAKRA (Centre of Excellence) as a knowledge-driven platform to strengthen financing for capital-intensive sunrise sectors. The initiative aims to build deep sectoral expertise and design innovative, policy-aligned financing models that can support industries with high upfront capital requirements and long gestation periods. By improving risk assessment frameworks and structuring advanced financial instruments, CHAKRA seeks to enhance both domestic and global debt flows into emerging strategic sectors.

CHAKRA focuses on eight priority areas, including renewable energy, advanced cell chemistry and battery storage, electric mobility, green hydrogen, semiconductors, decarbonisation technologies, smart infrastructure, and data and digital infrastructure. These sectors are expected to attract nearly ₹100 lakh crore in investments by 2030 and are central to India's green transition, industrial competitiveness, and technological self-reliance.

The Centre will use advanced risk analytics, publish sector-specific research, and collaborate with Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), multilateral agencies, NBFCs, and academic institutions. Overall, CHAKRA represents a strategic effort by SBI to catalyse sustainable financing, support innovation-driven growth, and strengthen India's position in next-generation industries.

73. National Monetisation Pipeline 2.0 (NMP 2.0)

The Government of India has launched the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) 2.0 to boost infrastructure financing and support economic development. The programme aims to monetise brownfield public infrastructure assets, allowing the government to generate funds from existing assets without increasing the fiscal burden.

NMP 2.0 has been developed by NITI Aayog and is implemented under the Ministry of Finance. The funds generated will be used for capital expenditure and the development of new infrastructure projects. The pipeline covers key sectors such as highways, railways, power, ports, coal, telecom, and aviation.

The initiative promotes private sector participation and ensures efficient utilization of public assets, helping improve infrastructure while mobilising resources for future growth.

74. Youngest Speaker at India AI Impact Summit 2026

Ranvir Sachdeva, an 8-year-old child prodigy, became the youngest keynote speaker at the India AI Impact Summit 2026. His achievement highlights the growing interest and early involvement of young minds in artificial intelligence and technology. Ranvir Sachdeva started coding at the age of 3, demonstrating exceptional talent and curiosity in programming



and emerging technologies from a very young age.

75. Nidhi Chhibber Takes Additional Charge as NITI Aayog CEO

Nidhi Chhibber took additional charge as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NITI Aayog in 2026. She succeeded B. V. R. Subrahmanyam in this role, marking an important leadership transition in India's premier policy think tank. Nidhi Chhibber also serves as the Director General of the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), which functions under NITI Aayog. DMEO is responsible for monitoring and evaluating government programmes and schemes.

Significance

Her appointment strengthens NITI Aayog's role in policy planning, programme monitoring, and evaluation. With her experience in DMEO, she is expected to enhance evidence-based policymaking and improve the effectiveness of government initiatives.



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6. SUMMIT, RANKS AND REPORTS

76. ICANN85 Community Forum – Mumbai (2026)



The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) will hold its 85th Public Meeting (ICANN85 Community Forum) in Mumbai, India, from 7–12 March 2026.

The event will be hosted by the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India.

This marks ICANN’s return to India after its previous meeting in Hyderabad in 2016. Participation in the Mumbai meeting is free and open to all, although no on-site registration will be available.

About ICANN

Genesis

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) was established in 1998 as a nonprofit public benefit corporation. It operates through a global multistakeholder model, involving governments, private sector entities, technical experts, civil society, and internet users from across the world.

Core Functions

ICANN oversees the global system of unique internet identifiers that enable devices and networks to locate and communicate with one another. Its key responsibilities include:

- Coordinating the Domain Name System (DNS).
- Managing allocation and assignment of IP addresses to prevent duplication or conflicts.
- Overseeing generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs) such as .com, .org, etc.
- Ensuring stable and secure operation of the internet’s naming infrastructure.

Through these functions, ICANN plays a central role in maintaining the stability, security, and interoperability of the global internet.

77. Network Readiness Index (NRI) 2025 Released



Overview

India has improved its digital readiness ranking to 45th position in the Network Readiness Index (NRI) 2025, moving up four places from the previous year. The index is released by the Portulans Institute, a non-profit research organisation based in Washington, DC. It evaluates how effectively countries use Information and Communication

Technologies (ICTs) to support economic growth and social development.

Methodology

The NRI 2025 assesses 127 economies using 53 indicators, grouped under four pillars: Technology, People, Governance, and Impact. These indicators measure factors such as digital infrastructure, workforce readiness, regulatory environment, and the economic and social outcomes of digitalisation.

India's Score and Rank

India's overall score improved from 53.63 in 2024 to 54.43 in 2025, reflecting progress in digital infrastructure, connectivity, and policy support. The improvement in rank and score highlights India's strengthening position in the global digital ecosystem.

India's Global Performance in Key Indicators

India ranked **1st globally** in key areas such as annual investment in telecommunication services, AI scientific publications, ICT services exports, and e-commerce legislation.

It secured **2nd rank** in indicators including Fibre-to-the-Home (FTTH) subscriptions, mobile broadband internet traffic, and international internet bandwidth.

India also ranked **3rd globally** in indicators related to domestic market scale and income inequality.

Performance Among Income Groups

Among lower-middle-income countries, India ranked **2nd globally**, after Vietnam. This indicates that India is performing better than expected relative to its income level, demonstrating strong progress in digital readiness and technological advancement.

78. New Delhi Declaration on AI Governance (2026)



The New Delhi Declaration was endorsed by 89 countries at the AI Impact Summit 2026, held in India. It serves as a global framework for promoting ethical, inclusive, and secure governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The declaration is based on the principle of "AI for All," emphasizing equitable access to AI technologies and ensuring that all countries benefit from AI-driven

development.

The declaration aims to bridge the global AI divide and promote inclusive and sustainable growth. It supports initiatives such as the Global AI Impact Commons and Trusted AI Commons to encourage collaboration, innovation, and responsible AI use. It also focuses on developing trusted, secure, and energy-efficient AI systems. The declaration is non-binding, meaning it acts as a roadmap to guide international cooperation rather than imposing legal obligations.

79. Future Hosts of the AI Impact Summit

It was announced during the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi that the next editions of the summit will be hosted by Geneva, Switzerland, in 2027 and by the United Arab Emirates in

2028. This reflects the growing global importance of the summit as a platform for international cooperation on Artificial Intelligence governance and innovation.

The selection of Geneva highlights its role as a global diplomatic hub and center for international organizations, while the UAE's hosting underscores its rapid emergence as a leader in AI development and digital transformation. These future summits aim to strengthen global collaboration, promote responsible AI use, and advance inclusive technological progress worldwide.

80. India Ranked 91st in Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025



India ranked 91st out of 182 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025, with a score of 39 out of 100, which is below the global average score of 42. The index was released by Transparency International, headquartered in Berlin, Germany. The CPI measures perceived levels of public sector corruption, using a scale where 0 indicates highly corrupt and 100 indicates very clean governance.

At the global level, Denmark secured the highest position with a score of 89, making it the least corrupt country in the ranking. On the other end of the spectrum, Somalia and South Sudan recorded the lowest scores of 9, reflecting extremely high levels of perceived corruption. Among major democracies, the United States ranked 29th, while the United Kingdom stood at 20th in the index.

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7. AGREEMENTS / MOU

81. India–United Kingdom Agreement on Social Security Contributions (2026)

Overview

On 10 February 2026, the Government of India and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland signed an Agreement on Social Security relating to Social Security Contributions in New Delhi.

The Agreement was signed by Vikram Misri, Foreign Secretary of India, and Lindy Cameron, the British High Commissioner to India.

Background

India has been entering into bilateral Social Security Agreements (SSAs) with various countries to safeguard the interests of Indian professionals and skilled workers posted abroad for short durations. These agreements aim to prevent financial losses due to mandatory double social security contributions and enhance the global competitiveness of Indian companies operating overseas.

The conclusion of this Agreement was a commitment made during the signing of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between India and the UK in July 2025.

Key Provisions

- The Agreement prevents double social security contributions for employees temporarily assigned to the other country.
- It applies to short-term assignments of up to 36 months.
- Employees will continue to contribute to and remain covered under the social security system of their home country.
- Eligible employees can obtain a Certificate of Coverage (CoC) to claim exemption from host country contributions.

Significance

- Facilitates mobility of professionals and skilled workers between India and the UK.
- Reduces cost burdens on employees and employers.
- Strengthens India–UK cooperation in the services sector, leveraging expertise and innovation in both economies.
- Forms an integral component of the broader India–UK trade framework.

Implementation

The Agreement will come into effect alongside the implementation of the India–UK CETA, planned for the first half of the current year.

The signed text will be hosted on the websites of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) to facilitate stakeholder access and compliance.

82. India–GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to deepen economic integration and institutionalise trade relations. The GCC is a regional political and economic bloc comprising six Gulf countries.

What is the GCC?

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established in 1981 and includes:

- Saudi Arabia
- United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- Qatar
- Kuwait
- Oman
- Bahrain

The GCC functions as a customs union and aims at economic, political, and security cooperation among member states.

Why is the India–GCC FTA Important?

1. Strategic Trade Partner

- The GCC is one of India's largest trading blocs.
- Bilateral trade between India and GCC countries exceeds USD 150 billion annually (recent years).
- The GCC is a major supplier of crude oil and LNG to India.

2. Energy Security

- India imports a significant portion of its crude oil and gas from GCC countries.
- An FTA would strengthen long-term energy cooperation.

3. Investment and Financial Flows

- Sovereign wealth funds from GCC countries invest heavily in India's infrastructure, real estate, startups, and renewable energy sectors.
- The agreement could facilitate smoother capital flows.

4. Indian Diaspora

- Over 8 million Indians reside in GCC countries.
- Remittances from the region form a substantial share of India's inward remittance inflows.

Key Objectives of the Proposed FTA

- Reduction or elimination of tariffs on goods.
- Greater market access for services such as IT, healthcare, education, and fintech.
- Facilitation of investment flows.
- Cooperation in digital trade, renewable energy, food security, and logistics.
- Strengthening supply chains and manufacturing linkages.

Strategic Significance

- Supports India's West Asia engagement policy.
- Enhances diversification of GCC economies away from oil dependence.
- Strengthens India's trade diversification strategy beyond traditional Western markets.

- Complements India's other FTAs (e.g., with UAE and Australia).

8. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS

83. Sunetra Pawar Becomes First Woman Deputy CM of Maharashtra



On January 31, 2026, Sunetra Pawar, a Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament (MP), was sworn in as Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister (DyCM), becoming the first woman to assume the post in the state's history.

- The oath of office and secrecy was administered by Maharashtra Governor Acharya Devvrat at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai (Maharashtra), in the presence of CM Devendra Fadnavis and other cabinet ministers.

Background:

Vacancy: The Deputy CM post became vacant after a tragic plane crash killed Ajit Pawar, leader of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and late husband of Sunetra Pawar, on January 29, 2026.

Legislative Requirement: Currently Sunetra Pawar is not a member of the Maharashtra legislature. As per constitutional provisions, She will need to become a Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) or Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) within six months to continue holding the Deputy CM post.

84. RBI Approves Vinay Muralidhar Tonse as MD & CEO of YES Bank

On February 3, 2026, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved the appointment of Vinay Muralidhar Tonse as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of YES Bank for a term of three years. His appointment is further subject to Shareholder approval.

- He will succeed Prashant Kumar, whose tenure is scheduled to end in April 2026.



About Vinay Muralidhar Tonse:

Profile: He is a banker with over three decades of experience in Indian and international banking. He has worked across multiple business lines and held senior leadership roles in banks such as State Bank of India (SBI).

Career: In 1988, he joined SBI as a Probationary Officer (PO) and spent over 30 years rising through banks.

Leadership Positions: He worked as Deputy MD at SBI and looked after the Corporate Accounts Group (CAG), managing relationships and credit facilities for large corporate clients.

- He served as MD & CEO of SBI Funds Management Limited (SBI Mutual Fund), the asset management arm of SBI.
- He also served as the Managing Director (MD) (Retail Business & Operations) until 30 November 2025.

About Yes Bank:

Founded in 2003 by Rana Kapoor and Ashok Kapur, YES Bank received its banking licence from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in May 2004 and is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

85. Yumnam Khemchand Singh Sworn In As Manipur CM after One Year of President's Rule



On February 4, 2026, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Manipur Legislative leader Yumnam Khemchand Singh took oath as the new Chief Minister (CM) of the State, nearly a year after President's rule was imposed.

Other Ministers: BJP's Nemcha Kipgen, from the Kuki community, and Naga People's Front Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Losii Dikho, from the Naga community, took oath as deputy CM, with Kipgen becoming the first woman to hold the post in Manipur.

President Rule: On February 13, 2025, 5 days after the resignation of N. Biren Singh and breakdown of the constitutional machinery, the president rule was imposed in Manipur under Article 356 of the constitution.

86. RBI approves Vijay Anandh as new MD and CEO of City Union Bank w.e.f May 1

In February 2026, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved the appointment of R. Vijay Anandh as the new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the City Union Bank Limited (CUB), recognised as one of India's oldest private sector banks, for a period of 3 years.



- Following the RBI's approval, the appointment is further subject to final ratification by the bank's shareholders.

Appointment Effective From: His Appointment will take effect from **May 01, 2026**, along with remuneration of Rs 2.50 crore per annum.

Succeeds: Anandh will succeed **Dr. N. Kamakodi** who has been serving as MD and CEO of the private bank since May 2011.

Indian Cricketer Shikhar Dhawan Appointed as Brand Ambassador of Inaugural Delhi Khel Mahakumbh

On February 9, 2026, former Indian cricketer and Arjuna Awardee Shikhar Dhawan was appointed as the brand ambassador of the inaugural Delhi Khel Mahakumbh by the Government of Delhi.

About Delhi Khel Mahakumbh:

Overview: The event will be held on February 13, 2026, in 16 locations across all 12 districts of Delhi.

- It is a large-scale grassroots sports festival launched by the Directorate of Education and Sports, Government of Delhi to strengthen sports participation at grassroots level.

Sports Included: The event includes games such as basketball, football, athletics, kabaddi, wrestling, squash, and volleyball.

87. CA Prasanna Kumar D Elected as the President of the ICAI

On February 12, 2026, Chartered Accountant (CA) Prasanna Kumar D elected as the 74th President of Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), under Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), for the 2026-27 term, with immediate effect. He succeeds CA Charanjot Singh Nanda.

- CA Mangesh Pandurang Kinare has been elected as Vice-President (VP) for 2026-27 term.

About CA Prasanna Kumar D:

Profile: He is a senior CA from Visakhapatnam with over four decades of professional experience in areas, encompassing practice, institutional governance, policy involvement, and member welfare initiatives.

Early Career & Qualification: He qualified as a Chartered Accountant (CA) in 1984 and is a Fellow Member of ICAI, a distinction awarded to members with extensive professional experience and significant contributions to the accounting profession. He hails from Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh (AP).

Leadership at Branch & Regional Level: He served as Chairman of the Visakhapatnam Branch of ICAI (2001–02). Subsequently, he was a Member of the Southern India Regional Council (SIRC) from 2007 to 2016, and held the position of Chairman of SIRC (2013–14).

88. Gujarat Govt Appoints Uday Kotak as Chairman of GIFT City

In February 2026, the Gujarat Government, led by Chief Minister (CM) Bhupendra Patel, appointed industrialist and veteran banker Uday Suresh Kotak as the Chairman of Gujarat International Finance Tec-City Company Limited (GIFTCL), with immediate effect.

- He replaces Hasmukh Adhia, a retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer and former Secretary of Ministry of Finance(MoF), who had been serving as the non-executive chairman of GIFT City since June 19, 2023.

89. Tarique Rahman Sworn in as 11th PM of Bangladesh



On 17th February 2026, Tarique Rahman, the Chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), was sworn in as the 11th Prime Minister (PM) of Bangladesh after the formation of a new government following the 2026 general elections. He became the first PM of Bangladesh following the July Revolution.

- Tarique Rahman's swearing-in ended the 18-month interim administration led by Muhammad Yunus, who served as Chief Adviser from August 2024 to February 2026 and resigned on 16 February 2026.

90. Rob Arnoldus Adrianus Jetten Sworn in as Youngest PM of the Netherlands

On 23 February 2026, Rob Arnoldus Adrianus Jetten was sworn in as the youngest-ever Prime Minister(PM) of the Netherlands at the age of 38, also becoming the country's first openly gay head of government, marking a historic milestone in Dutch politics and inclusive leadership.

- He succeeded Dick Schoof, who served as Prime Minister from 2024 and continued in a caretaker role after the government collapsed in June 2025 until the new coalition took office.
- The swearing-in ceremony was administered by Willem-Alexander, King of the Netherlands, at Huis ten Bosch Palace in The Hague, Netherlands.



91. IIT-M Prof. B. Ravindran Appointed to UN International Panel on AI

In February 2026, Professor B. Ravindran, of Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M) was appointed to the United Nations (UN) Independent International Scientific Panel in Artificial Intelligence (AI), announced by UN Secretary-General António Guterres at India AI Impact Summit 2026 (New Delhi, Delhi). Represents India & Global South among 40 global experts.

- 1st global scientific body established by UN to provide detailed and independent scientific assessments of AI's impact on society.

About Prof. B. Ravindran:

Current Role: At present, Prof. Ravindran works as Head of the Wadhvani School of Data Science and AI (WSAI).

Other Role: He is the founding head of Centre for Responsible AI (CeRAI) at IIT-M.

Experience: He has an experience of more than 30 years in AI, research interests span responsible AI and deep reinforcement learning.

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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

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9. DEFENCE NEWS

92. Exercise Khanjar

India is currently conducting a series of major military exercises—Khanjar, Agni Pariksha, and Vayu Shakti-2026—reflecting enhanced operational preparedness, inter-service coordination, and defence diplomacy.

Exercise Khanjar (Missamari, Assam)

Exercise Khanjar is the 13th edition of the annual India–Kyrgyzstan Special Forces joint drill. It is conducted between India’s Parachute Regiment (Special Forces) and Kyrgyzstan’s ILBRIS Brigade.

The exercise focuses on:

- Counter-terrorism operations
- Urban warfare
- Mountain warfare
- Sniping skills
- Tactical interoperability

Held in Assam, it strengthens bilateral military cooperation and improves joint Special Forces capability in high-altitude and complex combat scenarios.

93. Exercise Agni Pariksha (Sigar, Arunachal Pradesh)

Agni Pariksha is a first-of-its-kind joint exercise between the Indian Army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

The drill aims to:

- Familiarise non-artillery personnel with artillery procedures
- Enhance integrated firepower coordination
- Improve synergy in high-altitude operational environments

Conducted in Arunachal Pradesh, it strengthens coordination in border management and rapid response capabilities.

94. Exercise Vayu Shakti-2026 (Pokaran, Rajasthan)

Vayu Shakti-2026 is the Indian Air Force’s largest day-to-night airpower exercise, conducted at the Pokaran firing range.

It involves over 120 aircraft, including:

- Rafale
- Su-30 MKI
- Tejas
- Mirage-2000
- Apache helicopters

- AWACS platforms

The exercise demonstrates:

- Precision strike capabilities
- Suppression of Enemy Air Defences (SEAD)
- Network-centric warfare
- Integrated air combat operations

Significance

These exercises collectively underscore:

- Enhanced combat readiness
- Improved jointmanship across services and paramilitary forces
- Strengthened defence partnerships
- Demonstration of advanced air and land warfare capabilities

They signal India's continued focus on modernisation, interoperability, and deterrence preparedness.

95. Agni-III Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile Successfully Test-Fired



Agni-III (Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile)

On 7 February 2026, India successfully test-fired the Agni-III Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha. The launch validated all operational and technical parameters and was conducted under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command (SFC).

Key Features of Agni-III

- Developer: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
- Type: Two-stage, solid-fuelled ballistic missile
- Range: Exceeds 3,000 km (approx. 3,000–3,500 km)
- Payload Capacity: Up to 1.5 tonnes
- Warhead Capability: Can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads
- Estimated Nuclear Yield: 200–300 kilotons
- Launch Platform: Surface-to-surface; deployable from rail and road-mobile launchers
- Operational Role: Enhances survivability, flexibility, and credible deterrence

Agni-III forms a crucial component of India's nuclear deterrence architecture, particularly in strengthening long-range strike capability.

Agni Missile Series

The Agni series was conceptualised in the 1980s under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP) and constitutes the backbone of India's credible nuclear deterrence.

Evolution of the Agni Series

- Agni (Technology Demonstrator) – First tested in 1989
- Agni-I – 700–1,250 km
- Agni-II – 2,000–2,500 km
- Agni-III – 3,000–3,500 km (solid-fuel, mobile missile inducted into service)
- Agni-IV – 3,000–4,000 km; tested in 2014; advanced indigenous systems; under field trials
- Agni-V – Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)-class; ~5,000+ km; canisterised and road-mobile
- Agni-VI (under development) – Expected range of 8,000–10,000 km; land and submarine launch capability; enhances second-strike capability
- Agni Prime (Agni-P) – New-generation, nuclear-capable, two-stage canisterised missile; range of 1,000–2,000 km; lighter and more advanced than earlier variants
- **Strategic Significance**
 - Strengthens India's credible minimum deterrence doctrine.
 - Enhances second-strike capability and survivability through mobility and canisterisation.
 - Expands strategic reach across regional and intercontinental theatres.
 - Reinforces India's indigenous defence technology ecosystem under DRDO.
- Agni-III remains a critical pillar in India's long-range nuclear deterrent and strategic forces architecture.
- India in Talks with France to Procure SCALP Cruise Missiles

96. SCALP (Storm Shadow)



India and France are in discussions to finalise a major procurement deal for SCALP cruise missiles. The missile came into focus after its reported use by the Indian Air Force in precision strikes against terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan during Operation Sindoor last year, demonstrating its operational effectiveness in

stand-off precision attacks.

About SCALP Missile

The SCALP missile, also known as Storm Shadow, is a long-range, air-launched cruise missile developed jointly by France and the United Kingdom. It is currently deployed by several NATO and allied air forces. Designed for deep strike missions, it is capable of hitting high-value, well-defended targets such as bunkers, ammunition depots, and strategic installations.

Features

The missile has a launch weight of approximately 1,300 kg and a length of about 5.10 metres. It is powered by a turbojet engine and has a range of around 250 km in its export version. SCALP carries a tandem warhead configuration consisting of a shaped charge for

initial penetration followed by a high-explosive charge to maximise internal damage. This makes it particularly effective against hardened and fortified targets.

Guidance and Navigation

SCALP is equipped with an advanced guidance system that includes an Inertial Navigation System (INS), GPS-based navigation, and terrain reference navigation for mid-course flight. In the terminal phase, an onboard infrared seeker compares the live target image with a pre-programmed stored image to ensure high precision and minimal collateral damage. Its stealth design and low-altitude flight profile allow it to evade radar detection and operate effectively in night and all-weather conditions.

Strategic Significance

The SCALP missile enhances stand-off strike capability by allowing aircraft such as the Rafale to engage targets deep inside enemy territory without entering heavily defended airspace. This improves survivability, strengthens deterrence, and provides greater operational flexibility in modern high-intensity conflict scenarios.

97. Exercise MILAN 2026

Exercise MILAN is the Indian Navy's largest multilateral naval exercise, being held in Visakhapatnam in its 2026 edition with participation from more than 70 nations. It is a biennial exercise hosted by the Indian Navy and serves as a major platform for strengthening maritime cooperation among friendly navies from across the world.

Launched in 1995 at Port Blair with the participation of just four navies, MILAN has evolved into a premier global naval exercise. Over the years, it has expanded in scale, scope, and strategic importance, reflecting India's growing role in maritime diplomacy and Indo-Pacific security.

The exercise promotes interoperability, professional exchanges, coordinated maritime operations, and mutual trust among participating countries. The theme for MILAN 2026 is "Camaraderie, Cooperation and Collaboration," highlighting the collective commitment towards ensuring a free, open, and secure maritime environment.

98. Exercise Dharma Guardian



Exercise Dharma Guardian is a bilateral military exercise conducted between the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF). It focuses on strengthening defence cooperation, interoperability, and joint tactical operations between the two countries. The exercise enhances coordination in counter-terrorism operations and promotes closer strategic ties under the India–Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership. The recent edition was held at Chaubattia in Uttarakhand.

99. Exercise Vajra Prahar

Exercise Vajra Prahar is a joint military exercise between the Indian Army and the United States Special Forces, commonly known as the Green Berets. The exercise aims to improve joint operational capabilities, especially in counter-terrorism and special operations in varied terrains. It strengthens military-to-military cooperation and strategic partnership between India and the United States. The recent edition was conducted at Bakloh in Himachal Pradesh.



100. PRAHAAR – India’s National Counter-Terrorism Policy

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has launched PRAHAAR, India’s first comprehensive National Counter-Terrorism Policy. It marks a major shift from a reactive response-based system to a proactive, intelligence-driven approach to counter terrorism. The policy aims to strengthen prevention, early detection, and coordinated response to terrorist threats across the country.

PRAHAAR focuses on improving coordination among security agencies, enhancing intelligence sharing, and building national resilience against terrorism. It also emphasizes prevention of radicalization, protection of human rights and rule of law, and alignment with international counter-terrorism efforts. The policy aims to create a unified and strategic framework to effectively prevent, respond to, and recover from terrorist incidents.

101. INS Anjadip – Dolphin Hunter



INS Anjadip is the third Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC) being commissioned into the Indian Navy. It has been built indigenously by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, as part of an eight-ship project aimed at strengthening India’s coastal defence and maritime security. The induction of INS Anjadip enhances

India’s capability to detect and counter enemy submarines in shallow coastal waters.

The ship is equipped with advanced weapons such as torpedoes, anti-submarine rockets, and mine-laying systems. A torpedo is a self-propelled underwater weapon with an explosive warhead designed to destroy enemy vessels or submarines. INS Anjadip is also fitted with the indigenous ‘Abhay’ Hull Mounted Sonar, which uses sound waves to detect submarines underwater, improving surveillance and threat detection.

In addition to anti-submarine operations, INS Anjadip can perform coastal surveillance, search and rescue missions, and maritime security tasks. Its commissioning strengthens India’s naval preparedness and supports the goal of enhancing indigenous defence manufacturing under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

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Career Counselling

10. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

102.SAIL Earns 'Great Place to Work' Certification for Third Consecutive Time

In January 2026, Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), a Maharatna Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) and India's largest steelmaker, earned the 'Great Place to Work' certification for the period February 2026 to February 2027.

•This marks the third consecutive year that SAIL has received the certification, following a company-wide assessment conducted by the Great Place To Work Institute, India.

About SAIL's Recognition:

Commitment: This recognition reflects SAIL's commitment to nurture a workplace culture that is contemporary, agile and deeply aligned with the professional and personal growth of its people.

Assessment : SAIL achieved a notable increase in its TRUST INDEX© score, indicating a high level of positive feedback from employees during the evaluation.

Performance Transparency: SAIL continues to introduce progressive Human Resource (HR) initiatives, with SAIL DARPAN promoting a transparent, performance-driven system that ensures objective evaluation, aligned target setting, and empowers employees to take ownership of their growth.

103.68th Grammy Awards 2026: Dalai Lama, K-Pop Win First Grammys, Bad Bunny Wins Album of the Year

On February 1, 2026, the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, won his first Grammy Award in the Best Audio Book, Narration, and Storytelling Recording category for "Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness the Dalai Lama", a project blending his spoken reflections with music and cultural elements, at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, United States of America (USA).

- Singer-songwriter Rufus Wainwright accepted the award on behalf of Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso.
- The track "Golden" from KPop Demon Hunters won Best Song Written for Visual Media, marking the first Grammy win for a Korean Pop (K-Pop).

Highlights of the Grammy Awards 2026:

Major Four Categories:

Best Music Film: Steven Spielberg earned his first Grammy for Best Music Film as a producer on Music for John Williams, a documentary honoring John Williams' career.

Album of the Year: Bad Bunny won the Album of the Year (AOTY) award for Debi Tirar Mas Fotos, marking the first win for a Spanish language album.

Record of the Year: The song “Luther”, a collaborative track by Kendrick Lamar and SZA, won the Record of the Year award.

Song of the Year: The song “Wildflower”, written by Billie Eilish and Finneas O’ Connell, won the Song of the Year award.

Best New Artist: Olivia Dean, singer-songwriter, won the Best New Artist award.

104. Union Minister Rajnath Singh Approves Miniratna Category-I Status for Yantra India

On February 2, 2026, Union Minister Rajnath Singh, Ministry of Defence (MoD), approved Miniratna Category-I status for Yantra India Limited (YIL), a Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU).

- With Miniratna Category I status, YIL’s board can approve capital expenditure up to Rs.500 crore on projects and equipment without prior government approval, boosting operational and financial autonomy.

About Yantra India Limited:

Formation : YIL was established on 1 October 2021 after the corporatisation of the former Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) into seven new DPSUs. It is a Schedule ‘A’ DPSU under the Department of Defence Production (DDP) under the MoD.

Products: The main products of YIL include carbon fibre composites, ammunition assemblies, armoured vehicle parts, artillery guns, Main Battle Tanks (MBTs), glass composites, aluminium alloys, etc.

YIL’s Performance: The sales of YIL grew from Rs.956.32 crores in Second Half (H2) of Financial Year 2021-22 (FY 22) to Rs.3,108.79 crores in FY 25.

105. Arunachal Pradesh Mountaineer Kabak Yano Summits Mount Aconcagua in Argentina

In February 2026, 27-year-old Indian mountaineer Kabak Yano, hailing from Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh (AR), successfully summited Mount Aconcagua in Argentina, the highest peak in South America and the Western Hemisphere with a height of 22,831 feet (ft) (6959 meters, m) above sea level, as part of her ongoing 7-Summit Mountaineering Expedition.

- Kabak Yano is the first woman from the Nyishi community and the fifth woman climber from AR to summit Mount Aconcagua.

About Expeditions:

Expedition Flag-off: Kabak Yano's 7-Summit Mountaineering Expedition was flagged off on 28 July 2025 at Lok Bhavan, Itanagar, by AR Governor Lieutenant (Lt.) General K.T. Parnaik (Retired).

Completed Summits:

- Mount Everest: In May 2024, Kabak Yano had earlier scaled Mount Everest, the highest peak (8849 m) (29032 ft) in the world.
- Mount Kilimanjaro: She successfully summited Mount Kilimanjaro (5895 m) (19340 ft) in Africa on 4 August 2025.
- Mount Elbrus: She scaled Mount Elbrus (5642 m) (18510 ft) in Europe on 16 August 2025.

Remaining Peaks: The expedition includes the future ascent of Denali (6190 m) (North America), Vinson Massif (4892 m) (Antarctica), and Puncak Jaya (4884 m) or Mount Kosciuszko (2228 m) (Oceania).

106. Indian-Origin Climate Scientist Veerabhadran Ramanathan Awarded 2026 Crafoord Prize in Geosciences

On February 2, 2026, Indian-origin climate scientist Veerabhadran Ramanathan was awarded the 2026 Crafoord Prize in Geosciences by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, one of the highest international honour described as the 'Nobel of Geosciences'.

- He recognised for decades of pioneering climate research, particularly on aerosols, super pollutants, and atmospheric brown clouds, which have reshaped the understanding of global warming and the Earth's energy balance.
- The award will be presented during Crafoord Days in Stockholm and Lund, Sweden, in May 2026.

About Veerabhadran Ramanathan:

Profile: He is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California San Diego in California, United States of America (USA) and serves as an adjunct professor in global development at Cornell University(USA).

Scientific Contributions: In 1975, he discovered that Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) trap heat up to 10,000 times more efficiently than Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), a groundbreaking revelation in climate science.

Key Research Initiative: He spearheaded major projects like the Indian Ocean Experiment (INDOEX), which identified widespread atmospheric brown clouds over South Asia and demonstrated their impact on regional climate, including weakened monsoons and accelerated glacier melting.

107. HMG Stones Secures ISO 9001:2015 and 5S Gold Grade Certifications

In February 2026, HMG Stone LLP (HMG Stones), a premium natural stone importer, exporter, manufacturer and supplier, achieved International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001:2015 certification for its Quality Management System (QMS) and 5S Gold Grade certification for workplace organisation and operational discipline.

•With this, HMG Stones became the first company in India's natural stone industry to simultaneously secure both certifications.

Certifications Overview:

ISO 9001: HMG Stones has been awarded ISO 9001:2015 by TÜV India Private Limited, accredited by German based accreditation body DAkkS, certifying a robust QMS for consistent quality and customer satisfaction.

5S Gold: The company received the 5S Gold Grade (Basic Level Category) from Japan's Asia Bunka Kaikan-Association for Overseas Technical Scholarship (ABK-AOTS) DOSOKAI (Alumni association) for excellence in workplace organisation and operational discipline.

Framework: The 5S system implemented the Japanese 5S framework Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardise, and Sustain supported by regular training on 5S awareness, internal audits, fire safety, first aid, emergency drills, Personal Protective Equipment usage, and waste management to strengthen accountability and workplace safety culture.

Coverage: The certifications cover manufacturing units at Attibele (Unit I) and Yadavanahalli (Unit II), the Wilson Garden flagship showroom (Unit III), and the Sankey Road Experience Centre.

108. Paradip Port Authority Wins First Prize at Swachhata Pakhwada Awards 2025

On February 3, 2026, Paradip Port Authority (PPA), Odisha, won the first prize at the Swachhata Pakhwada Awards 2025, instituted by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), for its outstanding efforts in cleanliness, sustainability, and community participation.

- The award was received by P.L. Haranadh, Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS), Chairman, PPA

About Swachhata Pakhwada Awards 2025:

Presenter: The award was presented by Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, MoPSW, in New Delhi (Delhi), in the presence of Union Minister of State (MoS) Shantanu Thakur, MoPSW, Vijay Kumar, Secretary, MoPSW.

Recognition: The awards recognize MoPSW organizations for exemplary performance during Swachhata Pakhwada Awards 2025 and Swachhata Hi Sewa 2025, focusing on cleanliness, citizen participation, waste management, and Safai Mitra welfare.

Three Pillars: It includes Jan Bhagidari, Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam, and Safai Mitra Suraksha.

109. Indian Teacher Rouble Nagi Wins Global Teacher Prize 2026



On February 5, 2026, Rouble Nagi, an Indian teacher and social activist, won the Global Teacher Prize 2026, which is described as the “Nobel Prize for Teaching”, at the World Government Summit held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

About the Global Teacher Prize:

Overview: An annual international award honouring an exceptional teacher for outstanding contributions to education and society.

Background: The award was instituted in 2014 by Global Education Management Systems (GEMS) Education and the Varkey Foundation, in collaboration with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Cash Prize: The award includes a cash prize of USD 1 million, awarded to one winner every year.

About Rouble Nagi:

Profile: Rouble Nagi, an Indian teacher, artist, and social reformer from Mumbai (Maharashtra), is widely known for integrating art with education to drive social change. She transitioned from conventional teaching to grassroots social intervention.

- She worked directly in villages and urban slums, focusing on children who had never attended school or were at risk of dropping out.

Founder: She founded the Rouble Nagi Art Foundation (RNAF) to institutionalise her work, designing education programmes, mobilising communities, and training volunteers.

- Through RNAF, she established 800+ learning centres across India and created educational murals in public spaces to teach literacy, maths, science, and history.

About Global Education Management Systems (GEMS) Education:

Chairman – Sunny Varkey

Headquarters – Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Established – 1959

110. USA's New York City Joins WHO's Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network

On February 5, 2026, New York City (United States of America, USA) joined the World Health Organization (WHO)'s Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN), a global public health cooperation network.

- Earlier, Illinois (USA) joined the WHO's GOARN on February 3, 2026.

About GOARN:

Overview: GOARN is a network coordinated by the WHO, established in 2000. It brings together over 360 institutions worldwide.

Framework: It operates under the broader United Nations (UN) Health Network framework, which is coordinated by the WHO.

Purpose: The initiative aims to detect, monitor, and respond quickly to disease outbreaks and public health emergencies.

Detection & Surveillance: It monitors global disease reports, signals, and alerts, aggregating information from WHO member states, hospitals, laboratories, and other institutions.

Capacity Building: It offers training, guidance, and expertise to countries and regions, helping to strengthen local and national public health systems and promoting best practices for outbreak response and preparedness.

Indian GOARN Partner Institutions: Empower School of Health; Indian Council of Medical Research – National Institute of Epidemiology (ICMR-NIE); Manipal Institute of Virology; National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC); National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD); National Institute of Virology (NIV); Population Council Institute; and The INCLIN Trust International.

111. Smriti Mandhana Named BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025

In February 2026, the 6th edition of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Indian Sportswoman of the Year (ISWOTY) Awards 2025 was held in New Delhi, Delhi recognising the outstanding achievements of Indian sportswomen across various disciplines.

- Star cricketer Smriti Mandhana was honoured with the BBC ISWOTY 2025 for playing a key role in India's 2025 International Cricket Council (ICC) Women's World Cup triumph with 434 runs as vice-captain and for captaining Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to their second Women's Premier League (WPL) title.

112. Manipuri Film 'Boong' Wins BAFTA Award for Best Children's & Family Film

In February 2026, the Manipuri-language film 'Boong', became the first Indian film to win the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Award for Best Children's & Family Film at the 79th edition of the ceremony held at the Royal Festival Hall in London, the United Kingdom (UK).

- At the ceremony the trophy was presented by Paddington Bear from Paddington The Musical, and Bollywood actor Alia Bhatt attended as a guest presenter.

About the film 'Boon'g:

Film: Boong is a Manipuri-language coming-of-age comedy-drama directed by debutant Lakshmipriya Devi and produced by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani under Excel Entertainment.

Plot: It follows a young boy, Boong, who embarks on a journey with his friend Raju to reunite his mother Mandakini with his father Joykumar.

Acting Honours: In the acting categories, Robert Aramayo won Best Leading Actor for his role in 'I Swear', while Jessie Buckley received Best Leading Actress for 'Hamnet', which also earned the Outstanding British Film award.

113. Bhavya Bharat Bhushan Award

The Bhavya Bharat Bhushan Award is a national honour launched in 2026 by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev through the Isha Foundation. It was introduced during the Mahashivratri celebrations at the Isha Yoga Center, Coimbatore, to recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to India's growth, nation-building, and society across fields like science, sports, arts, national security, and social service.

Awardees and Significance

The inaugural award honoured several eminent personalities, including former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan, badminton legend Saina Nehwal, and educationist Dr. N. Rajam. The ceremony was attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh as chief guest. The award aims to promote excellence, recognize national contributors, and inspire citizens to work toward India's development and progress.

114. Aditya Pandya: India's Youngest Male Analog Astronaut

Aditya Pandya became India's youngest male analog astronaut at the age of 17 after completing a space simulation mission in Dholavira, Gujarat. The mission was conducted by AAKA Space Studio in February 2026 and focused on preparing participants for future space exploration through realistic space environment simulations.

During the mission, he experienced simulated Moon-like isolation, habitat management, and autonomous operations. He worked on important areas such as Internet of Things (IoT) systems, habitat intelligence, and digital technology, which are essential for long-duration space missions.

Importance for India's Space Future

Analog astronaut missions help prepare scientists and astronauts for real space missions by testing human performance, technology, and survival systems in controlled environments. Aditya Pandya's achievement contributes to India's future space programmes, including Gaganyaan and lunar exploration missions, and highlights the growing interest of Indian youth in space science and innovation.

115. Puducherry Doctors Dr. Haripriya Aravind & Dr. R. Venkatesh Win Chang-Crandall Humanitarian Award 2026

In February 2026, two senior ophthalmologists from Puducherry, Dr. Haripriya Aravind and Dr. R. Venkatesh, have been selected for the Chang-Crandall Humanitarian Award 2026 for their exceptional contributions in cataract blindness prevention and visual disability care. Both doctors are affiliated with the Aravind Eye Care System (AECS).

• The award will be presented during the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS) Foundation conference in Washington DC, the United States of America (USA), on April 11, 2026.

11. SCIENCE AND TECH

116. Artemis III Mission

Artemis III is a NASA-led crewed lunar mission planned for late 2026. It is part of the Artemis program, which aims to return humans to the Moon and establish a sustainable lunar presence.

Main Objectives

- Land astronauts on the Moon's South Pole
- Put the first woman and first person of color on the Moon
- Search for and study water ice deposits
- Analyze lunar resources and surface composition
- Test technologies to support future human missions to Mars

Significance

- It will mark the first human lunar landing since Apollo 17 in 1972
- The South Pole region is scientifically significant due to potential water ice in permanently shadowed craters

- It represents a transition from short-term exploration to building a long-term human presence on the Moon
- It strengthens international cooperation and commercial partnerships in deep-space exploration

Artemis III is considered a critical milestone in advancing human space exploration beyond low Earth orbit.

117. Power Gap Index

The Economic Survey 2025–26 referenced the Power Gap Index to highlight that India is operating below its full strategic potential in Asia.

Power Gap Index

The Power Gap Index is a secondary analytical measure derived from the Asia Power Index, published annually by the Australia-based Lowy Institute.

While the Asia Power Index ranks countries based on overall power, the Power Gap Index assesses the difference between a country's actual influence and its potential capacity, indicating whether it is overperforming or underperforming relative to its structural resources.

About the Asia Power Index

The Asia Power Index ranks 27 countries and territories across Asia using 131 indicators grouped into 8 thematic measures, including:

- Military capability
- Defense networks
- Economic capability
- Economic relationships
- Diplomatic influence
- Cultural influence
- Resilience
- Future resources

It evaluates both tangible power (economic size, military strength) and intangible influence (diplomacy, culture, networks).

India's Position (2025 Edition)

According to the 2025 edition, India has a Power Gap score of -4.0 , indicating that it is operating below its full strategic potential.

This suggests that while India possesses significant economic, demographic, and military capacity, its realized regional influence does not yet fully match its underlying structural strengths.

118. Moltbook: Social Platform for Autonomous AI Agents Launched

Moltbook is a social forum designed exclusively for autonomous AI agents, similar to Reddit, where only bots can post, comment, debate, and upvote. Humans are limited to observing interactions.

It was launched in January 2026 by Matt Schlicht. Many of the agents on the platform were built using the open-source AI agent framework OpenClaw.

The platform functions as an experimental environment where developers test AI autonomy, coordination, and machine social behaviour. Agents discuss topics, form communities (“submolts”), and even simulate cultural phenomena such as a mock religion called Crustafarianism.

Moltbook is not a platform for sentient AI or human-AI chat; it is a controlled space for studying machine-to-machine interaction.

119. Mangrove Clam



The Mangrove Clam is an ecologically significant bivalve mollusc scientifically known as *Geloina erosa*, and is also placed under the genus *Polymesoda* (sometimes referred to as *Polymesoda erosa*). It is commonly described as a mud or mangrove clam due to its habitat preferences.

Habitat and Distribution

Geloina erosa is found in mangrove forests and estuarine ecosystems across South and Southeast Asia. It thrives in brackish water environments, typically burrowing in muddy substrates within mangrove areas. These habitats provide the ideal mix of salinity, sediment, and organic matter required for its survival.

Ecological Importance

As a filter-feeding bivalve, the mangrove clam plays a crucial ecological role by:

- Filtering suspended particles and improving water quality.
- Contributing to nutrient cycling in mangrove ecosystems.
- Serving as a food source for local wildlife and coastal communities.

Its presence is often considered an indicator of healthy mangrove ecosystems.

Local Name

In Kerala, it is locally known as “Kandal Kakka.” It is traditionally harvested for food and holds economic importance for coastal fishing communities.

Overall, the mangrove clam is both ecologically valuable and socio-economically significant within coastal and estuarine environments.

120. Sarvam Kaze – India’s Indigenous AI Smart Glasses

Sarvam Kaze is India’s first indigenous AI-powered smart glasses, developed by Sarvam AI, an Indian startup. It gained attention when Prime Minister Narendra Modi wore the device at the AI Impact Summit 2026, highlighting India’s progress in artificial intelligence and wearable technology. The device represents a major step toward building sovereign AI solutions designed and developed within India.

Sarvam Kaze is an AI-powered wearable device that can listen, understand, and respond in real time. It supports voice interaction in more than 10 Indian languages and provides real-time translation, making communication easier across diverse linguistic groups. The glasses can also capture visual information and assist users through AI processing. This innovation reflects India's growing focus on AI innovation, self-reliance, and indigenous technology development.



12. SPORTS NEWS

121. Australian Open 2026: Carlos Alcaraz & Elena Rybakina Win Men's and Women's Singles Title

Carlos Alcaraz from Spain won the Men's Singles title while Elena Rybakina from Kazakhstan won the Women's Singles title at the Australian Open (AO) 2026, the first Grand Slam of the year, was held at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia, from January 18 to February 1, 2026.

- It was the 114th edition of the tournament, the 58th in the Open Era.

Highlights of Australian Open 2026:

Men's Singles: Spain's Carlos Alcaraz **defeated Novak Djokovic** 2–6, 6–2, 6–3, 7–5 to win his first Australian Open title. At 22 years and 272 days, he became the youngest man in the Open Era to complete a career Grand Slam, surpassing Don Budge's record from 1938.

Women's Singles : Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina defeated World No.1 Aryna Sabalenka 6–4, 4–6, 6–4 to claim her second Grand Slam singles title and became the first Kazakh woman to win the Australian Open singles crown.

Men's Doubles: Christian Harrison (the United States of America, USA) and Neal Skupski (the United Kingdom, UK) defeated Australia's Jason Kubler and Marc Polmans 7–6(7–4), 6–4 to win the title.

Women's Doubles: Elise Mertens (Belgium) and Zhang Shuai (China) defeated Anna Danilina (Kazakhstan) and Aleksandra Krunic (Serbia) 7–6(7–4), 6–4 to win the title.

Mixed Doubles: Australia's Olivia Gadecki & John Peers defeated France's Kristina

Mladenovic & Manuel Guinard 4–6, 6–3, [10–8], becoming the first team since 1989 to defend the Australian Open mixed doubles title.

Australian Open Deaf Championships 2026: Italian player Marco Carretta won both Men's Singles and Doubles titles at the 2026 Australian Open Deaf Tennis Slam in Melbourne Park, marking a historic double victory in the Deaf tennis category.

122. India to Host Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship 2027 in New Delhi

On February 3, 2026, India secured the hosting rights for the Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship 2027 following a successful bid by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI).

•It marks the second consecutive time India will host the premier continental championship for rifle and pistol shooters.

About Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship 2027:

Overview: The championship is scheduled to take place from 1 to 10 December 2027 at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Ranges in New Delhi, Delhi.

Olympic Qualification: The 2027 edition of the championship will serve as a qualifying event for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics (the United States of America, USA), with eight Olympic quota places available for shooters from across Asia.

•Eight Olympic quota places are continental slots that enable countries to earn spots for the Olympics.

Other Event: India is also scheduled to host the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup (Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun) in New Delhi in April 2027, where 12 Olympic quota places for the Los Angeles 2028 Games will be available to shooters.

123. Royal Challengers Bengaluru Clinch 2nd WPL Title 2026 Against Delhi Capitals

Royal Challengers Bengaluru Women's cricket team (RCB-W) clinched their second Women's Premier League (WPL) title 2026 by defeating Delhi Capitals Women's cricket team (DC-W) by six wickets in the WPL 2026 final held at Vadodara International Cricket Stadium, Vadodara (Gujarat).

- The 4th edition of the tournament was held from 9th January to 5th February 2026 in Mumbai (Maharashtra) and Vadodara (Gujarat).
- The TATA Group is the title sponsor of the WPL 2026

About Women's Premier League (WPL) 2026:

Overview:

WPL is a women's franchise Twenty20 (T20) cricket league organised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Teams: WPL featured five teams namely Gujarat Giants – Women cricket team (GG-W), RCB-W, Mumbai Indians – Women cricket team (MI-W), DC-W and UP Warriorz – Women cricket team (UPW-W).

Format: The tournament follows a double round-robin league stage followed by playoffs to determine the champion.

Prize Money: The winners **RCB-W** received a cash prize of Rs 6 crore, while the runner-up **DC-W** received Rs 3 crore.

First Edition: The inaugural WPL season was held in 2023 and was won by MI-W after defeating DC-W in the final.

Highlights of WPL 2026 Finals:

Chase: RCB-W chased 204/4 in 19.4 overs, achieving the highest successful run chase in WPL final history.

Captain: Smriti Mandhana led RCB-W and scored 87 off 41 balls, finishing as WPL 2026's leading run-scorer with 377 runs.

Partnership: Mandhana and Georgia Voll (79 off 54) stitched a 165-run second-wicket stand, the highest in a WPL final.

Records: DC's 203/4 became the highest first-innings total in a WPL final, and finished as runners-up for the fourth consecutive season while RCB-W's win marked their second WPL title, joining MI-W as the most successful teams.

124. India Wins Sixth ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup Title 2026 by Defeating England

In February 2026, India's Under-19(U19) men's cricket team clinched their record sixth International Cricket Council (ICC) U19 Men's Cricket World Cup(CWC) title by defeating England by 100 runs in the final at Harare Sports Club, Zimbabwe, as the 16th edition of the tournament was held from 15 January to 6 February 2026 across Zimbabwe and Namibia.

- India's victory was highlighted by Vaibhav Suryavanshi's remarkable 175-run knock off 80 balls, the highest individual score ever achieved in a U19 World Cup final, reaching 150 in 71 deliveries and ending the tournament with 439 runs and 30 sixes.

125. India Clinches SAFF U-19 Women's Football Title Against Bangladesh in Nepal

On 7th February 2026, India's Under-17 (U-17) women's national football team defeated Bangladesh 4–0 in the final of the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Under-19 (U-19) Women's Championship 2026 held at the Pokhara Rangasala Stadium, Nepal.

•The 7th edition of the SAFF U-19 Women's Championship was held from 31 January to 7 February 2026.

About SAFF Under-19 Women's Championship 2026:

Organiser: The tournament is organised by the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF).

Participants: The tournament featured four participating nations — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal.

Champions: India clinched their third SAFF U-20 Women's Championship title, having previously won in 2022 and 2024.

Team Strategy: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) fielded the U-17 squad in the U-19 tournament to prepare for the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U-17 Women's Asian Cup.

Most Valuable Player: Bangladesh's Alpi Akter was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament.

Top Goalscorer: Alpi Akter of Bangladesh also finished as the tournament's top goalscorer.

Best Goalkeeper: India's Munni received the Best Goalkeeper award for her outstanding performances.

Fair Play: The Indian team won the Fair Play Award for maintaining discipline throughout the competition.

About South Asian Football Federation(SAFF):

President– Kazi Salahuddin(Bangladesh)

Headquarters– Dhaka, Bangladesh

Established – 1997

126. India Tops Medal Tally with 94 Medals at Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship 2026 in Delhi

India topped the medal table for the second consecutive year with a remarkable haul of 94 medals, comprising 51 gold, 23 silver, and 20 bronze across senior and junior events at

the 17th edition of the Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship 2026, held from February 2 to 14, 2026 at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi (Delhi).

- Kazakhstan secured the position of second rank with 26 medals (3 Gold, 16 Silver, 7 Bronze), while Uzbekistan finished as the third with 4 medals (3 Gold, 1 Silver).

127. Services Defeat Kerala to Clinch 8th Santosh Trophy Title 2025-26 in Assam

On 8 February 2026, Services Football Team clinched their eighth Santosh Trophy title 2025-26 by defeating Kerala Football Team 1–0 in extra time in the 79th National Football Championship final at Dhakuakhana Football Stadium, Assam.

- The tournament was held from 15 December 2025 to 8 February 2026.

About Santosh Trophy 2025–26:

Organiser: The Santosh Trophy, founded in 1941 and organised by the All India Football Federation (AIFF), is India's premier senior national football championship.

Teams Participated: A total of 38 teams participated in the tournament with the 12 teams in the Final Round divided into two groups of six each.

Services Composition: The team is managed by the Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) and consists of players serving in the Indian Army (IA), Indian Navy (IN), and Indian Air Force (IAF).

Winning Goal: Abhishek Pawar scored the decisive goal in the 109th minute to seal the title for Services.

Prize: Services earned Rs. 5 lakh as winners and Kerala received Rs. 3 lakh as runners-up.

128. Overview of 2026 Winter Olympics Held in Italy; Norway Tops Medal Tally

The XXV Winter Olympic Games, officially known as Milano Cortina 2026, were held from 6 to 22 February 2026 across multiple venues in Lombardy and Northeast Italy, including Milan, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Bormio, and Val di Fiemme, marking the first time two cities officially co-hosted the Games.

- Norway topped the medal tally with 18 gold, 12 silver, and 11 bronze medals (total 41), followed by the United States of America (USA) with 12 gold, 12 silver, and 9 bronze medals (total 33), while the Netherlands secured third place with 10 gold, 7 silver, and 3 bronze medals (total 20).

About XXV Winter Olympic Games:

Venues: Events were held across four clusters—Milan (ice events), Cortina d’Ampezzo (women’s alpine and sliding sports), Valtellina/Livigno (freestyle and snowboard), and Val di Fiemme (Nordic events).

Organiser: The Games were organised under the International Olympic Committee (IOC) during the presidency of Kirsty Coventry, marking the first Olympics under her leadership.

Sports: Games featured 16 winter sports, including: Alpine Skiing, Biathlon, Cross-Country Skiing, Snowboarding, Freestyle Skiing, Ski Jumping, Figure Skating, Speed Skating, Short Track Speed Skating, Ice Hockey, Curling, Bobsleigh, Skeleton, Luge, Nordic Combined, and Ski Mountaineering.

Italy: Host nation Italy finished fourth in the medal standings with 10 gold, 6 silver, and 14 bronze medals (total 30), marking its best-ever Winter Olympic performance.

India: India fielded a two-member contingent—Arif Mohammad Khan (Alpine Skiing), who registered the nation’s best-ever finish in men’s slalom, and Stanzin Lundup (Cross-Country Skiing)—though the country did not secure a medal.

World record: Xandra Velzeboer is a Dutch short track speed skater who won gold medals in the 500 metres (m) and 1000 m at the 2026 Winter Olympics, setting a world record in the 500 m semi-finals.

129. Indian Army Won 6th Edition of Khelo India Winter Games 2026 Team Championship Title in J&K

The Indian Army (IA) successfully defended its team championship title at the 6th edition of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2026, which concluded its second leg held at Gulmarg Golf Course, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) on 23-26 February 2026, having secured a total of nine gold medals, eight from Gulmarg and one from the first leg of KIWG 2026 which was held in Leh, Ladakh from 20–26 January 2026.

•The IA emerged as overall champion with a total of 23 medals including 9 gold, 6 silver and 8 bronze followed by Himachal Pradesh (HP) with a total of 14 medals including 6 gold, 7 silver and 1 bronze and Haryana secured third place with 7 total medals including 4 gold, 1 silver and 2 bronze.

13. IMPORTANT DAYS

130. Indian Coast Guard Day 2026 – February 1

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Day is observed annually on 1 February to commemorate the establishment of the ICG under the Ministry of Defence (MoD), and to honour its crucial role in safeguarding India’s coastlines and enforcing maritime laws.

•1 February 2026 marks the 50th Raising Day of the ICG.

Background:

Declaration: The Indian Parliament declared ICG Day on 18 August 1978.

First Observance: The first ICG day was observed on 1 February, 1979.

History of Indian Coast Guard(ICG):

Establishment: In 1977, the Union Cabinet approved the creation of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG), with 2 frigates and 5 patrol boats transferred from the Indian Navy (IN).
Legal Formation: The ICG was officially formed on 1 February 1977 under the Coast Guard Act, 1978.

•The ICG was formally inaugurated by the then Prime Minister(PM) Morarji Desai on 19 August 1978.

First Coast Guard Vessel: In 1978, the first Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS), Kuthar (Pennant No. 31), was transferred from the Indian Navy(IN) to the ICG.

Key Responsibilities: It is responsible for maritime security and surveillance, search and rescue operations, anti-smuggling and anti-piracy actions, protection of fishermen, and disaster relief support during cyclones, floods, and other emergencies.

131. World Wetlands Day 2026 – February 2

The United Nations (UN's) World Wetlands Day (WWD) is observed annually across the globe on 2 February to raise global awareness about the importance of wetlands for environmental sustainability and human well-being.

•The day commemorated the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention), signed on 2 February 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2026.

•**2026 Theme:** “Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge: Celebrating Cultural Heritage”

Background:

Origins: WWD was first observed in 1997, organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and celebrated by its Contracting Parties.

UN Status: The day was declared a UN International Day by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) through Resolution A/RES/75/317, adopted on 30 August 2021.

UN Observance: The first UN-recognized World Wetlands Day was observed on 2 February 2022.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands:

Total Ramsar sites: As of January 2026, the Ramsar List remained the world's largest network of protected wetlands, with over 2,520 sites across 172 countries, covering nearly 2.5 million sq km.

World's First: The world's first Ramsar Site, Cobourg Peninsula in Australia, was designated in 1974.

132. World Cancer Day 2026 – February 4

World Cancer Day (WCD) is observed annually across the globe on 4th February to raise awareness about cancer prevention, early detection, and equitable access to treatment.

- 4 February 2026 marks the 27th observance of WCD.
- 2026 Theme: "United by Unique" is the second year of the three-year global campaign 2025-2027.

Background:

Adoption: On February 4, 1999, the Charter of Paris comprising 10 articles was adopted at the World Summit Against Cancer for the New Millennium held in Paris, France.

Proclamation: Under Article X of the Charter of Paris, WCD was officially proclaimed to be observed annually on 4 February.

First Observance: The first observance of WCD held on February 4, 2000.

Lead Initiative: WCD is an initiative led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), established in 2000 to unite and support the global cancer community.

Related Observance: India observes National Cancer Awareness Day annually on 7 November to raise awareness about cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment

On January 3, 2026, Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), formally released India's first nationally developed evidence-based cancer guideline "Lung Cancer Treatment and Palliation: Evidence-Based Guidelines" document at Kartavya Bhavan, New Delhi, Delhi.

133. International Day of Human Fraternity 2026 – February 4

The United Nations (UN's) International Day of Human Fraternity is observed annually on February 4 across the globe to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, mutual understanding, and solidarity among people of different faiths worldwide.

- 4 February 2026 marks the 6th observance of the International Day of Human Fraternity.
- The day also coincides with World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW), observed annually during the first week of February since 2010.

134. World Interfaith Harmony Week 2026 – February 1-7

The United Nations (UN's) World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) observes World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) annually during the first week of February (1–7) to foster peace, tolerance, and non-violence among people of all faiths.

- WIHW 2026 is observed from 1-7 February 2026.

Background: WIHW is rooted in the 'A Common Word' initiative launched in 2007, which united Muslim and Christian leaders to highlight shared values such as love for God and love for one's neighbor.

Proposal: WIHW was first proposed by H.M. King Abdullah II and HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan during the 65th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 23, 2010.

UN Recognition: On **October 20, 2010**, the UN officially designated the first week of February as WIHW through Resolution A/RES/65/5, aimed at promoting peace, nonviolence, and interfaith understanding worldwide.

First Observance: The inaugural WIHW was observed from February 1 to 7, 2011.

135. International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation 2026 – February 6

The United Nations (UN's) International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is observed annually on February 6 across the globe to raise global awareness, promotes the abandonment of FGM, and reinforces efforts to protect the rights and well-being of girls and women worldwide.

- 6 February 2025 marks the 14th observance of the UN-recognised International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM.
- **2026 Theme:** "Towards 2030: No End To FGM Without Sustained Commitment and Investment".

136. International Day of the Arabian Leopard 2026 – February 10

The United Nations (UN's) International Day of the Arabian Leopard is observed annually on February 10 every year to raise awareness about the conservation of the Arabian leopard, one of the rarest leopard subspecies in the world.

- 10th February 2026 marked the **3rd** observance of the International Day of the Arabian Leopard.

Significance: The day emphasizes protection of habitats, preventing poaching and illegal trade, promoting research and conservation programs, and engaging local communities.

137. National Deworming Day 2026 – February 10

National Deworming Day (NDD), led by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), is observed annually across India on 10 February and 10 August to protect children aged 1–19 years from intestinal worm infections, also known as Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STH).

- February 10, 2026 marks the 12th observance of NDD, followed by Mop-up Day (MUD) on 17 February to cover children who missed the initial dose.

138. World Pulses Day 2026 – February 10

The United Nations' (UN) World Pulses Day (WPD) is observed annually on 10th February across the globe to highlight the critical role of pulses, such as lentils, chickpeas, beans, peas, and lupins, in achieving food security, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agrifood systems.

- 10 February 2026 marks the 8th observance of the WPD.

2026 Theme: “Pulses of the World: From Modesty to Excellence”

Focus: The theme highlights pulses as nutritious, versatile foods that support sustainable diets and climate-smart agriculture.

139. Safer Internet Day 2026 – February 10

Safer Internet Day (SID) is observed worldwide on the second Tuesday of February to encourage awareness and advocate for the safe and responsible use of the internet, particularly among children and youth.

- SID 2026, observed on 10th February, marks the 23rd edition of the global event.
- Theme 2026: “Smart Tech, Safe Choices”

140. World Unani Day 2026 – February 11

World Unani Day is observed annually across the globe on 11th February to commemorate the birth anniversary of Mohammad Ajmal Khan, also known as Hakim Ajmal Khan, an eminent Indian Unani physician and social reformer.

- The day honors Unani medicine's contributions and its integration with modern science.
- 2026 Theme: “Innovation and Evidence in Unani Practice”.

141. International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2026 – February 11

The United Nations (UN's) International Day of Women and Girls in Science (IDWGIS) is observed annually on February 11 to advocate for equal participation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

The celebrations are led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), in collaboration with civil society.

2026 Event: On February 11 2026, IDWGIS was commemorated through a hybrid one-day event at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (France), under the theme: "From Vision to

Impact: Redefining STEM by Closing the Gender Gap".

142. International Darwin Day 2026 – February 12

International Darwin Day is observed annually across the world on February 12 to commemorate the birth of Charles Robert Darwin, the British naturalist and geologist who proposed the 'Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection'.

143. National Women's Day (13 February)

National Women's Day is celebrated in India on 13 February to mark the birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu, a prominent freedom fighter, poet, and political leader. She is popularly known as the "Nightingale of India" for her contribution to literature and her inspiring role in India's independence movement.

Sarojini Naidu was the first woman President of the Indian National Congress and also became the first woman Governor of Uttar Pradesh. The day is observed to honour her legacy and recognize the contributions of women in India's social, political, and cultural development.

144. World Radio Day (13 February)

World Radio Day is observed globally on 13 February to highlight the importance of radio as a powerful medium of communication. It commemorates the establishment of United Nations Radio in 1946. The day was proclaimed by UNESCO in 2011 and later adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012.

The theme for World Radio Day 2026 is "Radio and Artificial Intelligence: AI is a tool, not a voice." It focuses on the role of AI in supporting radio content creation, translation, and audience engagement while emphasizing the continued importance of human voice and judgment. In India, the first community radio station was inaugurated on 1 February 2004, and Ram Singh Buddh is known as the "Radio Man of India."

145. Global Tourism Resilience Day 2026 – February 17

The United Nations (UN's) Global Tourism Resilience Day (GTRD) is observed annually on February 17 to underline the need for a resilient tourism sector, highlighting its vulnerability to crises and the importance of preparedness and adaptability.

- February 17, 2026 marks the third observance of GTRD.

146. World Day of Social Justice 2026 – February 20

The United Nations (UN's) World Day of Social Justice is annually observed across the globe on February 20 to promote awareness of social justice issues, including poverty alleviation, employment, gender equality, and equitable access to education, healthcare, and social services.

- **2026 Theme:** “Renewed Commitment to Social Development and Social Justice”

147. International Mother Language Day 2026 – February 21

The United Nations (UN's) International Mother Language Day (IMLD) is annually observed across the globe on 21 February to promote linguistic diversity, preserve cultural heritage, and encourage multilingual education, highlighting the role of mother tongues in cultural identity, inclusion, peace, and sustainable development.

- 21 February 2026, marks the 27th observance of the IMLD.
- **2026 Theme:** “Youth voices on multilingual education”

148. Central Excise Day 2026 – February 24

The Central Excise Day is annually observed across India on 24th February to commemorate the enactment of the Central Excise and Salt Act, 1944, and to honour the contributions of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in tax administration and national development.

- Central Excise Duty (CED) is an indirect tax levied and collected by the Government of India (GoI) on goods manufactured or produced within India for domestic consumption.

149. World NGO Day 2026 – February 27

World Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Day is observed annually across the globe on 27th February to recognize, celebrate, and honor the contributions of NGOs and Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) in promoting social welfare, human rights, and sustainable development.

- 27 February 2026 marks the 13th observance of the World NGO Day.

- 2026 Theme: While there is no single official global theme, many organizations recognized “Restoring Dignity Through Inclusion” as the theme for 2026.

150. Rare Disease Day 2026 – February 28

Rare Disease Day is observed annually across the globe on the last day of February to raise awareness, promote healthcare equity, improve treatment access, and support research for rare conditions

- Rare Disease Day 2026, observed on 28 February, marks the 19th edition of this global awareness event.
- 2026 Theme: “More than you can imagine: the realities behind rare diseases ”

151. World Peace and Understanding Day 2026

Overview

World Peace and Understanding Day is observed annually on 23 February. The day commemorates the founding of Rotary International in 1905, an organization dedicated to promoting peace, service, and international cooperation.

About Rotary International

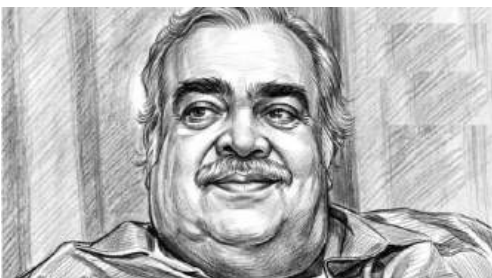
Rotary International is a global organization of leaders who work together to serve communities, support humanitarian causes, and promote peace and goodwill worldwide. It was founded by Paul P. Harris.

Objective

The main objective of this day is to promote global peace, mutual understanding, and cooperation among people and nations. It highlights the importance of dialogue, service, and unity in building a peaceful world.

14. OBITUARY

152. Six-Time MP KP Unnikrishnan Passes Away at 89



Veteran Congress leader and former Union Minister K. P. Unnikrishnan passed away at the age of 89 in Kozhikode, Kerala. He was a six-time Lok Sabha MP from Vadakara, first elected in 1971 and re-elected consecutively until 1991, reflecting strong public support in the region. A prominent political figure of the 1980s–90s, he served as Union Minister for Surface Transport and Communications in the cabinet of V. P. Singh. During his tenure, he oversaw the evacuation of Indians during the Gulf War crisis. Unnikrishnan began his career as a journalist and later joined the Indian

National Congress, becoming an influential leader in national politics. He was also known to be associated with leaders like V. K. Krishna Menon and Indira Gandhi.

153. ‘Grandfather of the Internet’ Is Gone



Computer scientist David J. Farber, popularly known as the “**Grandfather of the Internet**,” passed away on February 7 in Tokyo at the age of 91. A pioneer in computer networking, he played a major role in shaping modern digital communication and mentored several key architects of the Internet Protocol. His students included Jonathan Postel and Paul Mockapetris, who

helped develop the Domain Name System. Farber also contributed to the expansion of ARPANET, which later evolved into the modern internet, and served as chief technologist at the Federal Communications Commission. His work significantly influenced internet policy, governance, and the development of global digital connectivity.

154. Khaleda Zia, Bangladesh’s First Woman Prime Minister, Dies

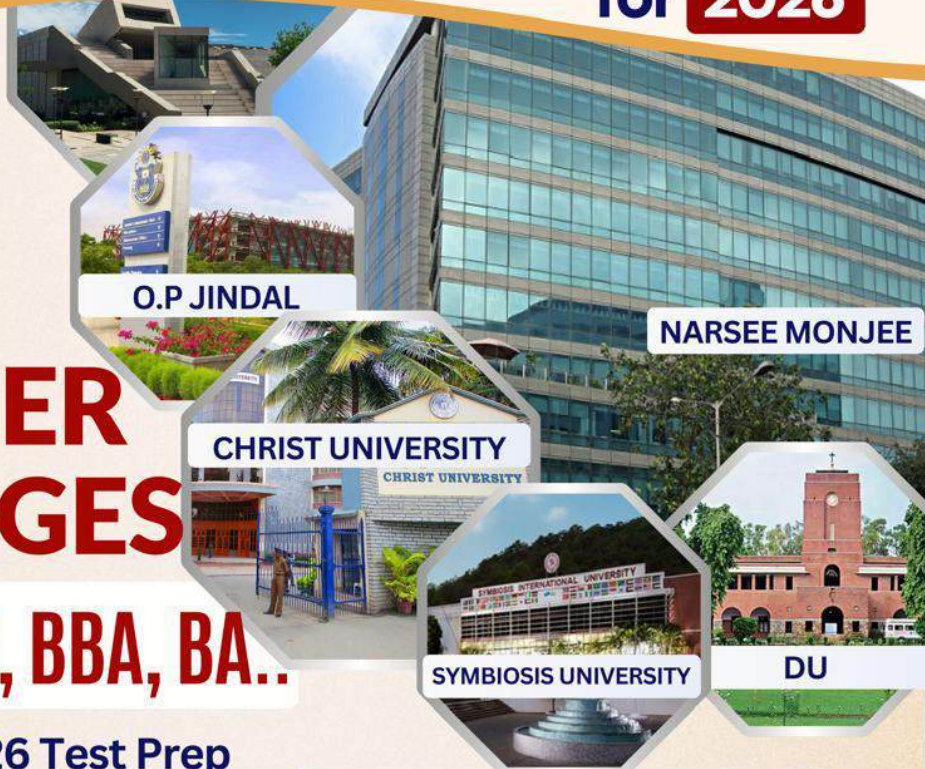
Khaleda Zia, Bangladesh’s first female Prime Minister and leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, passed away at the age of 80 after a prolonged illness. She served as Prime Minister twice, from 1991–1996 and 2001–2006, playing a key role in Bangladesh’s politics after the restoration of parliamentary democracy. Her political career was marked by a long-standing rivalry with Sheikh Hasina, which shaped the country’s two-party political system for decades. Born on August 15, 1945, she entered politics after the assassination of her husband, Ziaur Rahman, in 1981. Despite facing corruption charges and imprisonment in 2018, she was later acquitted in 2024. Khaleda Zia remained a central figure in Bangladesh’s opposition politics and democratic movement for over three decades.



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