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2025

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AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY

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Hand Written Notes

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)

Union Cabinet $\xrightarrow{\text{Chaired by}}$ Narendra Modi $\xrightarrow{\text{Has}}$ Approved
PM of India

Income Tax Act of 1961 $\xrightarrow{\text{Replaced by}}$ Income Tax Bill 2025 $\xrightarrow{\text{To}}$ Simplify tax laws $\xrightarrow{\text{Effect from}}$ FY 2026
 \downarrow
For taxpayers $\xrightarrow{\text{Effect from}}$ AY 2027

New Income Tax Slabs (Effective AY 2027):

Income Tax Slabs (in Rs.)	Income Tax Rate (in %)
Up to 4,00,000	0
4,00,001 – 8,00,000	5
8,00,001 – 12,00,000	10
12,00,001 – 16,00,000	15
16,00,001 – 20,00,000	20
20,00,001 – 24,00,000	25
Above 24,00,000	30

NCSK's tenure $\xrightarrow{\text{Extended by}}$ 3 years $\xrightarrow{\text{Till}}$ 31 Mar 2028 $\xrightarrow{\text{With budget}}$ Rs. 50.91 cr
MoSJE 31 Mar 2025

Continuation & restructuring $\xrightarrow{\text{Of}}$ SIP $\xrightarrow{\text{Till}}$ 2025-26 $\xrightarrow{\text{With budget}}$ Rs 8,800 cr
MSDE 2022-23

PMKVY 4.0, PM-NAPS, JSS Scheme

Waltair division $\xrightarrow{\text{Under}}$ New SCoR $\xrightarrow{\text{Renamed as}}$ Vishakhapatnam division
AP AP

PM - Prime Minister

FY - Financial Year

AY - Assessment Year

NCSK - National Commission for Safai Karamcharis

MoSJE - Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

SIP - Skill India Programme

MSDE - Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

PMKVY - Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

PM-NAPS - Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme

JSS - Jan Shikshan Sansthan

SCoR - South Coast Railway

AP - Andhra Pradesh

2)

Union Budget 2025-26 $\xrightarrow{\text{Allocated}}$ Rs. 20,000 cr $\xrightarrow{\text{To develop}}$ 5 SMRs $\xrightarrow{\text{By}}$ 2033 $\xrightarrow{\text{Under}}$ Nuclear Energy Mission

Highlights

→ Target - To achieve 100 Gigawatt of nuclear power by 2047

→ India plans to expand nuclear capacity to 22,480 MW by 2031-32 8,180 MW in 2024

→ To establish

Bharat Small Modular Reactors $\xrightarrow{\text{Capacity}}$ 30 MWe & 300+ MWe $\xrightarrow{\text{Developed by}}$ BARC
of power Maharashtra

→ To construct

10 new reactors (totaling 8,000 MW) in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Karnataka, & Madhya Pradesh

SMRs - Small Modular Reactors

MW - Megawatt

Mwe - Megawatt-electric

BARC - Bhabha Atomic Research Centre

3)

DFTM $\xrightarrow{\text{Unveiled}}$ Research Verticals & Thrust Areas $\xrightarrow{\text{Across}}$ 15 DIA-CoEs $\xrightarrow{\text{At}}$ DRDO headquarters
DRDO (MoD) (Research Verticals ↑ to 82 ↓ 65) New Delhi

Aim

Some newly Identified Research Verticals & Thrust Areas

To ease future technology needs in DR across DIA-CoEs → Compound Semiconductor Technologies at IITB (Maharashtra)

→ Emerging RF Technologies at IITR (Uttarakhand)

→ Software Defined Radios at IITK (Uttar Pradesh)

→ Cryptography & Information Security at IITK (West Bengal)

→ Laser Beam Combining based Communication, Power Transmission & Manufacturing, & Extraction & Recycling of Materials' at IITH (Telangana)

DFTM - Directorate of Futuristic Technology Management

DRDO - Defence Research and Development Organisation

MoD - Ministry of Defence

DIA-CoE - DRDO Industry Academia - Centres of Excellence

DR - Directed Research

IIT - Indian Institute of Technology

IITB - IIT Bombay

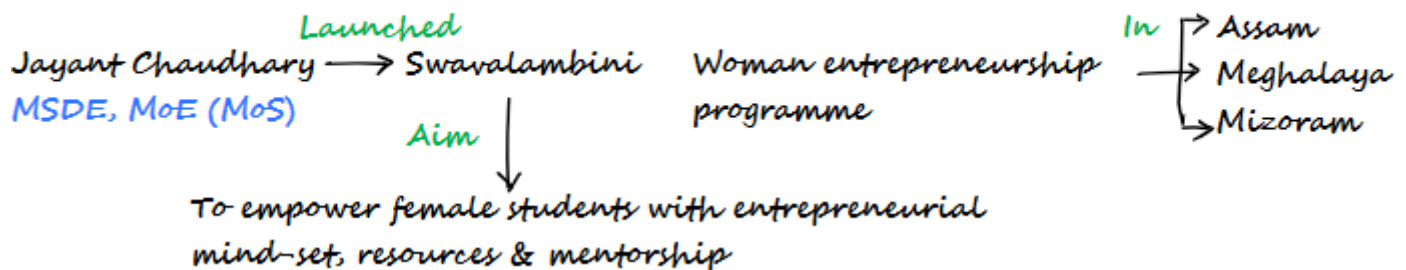
IITR - IIT Roorkee

IITK - IIT Kanpur

IITK - IIT Kharagpur

IITH - IIT Hyderabad

4)



Note: 1st time MSDE in collaboration with IIE (Assam) & NITI Aayog, introduced structured entrepreneurial process

MSDE - Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

MoE - Ministry of Education

MoS - Minister of State

IIE - Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship

NITI Aayog - National Institution for Transforming India

5)

Ex Winged Raider → Airborne exercise b/w IA & IAF ^{To} ↑ Operational readiness ^{Held} → Eastern Theatre India

IA - Indian Army

IAF - Indian Air Force

6)

CDAC + CPL $\xrightarrow{\text{To}}$ Support Indian electronic toy industry
MeitY (LEGO group)

CDAC - Centre for Development of Advanced Computing

MeitY - Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

CPL - Creative Play Lab

BANKING & FINANCE

1)

IDFC FIRST Bank $\xrightarrow{\text{Launched}}$ Banking products $\xrightarrow{\text{For}}$ Senior citizens
 \downarrow
 \rightarrow Cyber Insurance Coverage - Rs.2 lakhs
 \rightarrow Senior Citizen Fixed Deposit - Additional 0.5% interest rate

2)

Bajaj Allianz $\xrightarrow{\text{Launched}}$ HERizon Care \rightarrow India's 1st Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan for Women
 \downarrow
 About Components

Min. coverage - Rs 3 lakhs \rightarrow Vita Shield - Critical Illness & Holistic Wellness Protection

Max. coverage - Rs 2 crores \rightarrow Cradle Care - Women's reproductive health coverage

3)

RBI $\xrightarrow{\text{Approved}}$ Merger $\xrightarrow{\text{Of}}$ 2 UCBs \rightarrow CCB (Goa) with TJSB Sahakari Bank (Maharashtra)
 \rightarrow PCC Bank (Maharashtra) with PCS Bank (Maharashtra)

RBI - Reserve Bank of India

UCB - Urban Co-operative Bank

CCB - Citizen Co-operative Bank

PCC - Pune Commercial Co-operative Bank

PCS - Pimpri Chinchwad Sahakari

4)

SBI $\xrightarrow{\text{Reports}}$ Net Profit \rightarrow \uparrow To 84.32% YoY $\xrightarrow{\text{To}}$ Rs.16,891 cr $\xrightarrow{\text{From}}$ Rs.9164 cr
 (Q3 of FY2025) (Q3FY24)

SBI - State Bank of India

Q- Quarter

FY - Financial Year

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1)

GIC Re Board ^{Approved} → To set up → Wholly-owned Subsidiary of GIC Re ^{In} → United Kingdom

GIC Re - General Insurance Corporation of India

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

1)

CEO of Citibank India → K. Balasubramanian ^{Succeed} → Ashu Khullar
↓ ^{Appointed as}
Global Co-head of its
GAM UK Limited

CEO - Chief Executive Officer

GAM - Global Asset Managers

UK - United Kingdom

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1)

ISRO ^{Executed} → Ignition Trial ^{Of} → CE20 Cryogenic Engine ^{Powers} → Upper stage of LVM3
↓
^{Developed by} → LPSC of ISRO

ISRO - Indian Space Research Organisation

LVM3 - Launch Vehicle Mark-3

LPSC - Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre

SPORTS

1)

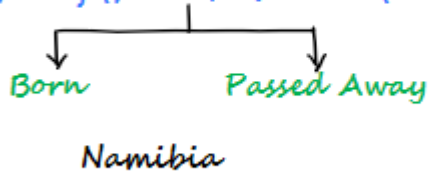
Marcelo Vieira da Silva ^{Announced} → Retirement ^{From} → Professional football
Junior (or) Marcelo
↓
Former Real Madrid &
Brazil defender (left-back)

^{Achievements}
Appeared in 16 seasons & won 25 trophies
(6 La Liga titles & 5 UEFA Champions League)

OBITUARY

1)

Samuel Shafiishuna Daniel Nujoma → Namibia's **1st** President (1990–2005)
(Father of the Namibian Nation) & Fiery Freedom Fighter

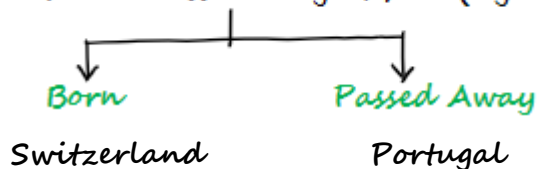


Awards

- 1970 - Lenin Peace Prize
- 1989 - Indira Gandhi Peace Prize
- 1990 - Ho Chi Minh Peace Prize

2)

Karim Al-Husseini Aga Khan (Aga Khan IV) → Philanthropist & **49th** hereditary imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims



Award

2015 - Padma Vibhushan (Social Work)

IMPORTANT DAYS

1)

10 February

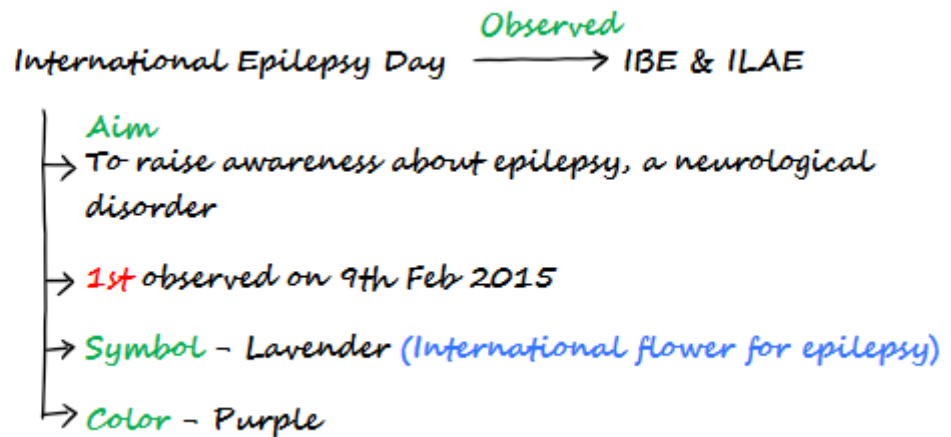
World Pulses Day Observed → United Nations

- **Theme**
"Pulses: Bringing diversity to agrifood systems"
- **Slogan**
"Love pulses for a healthy diet and planet"
- **Aim**
To highlight importance of pulse crops, such as chickpeas, dry beans & lentils
- **1st** observed on Feb 10, 2019
- **Key points**
 - India World's largest producer of pulses (26%)
 - Pulse production ↑ from **163.23 lakh** tonnes in 2015-16 to **244.95 lakh** tonnes in 2023-24.

2)

10 February

↓
2nd Monday
of February

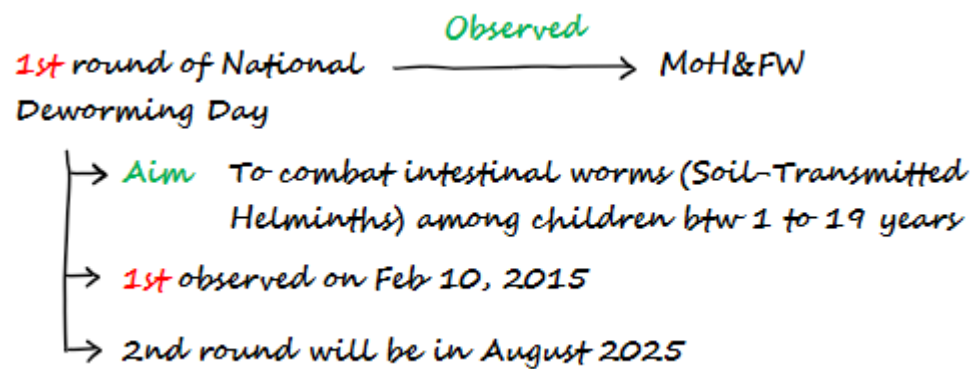


IBE - International Bureau for Epilepsy

ILAE - International League Against Epilepsy

3)

10 February



MoH&FW - Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

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Detailed Content

Current Affairs 11 February 2025 : Headlines



AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY

ENGLISH



ISRO successfully carries out vacuum ignition trial of cryogenic engine



Cabinet approvals
February 7, 2025

CURRENT AFFAIRS

11 FEBRUARY 2025

- Cabinet Approvals on 7 February 2025
- Nuclear Energy Initiatives in Union Budget 2025-26
- DRDO Unveils Research Verticals to Boost DIA-CoEs' Research
- Union MoS Jayant Chaudhary Virtually Launched Swavalambini, Women Entrepreneurship Programme in 3 NE States
- IA and IAF Conduct Joint Airborne Operations Exercise 'Ex Winged Raider'
- CDAC under MeitY Signs LoI with LEGO Group to Empower Indian Toy Industry
- IDFC FIRST Bank Launches Exclusive Banking Package for Senior Citizens
- Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Launched 'HERizon Care', India's 1st Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan for Women
- RBI Approves Voluntary Merger of Two Urban Co-operative Banks
- SBI Reports 84.32 % Rise in NP to Rs 16,891 crore for Q3FY25
- Board of GIC Re Approved Setting-up Wholly-owned Subsidiary in UK
- CitiBank Appointed Ashu Khullar as its Global Co-head of GAM; K. Balasubramanian Named CEO of Citi India
- ISRO Successfully Carried out Ignition Trial of Indigenous CE20 Cryogenic Engine
- Real Madrid & Brazil Legend Marcelo Announces Retirement from Football
- Samuel Nujoma, Namibia's 1st President & Fiery Freedom Fighter Passed Away
- Aga Khan IV, Padma Vibhushan Awardee & Spiritual Leader of Ismaili Muslims Passes Away
- World Pulses Day 2025 - February 10
- International Epilepsy Day 2025 - February 10
- National Deworming Day 2025 - February 10

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Cabinet Approvals on 7 February 2025

On 7 February 2025, the **Union Cabinet**, chaired by Prime Minister (PM) **Narendra Modi**, has approved the following:



- i. A new Income Tax (IT) Bill 2025 to simplify tax laws, and reduce legal complexities.
- ii. Extension of the tenure of National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) for 3 years beyond 31.03.2025 upto 31.03.2028.
- iii. Continuation and Restructuring of Skill India Programme (SIP).
- iv. Revision of divisional jurisdiction under the proposed South Coast Railway (SCoR) zone at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh (AP).

Cabinet Approves New Income Tax Bill 2025

The Union Cabinet has approved a new Income Tax **(IT) Bill 2025** to simplify and modernise India's tax system. Effective from the Financial Year (FY) 2025-26, the bill aims to simplify tax laws, reduce legal complexities, ease compliance for taxpayers, and cut the law's length by 50% without introducing new taxes.

- The bill will **replace the Income Tax Act of 1961** and will apply to taxpayers from the Assessment Year **(AY) 2026-27**.

Key Features of the Bill:

- i. The new Bill will have shorter sentences, reduced provisos, and easier language for better understanding.
- ii. It aims to unify multiple tax structures for various taxpayers, including individuals, companies, Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) Association of Persons (AOPs) Body Of Individuals (BOIs), cooperative societies, etc.
- iii. The new Bill will converge to a single tax regime to reduce the overall compliance burden and provide tax certainty.
- iv. It will streamline provisions to minimise disputes and legal challenges.
- v. The Bill may introduce lower penalties for certain offences, making compliance taxpayer-friendly.
- vi. The removal of obsolete/redundant laws will enhance clarity and precision.
- vii. The new Bill may also mention the expectations of anti-abuse provisions and a simplification and rationalisation of withholding tax rules.

New Income Tax Slabs (Effective AY 2026-27):

Income Tax Slabs (in Rs.)	Income Tax Rate (in %)
Up to 4,00,000	0
4,00,001 – 8,00,000	5

8,00,001 – 12,00,000	10
12,00,001 – 16,00,000	15
16,00,001 – 20,00,000	20
20,00,001 – 24,00,000	25
Above 24,00,000	30

Cabinet Approves Extension of NCSK for 3 Years till March 2028

The Union Cabinet has approved the **extension** of the tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) for **3 years** beyond 31 March 2025, up to **31 March 2028**. This extension involves a financial implication of approximately **Rs. 50.91 crore**.

Objectives of the Extension:

- Facilitate the socio-economic upliftment of sanitation workers.
- Improve working conditions in the sanitation sector.
- Achieve Zero Fatalities (ZFs) during hazardous cleaning operations.

Background:

The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993, was enacted in September 1993, and a statutory NCSK was first constituted in August 1994.

- “Safai Karamchari” means a person engaged in/or employed for, manually carrying human excreta or any sanitation work.

Functions of the NCSK:

- Recommend specific programs to eliminate inequalities faced by Safai Karamcharis.
- Study and evaluate the implementation of schemes for rehabilitating Safai Karamcharis and scavengers in particular.
- Investigate grievances and take suo-motu action on non-implementation of welfare schemes.
- Monitor working conditions, including health, safety, and wages of Safai Karamcharis.
- Report to the Central or State Government on issues concerning Safai Karamcharis.
- Address any other matters referred by the Central Government.

Role Under the MS Act, 2013:

Under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act 2013), the NCSK performs functions such as:

- Monitoring the implementation of the Act.
- Investigating complaints regarding its contravention.
- Advising the Central and State Governments on its effective implementation.
- Taking suo-motu action on non-implementation of the Act.

Cabinet Approves Continuation and Restructuring of Skill India Programme

The Union Cabinet has approved the **continuation and restructuring** of the Central Sector Scheme – Skill India Programme (SIP) until **2026**, with an outlay of **Rs 8,800 crore** from 2022-23 to 2025-26.

- This initiative aims to develop a skilled, future-ready workforce across India that meets evolving industry needs and global standards through industry-aligned, technology-driven skill training.

Key Components of the Skill India Programme:

i. The programme integrates 3 flagship schemes under a unified structure:

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 (PMKVY 4.0)
- Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (PM-NAPS)

- Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) Scheme

ii. With over 2.27 crore beneficiaries, these 3 flagship schemes of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) focus on Structured Skill Development (SSD), On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Community-Based Learning (CBL).

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 (PMKVY 4.0):

i. PMKVY 4.0 offers National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF)-aligned skill training for individuals **aged 15-59**.

ii. It introduces over 400 new courses in Artificial Intelligence (AI), 5th Generation (5G), Cybersecurity, Green Hydrogen (GH), and Drone Technology (DT).

iii. It incorporates OJT for real-world exposure and introduces micro-credential and National Occupational Standards (NoS)-based courses (7.5-30 hours) for targeted skill development

iv. It enhances learning with digital, micro-credential, and multilingual content and focuses on international mobility through Mobility Partnership Agreements (MMPAs).

Note: PMKVY was launched as a pilot in 2015 and was designed as a skill certification and reward scheme. The scheme was implemented by the MSDE through the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Sector Skill Councils (SSCs).

Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (PM-NAPS):

i. PM-NAPS encourages Earn-While-Learn (EWL) training for individuals **aged 14-35**.

- PM-NAPS was launched in 2016. Presently the NAPS-2 is under implementation.

ii. It provides a monthly stipend of Rs 1,500 via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

iii. It supports apprenticeships in AI, Robotics, Blockchain, Green Energy, and Industry 4.0 technologies.

- Special focus on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), aspirational districts, and the North-East Region (NER).

Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) Scheme:

i. JSS scheme targets women, rural youth, and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (EDGs) **aged 15-45**.

- The scheme of JSS, formerly known as Shramik Vidyapeeth is implemented through a network of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in India since March 1967.

ii. It offers low-cost, doorstep vocational training for self-employment and wage-based livelihoods.

iii. It also aligned with initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) and Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society (ULLAS).

Key Reforms and Impact of SIP:

i. All certifications under SIP are integrated with Digital Locker system (DigiLocker) and National Credit Framework (NCrF).

ii. SIP supports economic planning through Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data.

- It strengthens vocational education, apprenticeship, and Lifelong Learning (LLL), and enhances India's global workforce competitiveness.

Revision of Divisional Jurisdiction Under the Proposed South Coast Railway Zone

The Union Cabinet has granted ex-post facto approval to the **revision of divisional jurisdiction** under the proposed South Coast Railway (SCoR) Zone at **Visakhapatnam**, Andhra Pradesh (AP).

Key Decisions Approved:

i. The earlier decision of February 28, 2019, has been partially modified.

ii. The Waltair division will be retained in a truncated form and renamed as **Visakhapatnam division** to remove its colonial legacy.



iii. One part of the Waltair division (around 410 kilometres, km) covering sections between stations Palasa-Vishakhapatnam-Duvvada, Kureru-Vizianagaram, Naupada Junction (Jn.) – Paralakhemundi, Bobbili Jn. – Salur, Simhachalam North – Duvvada bypass, Vadalapudi – Duvvada, and Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) – Jaggayapalem will be **retained** as **Waltair division** under the new SCoR and **renamed** as **Vishakhapatnam division**.

iv. The other part of the Waltair division (around 680 km) that covers sections between Kottavalasa-Bacheli, Kureru-Theruvalli Jn., Singapur Road (Rd.) – Koraput Jn., and Paralakhemundi – Gunpurand will be converted into a new division under East Coast Railway (ECOR) with **headquarters** at **Rayagada**, Odisha.

Recent Related News:

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, has given approvals to various schemes and projects on 1 January 2025. The approvals are as follows:

- Continuation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) till 2025-26. •
- Setting up a Fund for Innovation And Technology (FIAT).
- Extension of One-time Special Package on Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) •
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the trade of Non-Basmati White Rice (NBWR) between India and Indonesia.

Nuclear Energy Initiatives in Union Budget 2025-26

On February 1, 2025, Union Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman**, Ministry of Finance (**MoF**) presented her 8th Union Budget 2025-26, highlighting a **focus on nuclear energy**. Key focus is on developing indigenous nuclear technology, encouraging private sector participation, and making key investments in nuclear infrastructure.



- India has set an ambitious **target of 100 Gigawatt (GW) of nuclear power by 2047** as part of its long-term energy strategy.
- This goal, highlighted in the Union Budget 2025-26, aims to strengthen energy security, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and support the vision of Viksit Bharat (Developed India).

Key Initiatives

Nuclear Energy Mission

The **Nuclear Energy Mission** for Viksit Bharat is a major initiative to promote research and innovation in nuclear power,

i. To support this, the government has allocated **Rs 20,000 crore** (USD 2.6 billion) to develop five indigenous Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) by 2033.

ii. The Government of India (GoI) plans to collaborate with the private sector to:

- Establish Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs)
- Support research and development (R&D) of Bharat Small Modular Reactors (BSMRs)
- Advance new technologies in the nuclear energy sector

Bharat Small Modular Reactors (SMRs):

SMRs are compact nuclear reactors that generate between **30 Megawatt-electric (MWe) and 300+ MWe** of power.

- Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (**BARC**) based in Mumbai, Maharashtra develops indigenous SMRs to replace coal-based power plants and supporting clean energy goals.

Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs):

The government is also developing Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs), which are 220 MW Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) with a proven safety record.

- Modified for land efficiency, ideal for steel, aluminum, and metal industries.
- **Private sector participation:** Companies provide land, water, and capital, while Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) based in Mumbai manages design and operation.

Key Points:

i. The Government of India plan is to expand nuclear capacity from **8,180 MW in 2024** to 22,480 MW by 2031-32 by:

- Constructing **10 new reactors** (totaling 8,000 MW) in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu (TN), Haryana, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh (MP).
- Starting pre-project work for 10 more reactors, which will be completed by 2031-32.
- Partnering with the United States of America (USA) to build a 6 x 1208 MW nuclear plant at Kovvada, Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh (AP).

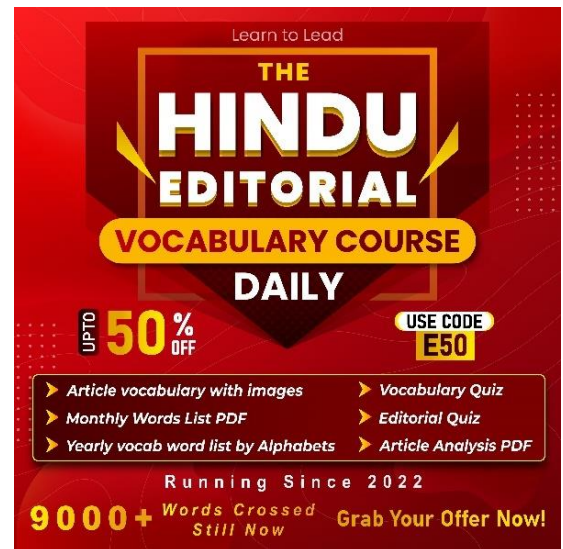
ii. Supports India's target of 500 GW non-fossil fuel energy by 2030, with 50% from renewables.

iii. DAE (Department of Atomic Energy), under the Prime Minister's direct charge, plans to develop advanced nuclear reactors, including high-temperature gas-cooled reactors for hydrogen production and molten salt reactors.

iv. Amendments to the **Atomic Energy Act 1962** and the **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act 2010** will be proposed to enable private sector participation in nuclear power projects.

Key Advancements in India's Nuclear Sector:

- **RAPP-7 Criticality Achieved:** Rajasthan Atomic Power Project Unit-7 (RAPP-7) achieved criticality (controlled nuclear reaction) on September 19, 2024.
- **Kakrapar PHWRs Operational:** Two 700 MWe PHWRs (KAPS-3 & 4) at Kakrapar, Gujarat, began commercial operations in FY 2023-24.
- **India's first Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)** – 500 MWe made major progress in 2024, including primary sodium filling, purification, and sodium pump commissioning. Core loading started on March 4, 2024.
- India's **closed fuel cycle** strategy, enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of its nuclear power program.
- **India's Largest Nuclear Plant: Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP)**, Tamil Nadu, remains India's largest nuclear facility, with each unit generating 1,000 MWe.
- **First uranium mine in India:** Discovered in Jaduguda Uranium Mines, Jharkhand. It was the first uranium mine in India.
- **NPCIL-NTPC Joint Venture (ASHVINI):** NPCIL and National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) based in New Delhi (Delhi) formed a joint venture (JV) named ASHVINI to develop nuclear power plants under the Atomic Energy Act 1962 (amended in 2015).



- Key project is the 4×700 MWe PHWR at Mahi-Banswara, Rajasthan.

[Click here for more details](#)

About Ministry of Finance (MoF):

Union Minister– Nirmala Sitharaman (Constituency- Rajya Sabha- Karnataka)

Minister of State (MoS)– Pankaj Chaudhary (Constituency- Maharajganj, Uttar Pradesh, UP)

DRDO Unveils Research Verticals to Boost DIA-CoEs' Research

On February 07, 2025, the Directorate of Futuristic Technology Management (**DFTM**), a part of Defence Research and Development Organisation (**DRDO**) under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) unveiled the redefined and augmented **Research Verticals & Thrust Areas** across DRDO Industry Academia – Centres of Excellence (**DIA-CoEs**) at DRDO headquarters in New Delhi (Delhi).



- The initiative aims to streamline and enhance the focus on future technology needs in Directed Research (DR) across the DIA-CoEs, while introducing cutting-edge deep technologies to improve overall research outcomes.
- The 65 existing Research Verticals across 15 DIA-CoEs have been restructured into **82** Research Verticals.

Key Focus Areas:

- The new realignment is expected to foster stronger collaboration between industry and academia, reduce duplication of efforts, and optimize resource use across institutions.
- It will also ensure that DIA-CoEs play a key role in tackling DRDO's future technology challenges and shaping the future of defense technology.

Newly Identified Research Verticals and Thrust Areas of DIA-CoEs:

- Compound Semiconductor Technologies at Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (**IITB**) in Maharashtra
- Laser Beam Combining based Communication, Power Transmission & Manufacturing and Extraction & Recycling of Materials' at Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (**IITH**) in Telangana
- Emerging RF Technologies at Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (**IITR**) in Uttarakhand
- Software Defined Radios at Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (**IITK**) in Uttar Pradesh (UP)
- Cryptography and Information Security at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (**IITK**) in West Bengal (WB)
- Click here for the list of newly identified research verticals and thrust areas of DIA-CoEs <https://www.drdo.gov.in/drdo/adv-tech-center>

About Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO):

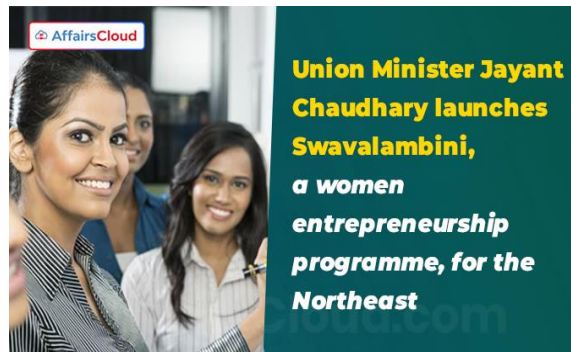
Chairman – Dr. Samir Vankatapati Kamat

Headquarters – New Delhi (Delhi)

Formed – 1958

Union MoS Jayant Chaudhary Virtually Launched Swavalambini, Women Entrepreneurship Programme in 3 NE States

In February 2025, Union Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge, I/C) **Jayant Chaudhary**, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (**MSDE**) and MoS, Ministry of Education (MoE) virtually launched '**Swavalambini**', a woman entrepreneurship programme in 9 colleges and universities of 3 North East (NE) states: Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram.



- The programme aimed to empower female students in select Higher Education Institutions (**HEIs**) in the NE region by providing them with the necessary entrepreneurial mind-set, resources and mentorship.
- This for the 1st time MSDE through Guwahati (Assam)-based Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (**IIE**), and in coordination with National Institution for Transforming India (**NITI**) Aayog introduced a structured stage-wise entrepreneurial process from awareness to development, mentorship and funding support.

Key People: Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary of MSDE along with other senior officials of the Ministry were also present at the event.

About Swavalambini Initiative:

- The initiative aims to facilitate structured training through the Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (**EAP**), which introduces entrepreneurship as a viable career option to **600** female students through a 2-day session covering basic entrepreneurial concepts and opportunities.
- The initiative is being implemented across various HEIs including Gauhati University (GU) in Guwahati, Assam; North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) in Shillong, Meghalaya; Kiang Nangba Government College in West Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya; Mizoram University in Aizawl, Mizoram; Government Champai College in Champai, Mizoram; Lunglei Government College (LGC) in Lunglei, Mizoram; Handique Girl's College in Guwahati, Assam and Dispur College in Guwahati, Assam; among others.
- Also, the Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme (**EDP**) offers intensive **40-hour training** to 300 selected students, covering important business aspects such as training and skilling, access to finance, market linkages, among others.
 - The Swavalambini initiative aims to see **10%** of EDP trainees to launch their successful enterprises.
 - Following this programme, 6 months of mentorship and handholding support will be provided to help participants in translating their ideas into sustainable prospects.
- A 5-day Faculty Development Programme (**FDP**) is introduced as part of the Swavalambini initiative, which aims to focus on upskilling the faculty in the HEIs. This programme will enable the faculty members to effectively train and mentor students in entrepreneurship.
- Award to Rewards initiative has been introduced to celebrate and recognise successful women entrepreneurs emerging from Swavalambini.
 - This programme will also use workshops, mentoring support, and seed funding to create sustainable women-led enterprises.

About Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE):

Union Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge, I/C)- Jayant Chaudhary (Rajya Sabha member- Uttar Pradesh, UP)

IA and IAF Conduct Joint Airborne Operations Exercise 'Ex Winged Raider'

On February 9, 2025, the Indian Army (IA) participated in a major training exercise named **Ex Winged Raider**, focusing on special airborne operations.



- The exercise demonstrated high operational readiness and showcased the integration between the IA and the Indian Air Force (IAF).

Highlights:

- The exercise focused on practicing various airborne insertion techniques using both **fixed-wing** and **rotary-wing** aircraft, aimed at enhancing the skills of the participating personnel.
- The exercise also witnessed a **first** in the Eastern Theatre, with airborne operations being conducted from the Chinook Helicopter (CH-47 Chinook).
- This training provided a crucial opportunity for troops to refine their operational expertise, which is essential for rapid deployment and ensuring mission readiness.
- It highlighted the vital role of airborne forces in modern military strategies, enabling swift and decisive action in diverse operational settings.

Synergy Between IA and IAF:

- The joint operation demonstrated the seamless coordination between the IA and the IAF, showcasing the effectiveness of integrated training programs.
- This joint operation reaffirmed both forces' commitment to maintaining a high level of preparedness to address evolving security challenges

Notable Event:

- On February 9, 2025, IA Chief General, **Upendra Dwivedi** and IAF Air Chief, **Marshal AP Singh** had a historic flight together in the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, single-engine multirole fighter aircraft.

About Indian Army (IA):

Chief of Army Staff (COAS)– General Upendra Dwivedi

Headquarters- New Delhi (Delhi)

Established-1895

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About Indian Air Force (IAF):

Chief of the Air Staff (CAS)– Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh

Headquarters– New Delhi (Delhi)

Established– 1932

CDAC under MeitY Signs LoI with LEGO Group to Empower Indian Toy Industry

In February 2025, the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with the Creative Play Lab (CPL) a specialised department of The LEGO Group (Denmark), to support the growth of the Indian electronic toy industry .

- The partnership focuses on the project titled “Development of Electronics and Information Technology (IT)-based Control and Automation Solutions for Consumer Electronic Goods (Toy Industry)”.

i.The aim is to nurture young engineers, from under-represented communities such as Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and the North Eastern Region (NER), by providing them with hands-on experience in toy innovation.

ii.The program is divided into two phases: **6-month Toy Lab Training at CDAC Noida, UP** where participants will learn to design and develop electronic toys and **6-month Industry Internship**, offering specialized training to create market-ready toy prototypes.

BANKING & FINANCE

IDFC FIRST Bank Launches Exclusive Banking Package for Senior Citizens

On February 6 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra) based **IDFC First Bank Limited**, a subsidiary of Infrastructure Development Finance Company (IDFC) Limited, launched an exclusive set of banking products and services designed specifically for **senior citizens**.



- The newly launched offerings include the Senior Citizen Savings Account and Senior Citizen Fixed Deposits (FDs), designed to cater to the unique financial needs of elderly individuals
- This initiative aims to provide secure, customized, and superior financial solutions tailored to meet the unique needs of this important demographic.

Key Offerings for Senior Citizens:

i.**Senior Citizen Savings Account** :Introduced to eliminates over **30 charges** associated with regular savings accounts and offers tailored features that suit the financial needs of senior citizens.

ii.**Senior Citizen Fixed Deposits (FDs)**: Launched ‘Senior Citizen FDs’ that offer an additional **0.5% interest** rate compared to regular deposits, providing higher returns to senior customers.

iii.**Senior Citizen Specials App**: A new feature called ‘Senior Citizen Specials’ was added to the bank’s mobile banking application (app). The benefits include:

- Customized Investment Solutions designed to cater the needs at various life stages.
- Cyber Insurance Coverage of **Rs.2 lakhs** to protect from increasing cyber threats.
- Complimentary **1-year MediBuddy membership**, including unlimited doctor video consultations for up to 4 family members.
- Upto 15% discounts at network pharmacies, a full-body health checkup covering **50+ parameters**, and **Rs.500 wallet balance** for healthcare expenses.
- Access a simplified mutual fund investment backed by research to modify investments based on their risk-reward appetite.

iv.No Charges on Premature FD Closure: No penalties for prematurely closing their FDs, offering them more flexibility.

About IDFC First Bank Limited:

Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO)– V. Vaidyanathan

Headquarters- Mumbai, Maharashtra

Established- 2018

Tagline- Always You First

Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Launched 'HERizon Care', India's 1st Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan for Women

In February 2025, Pune (Maharashtra)-based **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Limited**, India's leading private general insurer, announced the launch of '**HERizon Care**', a new health insurance product designed exclusively to cater evolving healthcare requirements of women.



- HERizon Care is India's 1st health insurance plan that offers various specialized covers in a single policy, facilitating holistic protection customised to unique requirements of women.
- This new offering will address critical illnesses, maternal and reproductive health, wellness, and more, to empower women with financial security throughout their life stages.

Key Features:

i.Covers Expenses for Various treatment: It is a first-of-its-kind health insurance coverage that provides coverage for Infertility Treatment, Assisted Reproductive Technology & Maternity Expenses, Adoption expenses, Pre-natal Health (in-utero treatment), congenital disability cover, among others.

- It also extends coverage for surrogate mothers, Oocyte donors as well as to live-in partners.
- It covers the legal expenses for sexual assault, kidnapping and acid attacks.

ii.Affordable Health Insurance Coverage: It provides flexible and affordable plans with premium discounts for Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination, first-come-first-serve policy entry.

ii.Eligibility Criteria: Women aged **18 to 80 years** and children from **90 days to 35 years** are eligible to avail the benefits of this new health insurance product.

iii.Minimum and Maximum Health Insurance Coverage: It offers sum insured options ranging from **Rs 3 lakhs to Rs 2 crores** to eligible women beneficiaries. It works on an individual sum insured basis with a policy time period of **1 to 5 years**, offering flexible payment options and lifelong renewal options.

Two Key Components of HERizon Care:

HERizon Care includes two key components namely, **Vita Shield** and **Cradle Care**, along with range of optional covers to address specific healthcare requirements.

i. Vita Shield, a critical illness and Holistic Wellness Protection component, which offers protection against **34 critical illnesses**, covering both general and female-specific conditions.

- In addition to it, this cover can be improved with optional extensions to further support policy holders such as: loss of job; incidental expenses cover offers financial assistance for essential medical expenses, including reconstructive surgery, physiotherapy, home nursing, among others.
- It also includes a holistic wellness ecosystem that offers access to resources that prioritize physical and mental well-being such as: community support, diet and nutrition consultations, and preventive health check-ups, among others.

ii. The Cradle Care, provides women's reproductive health coverage which includes surrogate care, covering medical expenses for surrogate mothers during surrogacy pregnancy and post-partum recovery.

- It will also cover medical expenses for Oocyte donor during inpatient hospitalization for any complications.

Other Optional Covers under HERizon Care:

i. The Nurture Nest Cover offers necessary support for women planning or expanding their families, including coverage for surgical management of infertility for women **aged 21-45 years**, covering adoption expenses and egg-freezing procedures.

ii. The Motherhood Cover provides financial support for assisted reproductive technologies such as : Intrauterine Insemination (IUI), In Vitro-Fertilisation (IVF), among others, alongside maternity expenses, including pre-and post-natal care.

iii. Fetal Flourish Cover provides health support for unborn babies, covering prenatal techniques, in-utero surgeries, and congenital disability treatments. It will also provide daily allowance for mother or baby during hospitalization.

iv. The Prophylactic Surgeries Cover includes preventive surgeries, including mastectomy and hysterectomy.

About Bajaj Allianz General Insurance:

It is a Joint Venture (JV) between **Bajaj Finserv Limited**, India's most diversified Non-Bank Financial Institution (NBFI), and **Allianz SE**, world's leading insurer and largest asset manager. The company operationalised in 2001, offers a wide range of general insurance products, including motor insurance, health insurance, among others.

Managing Director (**MD**) and Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**)- Tapan Singhel

Headquarters- Pune, Maharashtra

RBI Approves Voluntary Merger of Two Urban Co-operative Banks

In February 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (**RBI**) approved the voluntary merger of two Urban Co-operative Banks (**UCBs**) in India. The merger of Vasco-Da-Gama (Goa)-based Citizen Co-operative Bank Limited (**CCB**) with Thane (Maharashtra)-based TJSB Sahakari Bank Limited.

- Also, the merger of Satara (Maharashtra)-based Pune Commercial Co-operative Bank (**PCC Bank**) with Pune (Maharashtra)-based Pimpri Chinchwad Sahakari (**PCS Bank**).
- The RBI sanctioned the Scheme of Amalgamations of above mentioned banks in exercise of the powers conferred under Sub-Section (4) of Section 44A read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. The merger of these banks came into force on **February 10, 2025**.

Significance:

i. The merger of CCB with TJSB Sahakari Bank Limited is expected to improve accessibility of banking services for its customers and reinforcing financial inclusion (FI) efforts in Goa.



- With the completion of amalgamation on February 10, 2025, all branches of the CCB will now function as branches of TJSB Sahakari Limited.
- With this, the total number of branches of TJSB in India increases from 143 to 149 and also, its presence in Goa expands from 12 to 18 branches.

ii. Similarly, with the completion of merger of Satara-based UCB with PCS Bank, 4 branches of PCC bank will now operate under the name of PCS Bank.

Key Facts:

- As per RBI's report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India, the number of UCBs in India decreased steadily over the last 20 years from 1,926 to 1,472.
- Since 2004-05, the UCB sector in India saw 156 mergers, of which 6 mergers were in 2023-24. Among these 6 mergers in 2023-24, maximum mergers were in Maharashtra (3), followed by Telangana (2), and Gujarat (1).

Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) categorized into four tiers:

Tier 1 – Deposits up to Rs 100 crore

Tier 2 – Deposits above Rs 100 crore and less than Rs 1,000 crore.

Tier 3 – Deposits above Rs 1,000 crore and less than Rs 10,000 crore.

Tier 4 – Deposits above Rs 10,000 crore.

SBI Reports 84.32 % Rise in NP to Rs 16,891 crore for Q3FY25

In February, 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra) based State Bank of India (SBI) reported an **84.32%** year-on-year (YoY) rise in its Net Profit (NP), reaching **Rs.16,891** crore from **Rs.9164** crore in the 3rd Quarter Financial Year 2024-25 (**Q3-FY25**). The rise was driven by the absence of a one-time Rs. 7,100 crore pension provision and a drop in operating expenses.

- The operating profit for the quarter stood at **Rs 23,551 crore**, marking a **15.81% YoY** rise, while Net Interest Income (NII) grew by 4.09% YoY to Rs 41,446 crore.
- Return on Assets (ROA) improved by **42 basis points** (bps) YoY to 1.04%, and the Net Interest Margin (NIM) for domestic operations stood at 3.15%.

i. SBI's total advances crossed **Rs 40 lakh crore**, reflecting a 13.49% YoY growth, while total deposits grew by 9.81% YoY.

ii. The Gross Non-Performing Assets (NPA) ratio reduced to **2.07%**, and the Net NPA ratio improved to 0.53%, demonstrating better asset quality.

iii. The bank's Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) stood at **13.03%**, ensuring a solid financial foundation.

iv. SBI also enhanced its digital presence, with 64% of new Savings Accounts (SA) opened through YONO (You Only Need One).

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

Board of GIC Re Approved Setting-up Wholly-owned Subsidiary in UK

In February 2025, the Board of Directors(BoD) of Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based General Insurance Corporation of India (**GIC Re**) has approved the setting-up of a wholly-owned subsidiary i.e. GIC Re, India Service Company in the United Kingdom (UK).

- There is no minimum capital requirement for the company and can be set up with a capital of Great Britain Pound (GBP) 1, equivalent to USD 1.24.

i. The company will seek final approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (**IRDAI**) before making the investment.

ii. Also, the company will comply with the directives issued under Foreign Exchange Management (Overseas Investment) Directions, 2022.

Note: (GIC Re) is a 100% Government of India(GoI)-owned Public Sector Undertaking(PSU) company. It has branch offices in London(the UK) and Kuala Lumpur(Malaysia).

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

CitiBank Appointed Ashu Khullar as its Global Co-head of GAM; K. Balasubramanian Named CEO of Citi India

In February 2025, New York (the United States of America, USA)-based investment bank **CitiBank** has appointed **Ashu Khullar** who is currently serving as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Mumbai(Maharashtra) based Citibank India, as the Global Co-head of Global Asset Managers (GAM) based in London, the United Kingdom (UK).

i. Khullar will work alongside Anthony Diamondakis, the Head of GAM for North America. He will be responsible for monitoring operations across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) and Asia, and will collaborate with sponsors.

ii. **K. Balasubramanian** will succeed Ashu Khullar as CEO of Citibank India, subject to approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). He will report to Amol Gupte, head of Asia South and banking head.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

ISRO Successfully Carried out Ignition Trial of Indigenous CE20 Cryogenic Engine

In February 2025, Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) successfully carried out the ignition trial of the indigenous built 'CE20' cryogenic engine powering the upper stage of Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3). The engine was developed by Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) of ISRO.

- As per ISRO, the multi-element igniter within the engine has successfully simulated the engine ignition in the vacuum condition of space.
- The test trial of the engine was conducted in the High Altitude Test Facility at ISRO Complex in Mahendragiri district of Tamil Nadu (TN).

Key Points:

i. During this test trial, the ignition of the engine **Thrust Chamber** was carried out with a multi-element igniter in vacuum, under the tank pressure conditions that are estimated to continue at the time of restarting the cryogenic engine in flight.



ii. ISRO is trying to explore the initiation of turbo pumps in bootstrap mode rather than the stored gas system. Under this approach, both the thrust chamber and gas generator are expected to re-ignite under tank head conditions.

iii. The engine is already qualified to be used for thrust levels ranging from 19 tonne (t) to 20t in flight with single start and will also be used for India's ambitious Gaganyaan mission.

About LVM3:

i. It is previously known as Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV Mk-III), a **3-stage** launch vehicle consisting of two solid propellant S200 straps-ons and core stages comprising of L110 liquid stage.

ii. The height and diameter of the vehicle is 43.5 meter (m) and 4.0 m respectively, with lift-off mass of 640 tonnes.

iii. The vehicle has the capacity to launch heavier communication satellites that weigh up to 4,000 kilogram (kg) in Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).

SPORTS

Real Madrid & Brazil Legend Marcelo Announces Retirement from Football

In February 2025, Marcelo Vieira da Silva Junior, known as **Marcelo**, the former **Real Madrid** and **Brazil** defender (left-back), announced his retirement from professional football at the age of 36.

About Marcelo:

i. In 2005, he started his football career with Fluminense Football Club (FC), and in 2007 he joined the Real Madrid Club de Fútbol (CF).


ii. He played for Real Madrid from 2007 to 2022, making 546 appearances in 16 seasons and winning 25 trophies, including six La Liga titles in 2007, 2008, 2012, 2017, 2020, and 2022.

- He was also part of the Real Madrid team that won three consecutive Champions League titles from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

iii. In the 2014 Champions League final, Marcelo played a key role in helping Real Madrid secure "La Decima," their long-awaited 10th European title.

iv. He won five Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Champions League (titles with Real Madrid, including the 2013-14, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2021-22 seasons).


v. He also made 58 appearances for Brazil, winning the Confederations Cup in 2013. He was part of the 2008 Olympic squad and won a bronze medal and also part of the 2012 Olympic team and won a silver medal.



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OBITUARY

Samuel Nujoma, Namibia's 1st President & Fiery Freedom Fighter Passed Away

In February 2025, **Samuel Shafiishuna Daniel Nujoma**, the fiery freedom fighter who led Namibia to independence from apartheid South Africa in 1990 and served as its **1st President** for 15 years, passed away at the **age of 95** in Windhoek, Namibia. He was born on May 12, 1929 in Ongandjera, Ovamboland, South West Africa (now Omusati Region, Namibia).



- He has received numerous awards and honours including the '**Lenin Peace Prize**' award.

About Samuel Shafiishuna Daniel Nujoma:

- i. He began his political career in the early 1950s, joining the trade union movement and later co-founding the Ovamboland People's Organization (**OPO**) in **1959**.
- ii. In 1960, OPO evolved into the South West Africa People's Organisation (**SWAPO**) with him as its **1st president**, leading the national liberation movement.
- iii. He launched the Namibian War of Independence in 1966, commanding SWAPO's armed wing, **PLAN** (People's Liberation Army of Namibia), in the fight against apartheid, for 3 decades.
- iv. Following Namibia's independence in 1990, he was elected as **Namibia's 1st President**, serving three terms (**1990–2005**), focusing on national reconciliation, economic development, and dismantling apartheid's legacy.
- v. In 2005, he published his autobiography, "Where Others Wavered".

Awards and Honors:

- i. The Parliament of Namibia has honored him with the titles "Founding President of the Republic of Namibia" and "**Father of the Namibian Nation**", recognizing his pivotal role in the country's liberation.
- ii. **Lenin Peace Prize (1970)** – Awarded for his leadership in the Namibian independence movement and efforts to end apartheid.
- iii. **Indira Gandhi Peace Prize (1989)** – Recognized his pivotal role in Namibia's liberation and commitment to peace.
- iv. **Ho Chi Minh Peace Prize (1990)** – Honored for his contribution to the global struggle for freedom and justice.

About Namibia:

President- Nangolo Mbumba

Prime minister (PM)– Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila

Capital- Windhoek

Currency- Namibian Dollars (**NAD**)

Aga Khan IV, Padma Vibhushan Awardee & Spiritual Leader of Ismaili Muslims Passes Away

In February 2025, Prince Karim Al-Husseini Aga Khan (also known as the **Aga Khan IV**), the **49th** hereditary imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims and a philanthropist, passed away at the age of 88 in Lisbon (Portugal). He was born on 13 December 1936 in Geneva (Switzerland).

- **Prince Rahim Al-Hussaini** become the 50th imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims

About Aga Khan IV:

i. In 1957, at the age of 20, Prince Karim Al-Husseini Aga Khan became the imam of the Ismaili Muslims, a branch of Shia Islam, following the death of his grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan.

- Queen Elizabeth bestowed upon him the title of "His Highness." in 1957.

ii. In 1959, he founded the Nation Media Group (NMG) which has grown into the largest independent media organization in East and Central Africa.

iii. He was the founder and chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), one of the world's largest private development organizations.

iv. In 2015, the Government of India (GoI) awarded him the **Padma Vibhushan**, India's second-highest civilian honor, for his contributions to social development in India.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Pulses Day 2025 – February 10

The United Nations (UN's) World Pulses Day (**WPD**) is observed annually on **February 10** across the globe to highlight the importance of pulse crops, such as chickpeas, dry beans, and lentils, in the world's food systems.



- The theme of WPD 2025 is "**Pulses: Bringing diversity to agrifood systems**" underscores the vital role of pulses in promoting diversity, both above and below the ground.
- The slogan of WPD 2025 is "Love pulses for a healthy diet and planet".

Background:

i. On December 20, 2013, the UN General Assembly (**UNGA**) adopted the resolution A/RES/68/231 and proclaimed **2016** as the International Year of Pulses (**IYP**) to raise awareness about their nutritional and environmental benefits in sustainable food production.

ii. The UNGA adopted the resolution A/RES/73/251 on December 20, 2018, officially establishing February 10 as WPD every year, with **Burkina Faso**, a landlocked West African country, proposing the observance.

- The **first-ever** WPD was observed on **February 10, 2019**

iii. This day was created following the successful implementation of the IYP in 2016 by the Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**).

What are Pulses?

- i. Pulses are a subset of legume crops, which encompass varieties like chickpeas, peas, beans, lentils, and others.
- ii. The word pulse originates directly from the Latin word '**puls**' meaning "thick gruel, porridge, mush."
- iii. These crops serve various purposes, including livestock forage, human consumption, and as soil-enriching green manure.

Significance:

- i. Pulses are nutrient-rich, high in protein, low in fat, and packed with soluble fiber, aiding in cholesterol control, blood sugar management, and disease prevention, particularly for diabetes, heart conditions, and obesity.
- ii. For farmers, pulses ensure food security, economic stability, and sustainable farming by improving soil fertility and reducing fertilizer use.

Pulses Production in India:

- i. India stands as the world's largest producer (26%), consumer (30%), and importer (14%) of pulses.
- ii. Pulses occupy about 20% of the area dedicated to food grains and contribute roughly 7-10% to India's total food grain production.
- iii. The predominant pulses produced in India are chickpeas (48%), pigeon pea (14%), blackgram (12%), green gram (8%), and lentils (7%).
- iv. India's pulse production has increased from 163.23 lakh tonnes in 2015-16 to 244.93 lakh tonnes in 2023-24.

- Based on the production estimates for the year 2022-23, **Madhya Pradesh (MP)**, Maharashtra and Rajasthan are the top three pulses producing states in the country.

v. The average productivity of pulses in the NorthEast Region (**NER**) is 848 kilogram per hectare (kg/ha), surpassing the national average of 764 kg/ha.

Note: Pulses are highly water efficient for producing 1 kg of lentils needs 1250 liters, while 1 kg of beef requires 13,000 liters.

2025 Events:

- i. The FAO and the Peruvian Ministry of Agricultural Development and Irrigation (MIDAGRI) are worked together to organize World Pulses Day 2025 celebration in Lima, Peru.
 - For the first time, the celebration will take place outside the FAO Headquarters.
- ii. The celebration includes a high-level ceremony, an exhibition and a gastronomic presentation featuring tarwi, a native pulse from Peru.

About Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):

Director-General (**DG**)– Qu Dongyu

Headquarters– Rome, Italy

Established- 1945

International Epilepsy Day 2025 – February 10

International Epilepsy Day is observed annually on the **2nd Monday of February** across the globe to raise awareness about epilepsy, a neurological disorder, as well as its symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment.

- The day serves as a platform to educate the public, dispels myths, and tackles stigma, aiming to reduce discrimination, social exclusion, and barriers to services for millions living with epilepsy worldwide, promoting inclusivity and support.
- International Epilepsy Day 2025 is observed on **February 10, 2025**.
- International Epilepsy Day 2024 was observed on February 12 2024 and in 2026 it will be observed on February 9 2026.



Background:

- i. International Epilepsy Day is a collaborative effort between the International Bureau for Epilepsy (**IBE**) and the International League Against Epilepsy (**ILAE**).
- ii. The **first-ever** International Epilepsy Day was celebrated on **9th February 2015** (Monday).
- iii. Since then, International Epilepsy Day has been observed annually on the 2nd Monday of February.

Symbol and Color:

- i. **Lavender**, the international flower for epilepsy, represents the isolation and loneliness often experienced by those with the condition.
- ii. The color **purple** is widely recognized as the symbol for epilepsy awareness.

What is Epilepsy?

- i. Epilepsy is a neurological disorder characterized by recurring seizures, caused by abnormal electrical activity in the brain.
- ii. These seizures can be mild or severe and may affect consciousness, movement, and sensations. There are 2 main categories of seizures:
 - **Generalized Seizures:** Affect the entire brain and often involve loss of consciousness.
 - **Focal Seizures:** Start in one area of the brain and may or may not affect consciousness.

iii. Symptoms include sudden jerking movements, loss of consciousness, confusion, staring spells, and uncontrollable movements.

Key Facts:

- i. Epilepsy is one of the oldest known medical conditions, with written records dating back to **4000 BCE** (Before Common Era).
- ii. Hippocrates (460-377 Before Christ, BC), the Greek philosopher, was the first to propose that epilepsy originates in the brain.

Significance:

- i. International Epilepsy Day is an initiative by the World Health Organization (**WHO**) under 10-year Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and Other Neurological Disorders (**IGAP**) 2022-2031.
 - The 1st global report on epilepsy titled "Epilepsy: A Public Health Imperative" was produced in 2019 by the WHO and key partners.
- ii. IGAP provides a **10-year roadmap** with strategic goals to improve public health approaches to epilepsy and address treatment and inclusion gaps globally.
- iii. **Global Target 5.1:** By 2031, countries will increase epilepsy service coverage by 50% from 2021 levels.
- iv. **Global Target 5.2:** By 2031, 80% of countries will have updated legislation to protect the human rights of people with epilepsy.
- v. WHO, ILAE, and IBE led the Global Campaign Against Epilepsy to raise awareness about epilepsy, strengthen public and private efforts to improve care and reduce the disease's impact.

Global Challenge:

- i. According to the WHO, epilepsy affects around **50 million people** globally.

ii. In India, about 10 million people are affected with epilepsy.

- While precise data is lacking, the prevalence rate is estimated at **5.59-10 per 1,000** people, making epilepsy one of the most challenging neurological conditions.

iii. WHO also estimates that 25% of epilepsy cases are potentially preventable, highlighting the importance of early intervention, better diagnosis, and access to treatment.

Government Efforts to Combat Epilepsy in India:

i. **Incorporating Neurological Disorders:** Epilepsy and other neurological conditions are included in India's National and District Mental Health Programs for better care.

ii. **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Major Diseases (NPCDCS):** Focuses on strengthening healthcare infrastructure, including stroke and epilepsy care.

iii. **Strengthening Primary Healthcare Services:** Epilepsy services are integrated into Comprehensive Primary Health Care under the Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (HWC) Scheme.

2025 Event:

The 15th Asian & Oceanian Epilepsy Congress is scheduled to be held in New Delhi, Delhi from 20-23 February, 2025.

Note: National Epilepsy Day in India is observed annually on **November 17** to raise awareness about epilepsy.

About International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE):

President– J. Helen Cross

Headquarters– Washington, D.C, the United States of America(USA)

Established– 1909

National Deworming Day 2025 – February 10

National Deworming Day (NDD) is organized biannually across all states and Union Territories (UTs) of India to combat intestinal worms, also known as Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STH), among all preschool and school-age children, both enrolled and unenrolled, between the ages of **1-19 years**. The first round takes place in February, and the second round in August.



- In 2025, the first round of NDD will be observed on **February 10, 2025** with a mop-up day (MUD) scheduled on February 17 2025, or as determined by the respective state governments.

Background:

i. NDD is a flagship program of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW), launched in 2015.

- The first-ever NDD was observed on **February 10, 2015**.

ii. Initially, NDD was conducted in **12 states** and Union Territories (UTs): Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Dadra and Nagar Haveli (DNH), Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu (TN), and Tripura, as part of the National Health Mission (NHM).

iii. Due to its success, the program expanded nationwide, with **Albendazole tablets** (a safe & effective deworming medicine) introduced as the primary treatment for eliminating worms.

- Albendazole and Mebendazole tablets, approved by the WHO, are used to treat intestinal worms in children and adolescents.

iv. Since its launch, over 30 crores (**300 million**) children in India have been dewormed annually, making it one of the world's largest public health initiatives.

Note: As per NHM, currently, 277 districts across 11 Indian states and UTs will observe NDD.

What is Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STH):

- STH are parasitic worms that infect humans through contact with contaminated soil.
- These worms, such as *Ascaris lumbricoides* (roundworms), *Trichuris trichiura* (whipworms), and *Ancylostoma duodenale* or *Necator americanus* (hookworms), are prevalent in areas with poor sanitation and hygiene.
- It leads to anemia, malnutrition, stunted growth, impaired development, and digestive issues like abdominal pain and diarrhea, in children.

Significance:

- NDD leverages schools and Anganwadi centers to deworm preschool and school-aged children.
- It is one of the largest public health initiatives, reaching a vast number of children in a short span of time.
- The main goal of NDD is to enhance children's health, nutritional status, access to education, and overall quality of life.

What is Deworming:

- Deworming is the process of administering medication to eliminate parasitic worms from the body.
- It is crucial for improving health, especially in children, by preventing infections caused by STH.

Global Impact:

- More than 1.5 billion people, or **24%** of the global population, are affected by STH. These infections are most prevalent in tropical and subtropical regions, with the highest numbers in sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas, China, and East Asia.
- Approximately **600 million** school-age children and 270 million preschool-age children require regular treatment and preventive measures.

National Impact:

- As per World Health Organization (WHO) report, STH is a major public health issue in India, with **241 million** children aged 1-14 at risk of infection.
- This accounts for around **68%** of the world's children in this age group and approximately 28% of all children globally at risk of STH.

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CATEGORIES	QUESTIONS COLLECTED	OVERALL	QUIZ	HANDWRITTEN NOTES
Current Affairs	42	37	29	16
Current Static Banking	1	—	—	—
Current Static GK	2	1	—	—
Static Banking	—	—	—	—
Static GK	—	—	—	—
Total	45	38	29	16

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