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11 JANUARY

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February 29 2024 PIB News - English
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AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY

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Hand Written Notes

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)

Highlights $\xrightarrow{\text{Of}}$ Narendra Modi $\xrightarrow{\text{Visit to}}$ Andhra Pradesh & Odisha
PM of India

Foundation stone

\rightarrow Bulk Drug Park $\xrightarrow{\text{To}}$ \uparrow Economic activity $\xrightarrow{\text{In}}$ Anakapalli,
Andhra Pradesh

\rightarrow Krishnapatnam $\xrightarrow{\text{Under}}$ Chennai Bengaluru $\xrightarrow{\text{Cost}}$ Rs.10,500 cr $\xrightarrow{\text{In}}$ Tirupati,
Industrial Area Industrial Corridor Andhra Pradesh

\rightarrow 1st Green Hydrogen Hub $\xrightarrow{\text{Under}}$ NGHM $\xrightarrow{\text{Cost}}$ Rs.1.85 lakh cr $\xrightarrow{\text{In}}$ Anakapalli,
Andhra Pradesh
 \downarrow
Developed by \rightarrow NGEL & NREDCAP

Inaugurated

\rightarrow 18th PBD Convention $\xrightarrow{\text{Organized by}}$ GoI & Odisha $\xrightarrow{\text{Theme}}$ Diaspora's Contribution $\xrightarrow{\text{In}}$ Bhubaneswar,
to a Viksit Bharat Odisha

\rightarrow Pravasi Bharatiya Express $\xrightarrow{\text{Introduced by}}$ MEA & IRCTC $\xrightarrow{\text{From}}$ Nizamuddin Railway Station
(A special tourist train) New Delhi

PM - Prime Minister

NGHM - National Green Hydrogen Mission

NGEL - NTPC Green Energy Limited

NREDCAP - New & Renewable Energy Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh

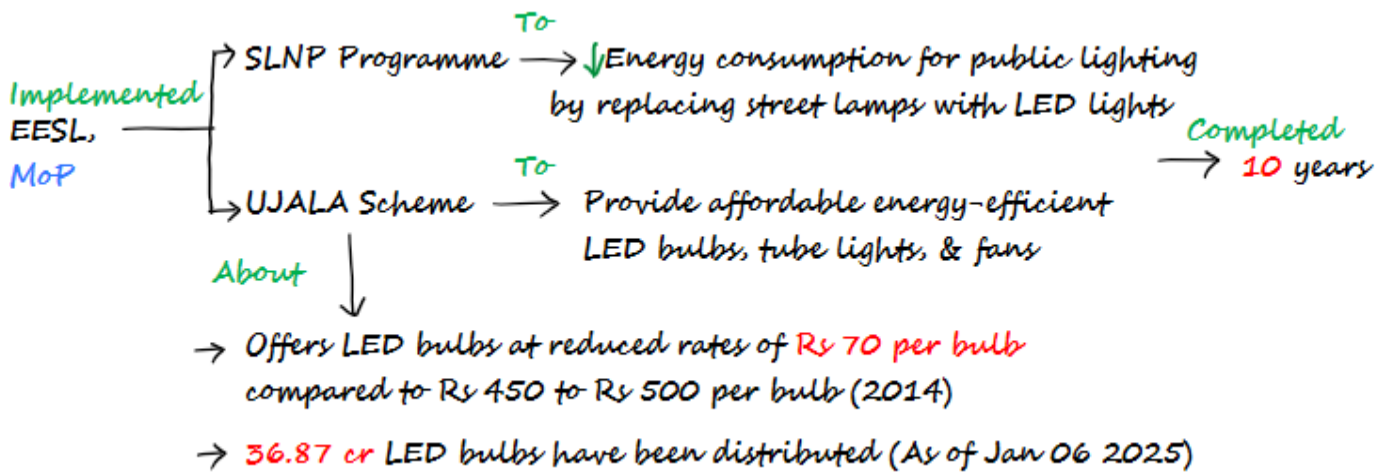
GoI - Government of India

PBD - Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

MEA - Ministry of External Affairs

IRCTC - Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation

2)



UJALA - Unnat Jyoti by Affordable Light Emitting Diodes for All

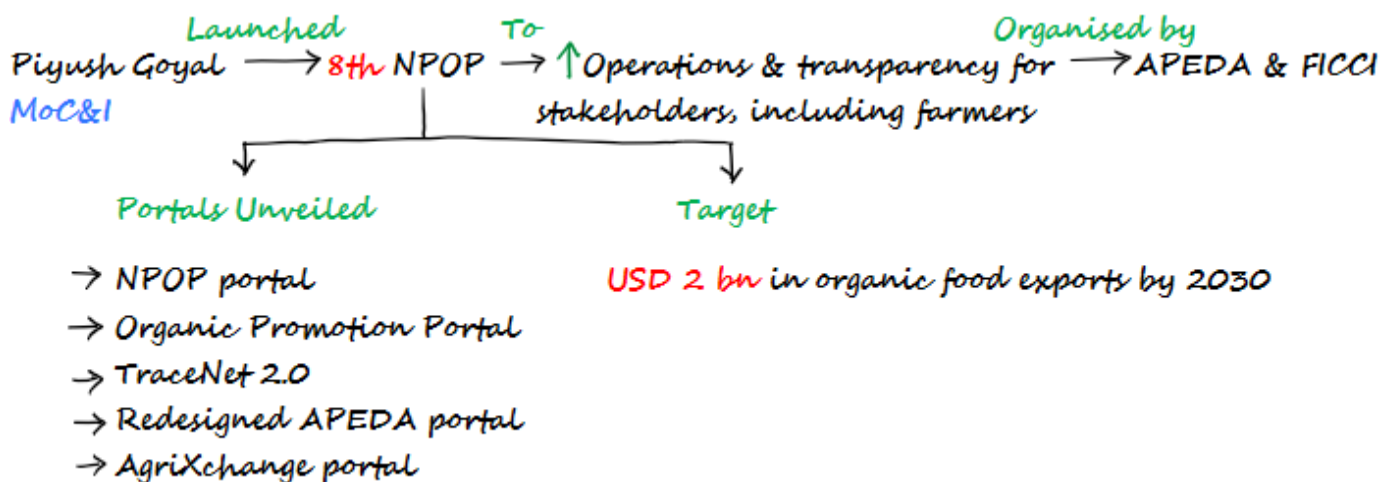
LED - Light Emitting Diode

SLNP - Street Lighting National Programme

EESL - Energy Efficiency Services Limited

MoP - Ministry of Power

3)



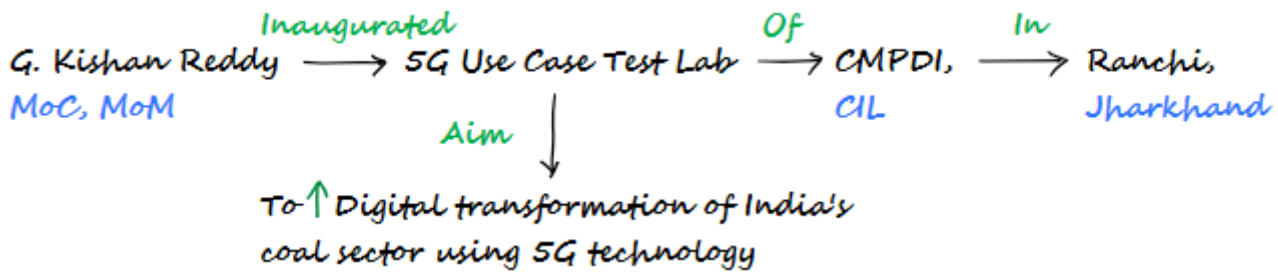
MoC&I - Ministry of Commerce & Industry

NPOP - National Programme for Organic Production

APEDA - Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority

FICCI - Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry

4)



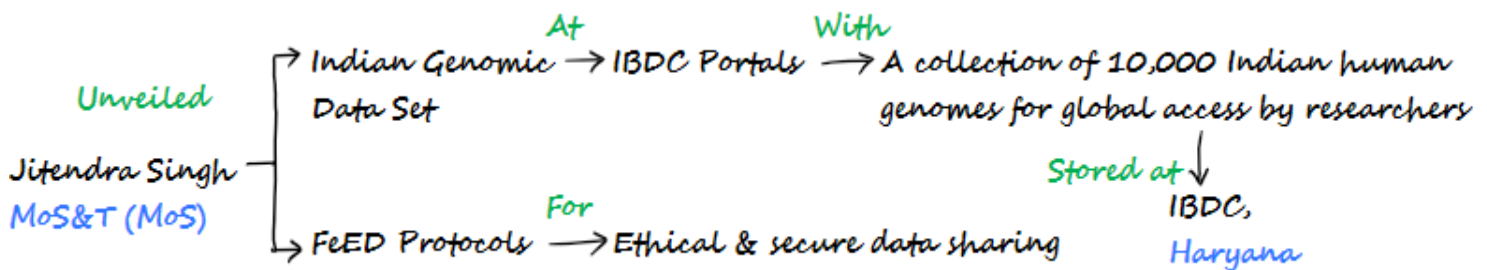
MoC - Ministry of Coal

MoM - Ministry of Mines

CMPDI - Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Limited

CIL - Coal India Limited

5)



MoS&T - Ministry for Science and Technology

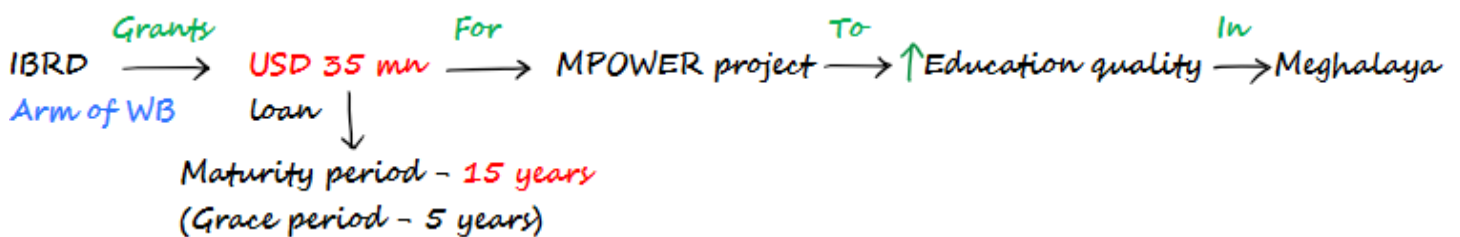
MoS - Minister of State

IBDC - Indian Biological Data Centre

FeED - Framework for Exchange of Data

BANKING & FINANCE

1)

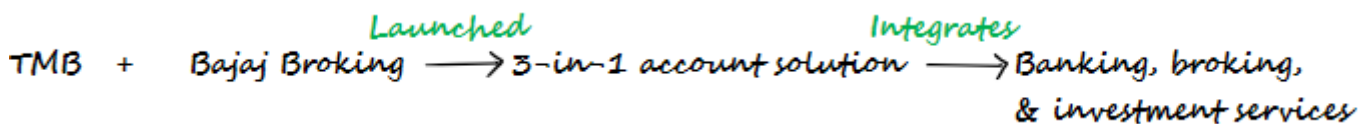


MPOWER - Multisectoral Project for Adolescent Wellbeing, Empowerment and Resilience

WB - World Bank

IBRD - International Bank of Reconstruction and Development

2)



TMB - Tamilnad Mercantile Bank

3)

Secured From For In
GSEDPL → Rs 21.28 bn loan → IREDA → Smart Meter project → Uttar Pradesh

UP ↓

A 10-year contract with
DISCOMs for smart meters

GSEDPL - GMR Smart Electricity Distribution Private Limited

IREDA - Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency

DISCOMs - Distribution Companies

UP - Uttar Pradesh

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1)

Launched To
RBIHub + IIMA Ventures → Swanari TechSprint 3.0 Programme → ↑ Women-centric fintech startups
to scale their businesses

RBI - Reserve Bank Innovation

IIMA - Indian Institutes of Management Ahmedabad

2)

To In
GHI + H2Carrier AS → ↑ Green hydrogen & ammonia solutions → India & Sri Lanka
Norway

GHI - Greenstat Hydrogen India

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1)

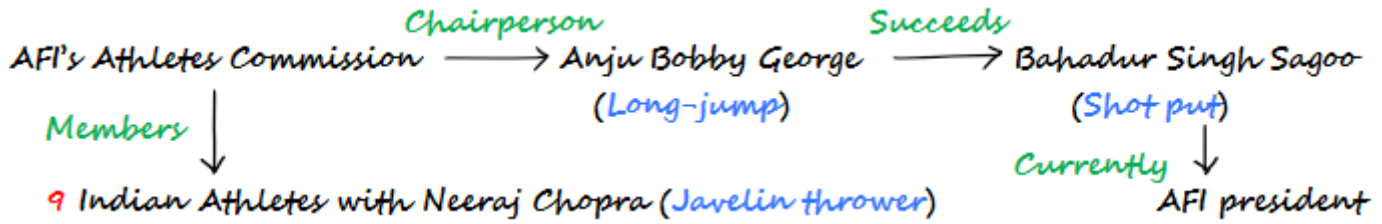
Delivered To For
MDL → INS Vaghsheer → 6th Scorpene Submarine → Indian Navy → ↑ Naval operational
readiness

MDL - Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited

INS - Indian Naval Ship

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

1)



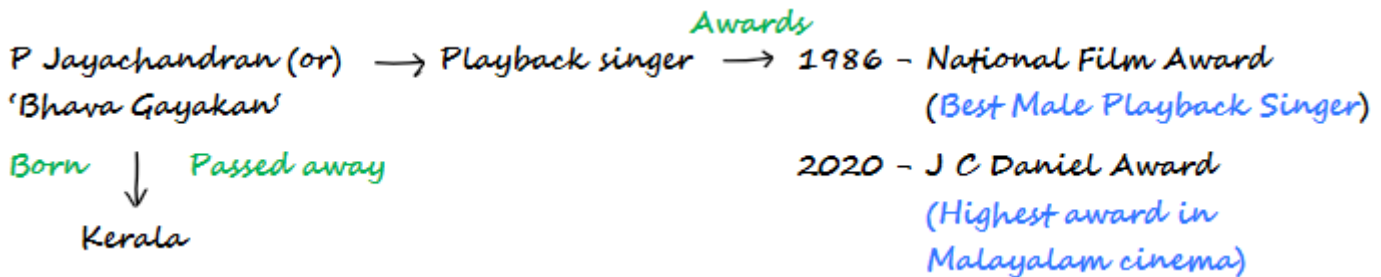
AFI - Athletics Federation of India

2)



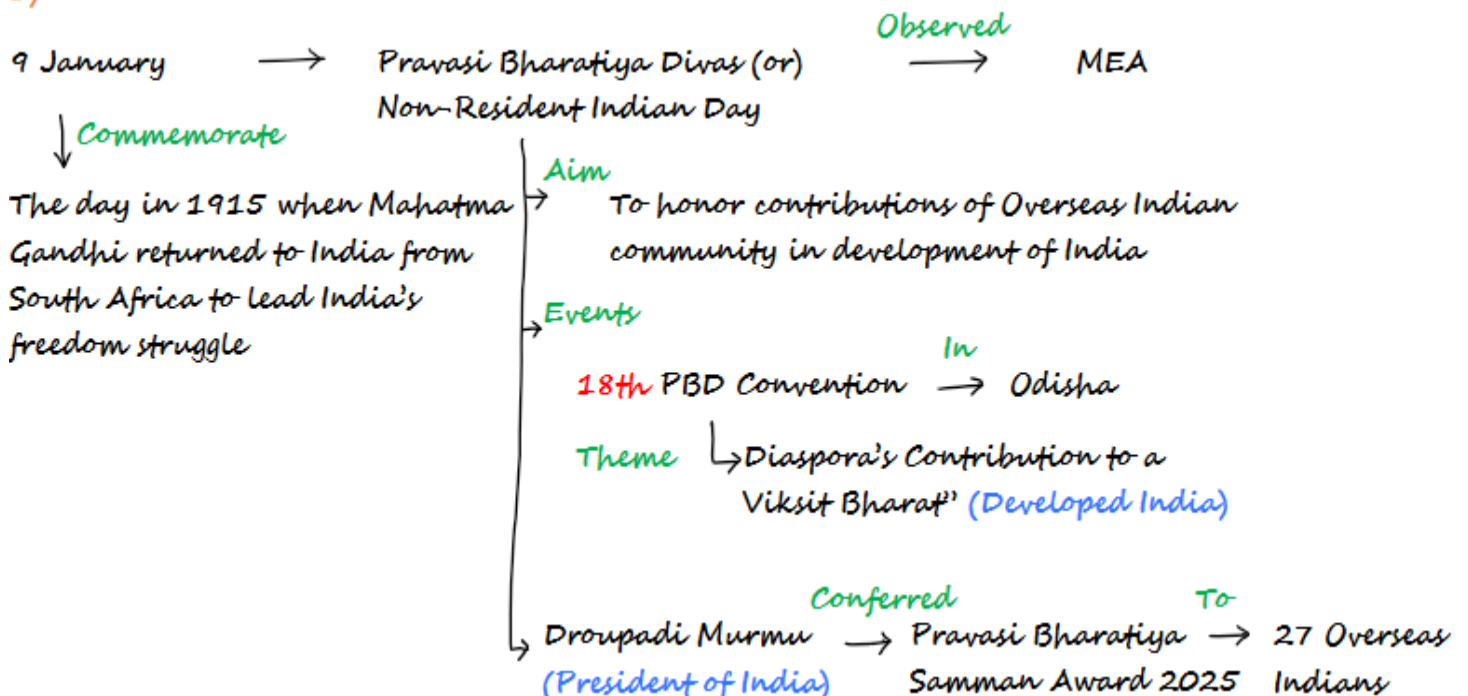
OBITUARY

1)



IMPORTANT DAYS

1)

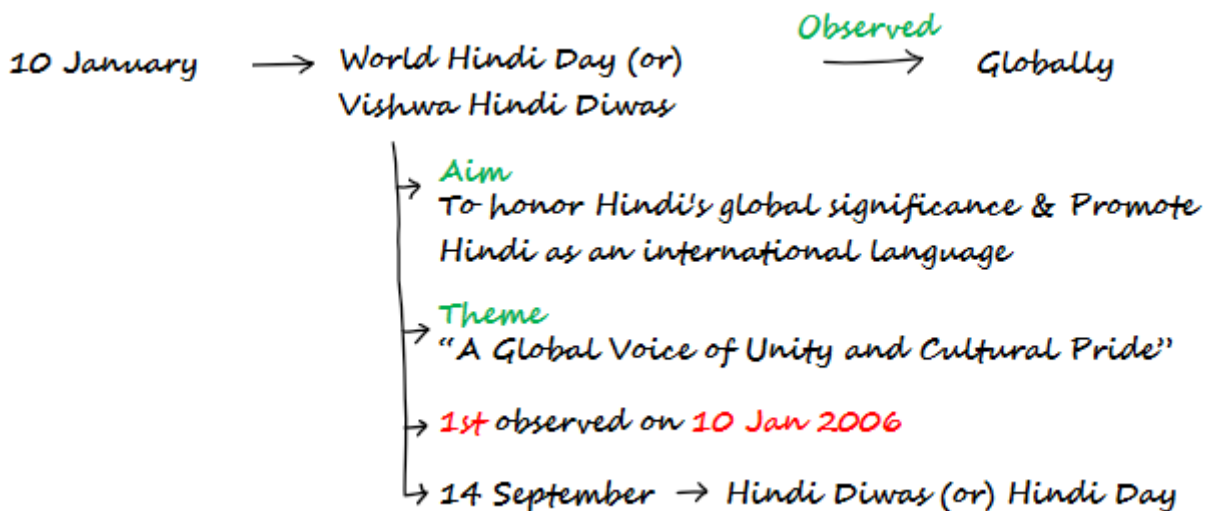


MEA - Ministry of External Affairs

PM - Prime Minister

PBD - Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

2)



3)

AICTE ^{Declared} → 2025 ^{As} → "Year of AI" ^{To} → Shape India as a global leader in AI

AICTE - All-India Council for Technical Education

AI - Artificial Intelligence

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- [MoU signed between Generation India & Govt of Uttarakhand in presence of CM Dhami](#)
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- [Mizoram explores partnership with World Bank for sports-driven development](#)
- [SECI signs MoU to promote Green Hydrogen initiatives](#)

Detailed Content

Current Affairs 11 January 2025 : Headlines



AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY

ENGLISH



MDL Delivers Sixth Scorpene-Class Submarine to the Navy, Sets Sights on Project 75 I Submarine Program



PM Modi visit to Andhra Pradesh and Odisha on 8th-9th January, 2025

CURRENT AFFAIRS

11 JANUARY 2025

- Overview of PM Narendra Modi's visit to AP and Odisha on 8th-9th January, 2025
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- Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy Inaugurated "5G Use Case Test Lab" at CMPDI in Jharkhand
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- TMB Joins Bajaj Broking to Roll Out 3-in-1 Account Solution
- GSEDPL Secures Rs 21.28 billion loan from IREDA for Smart Meter Project in UP
- RBIHub partners with IIM-A to launch 'Swanari TechSprint 3.0' For Women's Financial Inclusion
- GHI and H2Carrier sign MoU to Advance Green Hydrogen and Ammonia Solutions
- Anju Bobby George chaired Athletes Commission: Neeraj Chopra included among 9 athletes
- Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg to serve as the country's interim leader
- MDL delivers 6th Scorpene Submarine 'INS Vagsheer' to IN
- Renowned playback singer P Jayachandran passed away
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2025 – January 9
- World Hindi Day 2025 – January 10
- AICTE declared 2025 as 'Year of AI' to shape India as global leader

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Overview of PM Narendra Modi's visit to AP and Odisha on 8th-9th January, 2025

Prime Minister (PM) **Narendra Modi** visited Andhra Pradesh (AP) and **Odisha** from **8th January to 9th January 2025** to launch various projects worth over Rs 2 lakh crore to promote sustainable development, industrial growth, and infrastructure enhancement.



The various projects include,

- Laid the foundation stone and inaugurated various railway and road projects worth over Rs.19,500 crore in AP.
- First Green Hydrogen Hub under National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) launched in Pudimadaka, AP.
- 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention inaugurated in and remotely flagged-off the inaugural journey of the Pravasi Bharatiya Express in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

PM Narendra Modi's visit to AP:

Development works worth over Rs. 2 Lakh Crore launched in Visakhapatnam:

On January 8 2025, PM Modi laid the foundation stone and inaugurated various railway and road projects worth over **Rs.19,500 crore** in AP.

i. He laid the foundation stone for South Coast Railway Headquarters at Visakhapatnam with an aim to promote agriculture, trade, tourism, and regional economic activity.

ii. The foundation stone was also laid for a **Bulk Drug Park** in **Anakapalli** district to boost economic activity.

- It will support economic activity through its proximity to the Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor and other industrial regions.

iii. The Foundation Stone of Krishnapatnam Industrial Area (KRIS City) under Chennai Bengaluru Industrial Corridor was laid in Tirupati District of AP.

- The project is estimated to gather investments of approximately **Rs.10,500 crore** and connect with other industrial corridors to strengthen regional growth.

First Green Hydrogen Hub under NGHM launched:

On 8th January 2025, PM Modi laid the foundation stone of the NTPC Green Energy Limited (**NGEL**) **Green Hydrogen Hub** project in Pudimadaka, Anakapalli district, AP.

- It is the **first** Green Hydrogen Hub under the NGHM. The estimated cost of the project will be **Rs.1.85 lakh crore**.

ii. The project will be jointly developed by **NGEL** and the New & Renewable Energy Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh (NREDCAP).

iii. It will include the development of 20 Gigawatt (GW) of Renewable Energy (RE) projects, production of 1,500 tonnes per day (TPD) of green hydrogen and 7,500 TPD of green hydrogen derivatives such as green methanol, green urea, and sustainable aviation fuel primarily for export markets.

iv. The project will contribute substantially in achieving India's non-fossil energy capacity target of **500 GW by 2030**.

Note : The Union Cabinet launched the NGHM in 2023 with an outlay of Rs.19,744 crore from Financial Year (FY) 2023-24 to FY 2029-30 to make India a global hub for production, usage and export of Green Hydrogen and its derivatives.

PM Narendra Modi's visit to Odisha:

18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas(PBD) convention inaugurated:

On 9th January 2025, PM Modi inaugurated the **18th PBD Convention** in **Bhubaneswar**, Odisha.

i. It is organized by the Government of India (GoI) in collaboration with the Odisha Government.

- The theme of the event is 'Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat'.

PM flags off inaugural journey of the Pravasi Bharatiya Express:

On 9th January 2025, PM Modi inaugurated the **Pravasi Bharatiya Express**, a special tourist train which will start its journey from Nizamuddin Railway Station in New Delhi (Delhi).

i. The train has been developed for Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) aged between **45 and 65 years** and belonging to low-income categories.

ii. It has been introduced by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in collaboration with the Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC).

iii. The train will cover multiple destinations of religious and tourist importance, including Ayodhya, Patna, Gaya, Varanasi, Mahabalipuram, Rameshwaram, Madurai, Kochi, Goa, Ekta Nagar (Kevadia), Ajmer, Pushkar and Agra under the 'Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana.'

About Andhra Pradesh(AP):

Chief Minister (CM) – Nara Chandrababu Naidu

Governor – Syed Abdul Nazeer

Capital – Amaravati

Tiger Reserve – Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve

About Odisha:

Chief Minister (CM) – Mohan Charan Majhi

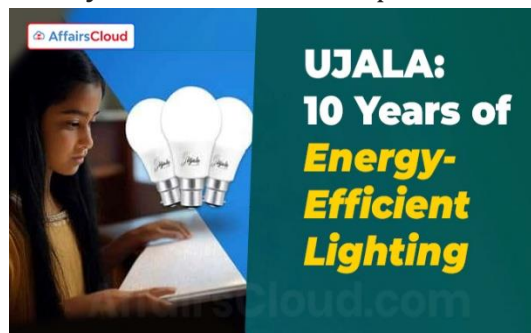
Governor – Hari Babu Kambhampati

Capital – Bhubaneswar

Tiger Reserve – Similipal Tiger Reserve, Satkosia Tiger Reserve

UJALA Scheme and SLNP Programme Completed 10 Years of Energy -Efficient Lighting

On January 05 2025, the Unnat Jyoti by Affordable Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) for All (UJALA) scheme, a transformative initiative of Government of India (GoI) in energy efficiency and Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) have completed **10 years** of successful implementation.



- Both programmes were launched by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi on 5th January, 2015.
- The UJALA scheme is being implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) under the Ministry of Power (MoP).

About UJALA Scheme:

i. It was originally introduced as the Domestic Efficient Lighting Programme (**DELP**), and later rebranded as UJALA. It aimed at providing affordable energy-efficient LED bulbs, tube lights, and fans to millions of Indian homes.

ii. Over the last 10 years, UJALA has emerged as the world's largest zero-subsidy domestic lighting programme, exemplifying India's commitment to reducing energy consumption, enhancing environmental awareness, and promoting economic efficiency.

Significance of LED bulbs Compared to ICL and CFL:

i. LED bulbs help in saving nearly **90%** of energy compared to Incandescent Lamps (**ICLs**) and 50% in the case of Compact Fluorescent Lamps (**CFLs**).

ii. LED bulbs consume less energy compared to ICLs and CFLs, for example: 1 LED bulb consumes only 1 unit of electricity when operated for 140 hours (hrs) whereas a CFL and ICL consume 2 units and 9 units respectively for the same time period.

iii. The scheme offers LED bulbs at reduced rates of **Rs 70 per bulb** compared to **Rs 450 to Rs 500 per bulb (2014)**, has further helped in reducing household consumption and contributed to environmental sustainability.

iv. The annual cost ownership of LEDs stands at Rs 12, which is less than 33% of a CFL (Rs 40) and merely 10% of an ICL (Rs 108).

Key Accomplishments of UJALA Scheme:

i. As of January 06 2025, **36.87 crore** LED bulbs have been distributed under the scheme, resulting in Rs 19,153 crore annually in electrical savings.

ii. So far, **407.92 crore** LED bulbs have been sold across the Indian market under the UJALA scheme.

iii. The peak demand of **9,586 MegaWatt (MW)** of electricity has been avoided.

iv. It also helped in reducing the Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 3.87 crore tonnes annually.

v. So far, 47,883 million (approximately 48 billion) kilowatt-hour (kWh) energy has been saved annually.

About Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP):

i. It was introduced as part of Government of India (GoI)'s commitment to environmental protection and sustainable development.

- **Aim:** To reduce energy consumption and operational costs for public lighting by replacing conventional street lamps with LED lights in urban and rural areas.

ii. The programme is being implemented by EESL. It has collaborated with governing bodies like: Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), Municipal bodies, Gram Panchayats (GPs) and both central and state governments for the implementation of programme.

iii. The programme operates a unique business model where EESL funds the projects upfront and recoups costs through annuity payments made by municipalities.

- It also ensures the maintenance of the LED streetlights, providing more than 95% uptime.

Key Accomplishments of SLNP:

i. As of January 06 2025, more than 1.34 crore LED streetlights have been installed across ULBs and GPs in the country.

ii. The installation of LED streetlights led to significant energy savings of over 9,001 Million Units (MU) of electricity annually.

iii. Reduction in peak demand by over 1,500 MW and a decrease in CO₂ emissions by 6.2 million tonnes annually.

About Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL):

It is a joint venture company of 4 power sector Public Sector Units (PSUs): NTPC Limited, Power Finance Corporation Limited, and POWERGRID Corporation of India Limited.

Chairman- K.S. Sundaram

Headquarters- New Delhi, Delhi

Established- 2009

About Ministry of Power (MoP):

Union Minister- Manohar Lal Khattar (Constituency- Karnal, Haryana)

Union Minister Piyush Goyal Launched 8th Edition of NPOP in New Delhi

On January 09 2025, Union Minister **Piyush Goyal**, Ministry of Commerce & Industry (**MoC&I**) launched the **8th** edition of National Programme for Organic Production (**NPOP**) at the Bharat Ratna C. Subramaniam Auditorium, National Agricultural Science Complex (NASC), Pusa in New Delhi (Delhi). The event was organized by the Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).



- During the event, he unveiled NPOP portal, TraceNet2.0, Organic Promotion Portal, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) portal and AgriXchange portal.
- He also distributed the 1st 5 registration certificates generated on newly launched, TraceNet2.0 to organic operators during the event.
- While addressing the event, the Union Minister highlighted that the total export value of organic farming in India has the potential to reach **Rs 2,000 crore** in the next 3 years.

Key Dignitaries:

i. Union Minister of State (MoS) Jitin Prasada, MoC&I; Union MoS Murlidhar Mohol, Ministry of Cooperation (MoC); Dr. Ashish Kumar Bhutani, Secretary of MoC and other senior government officials were present at the event.

ii. Representatives from major trading partners like: the United States of America (USA), European Union (EU), Australia, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, New Zealand, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

iii. Industry Leaders from international organisations like: Rome (Italy)-based Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Bonn (Germany)-based International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), and Germany-based Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL).

About NPOP:

i. NPOP was launched in May 2001, since then, it has undergone various revisions. The last revision of NPOP was made in 2014.

ii. The standards set by NPOP for crop production have been recognised by the European Commission (EC), Switzerland and the United Kingdom (UK).

iii. The implementation of NPOP is being monitored by APEDA, the apex body under MoC&I.



Key Features of 8th NPOP:

- i. The 8th edition of NPOP has introduced key amendments, which aimed to promote ease of operations and enhance transparency for stakeholders, including farmers.
 - **Key Target:** The programme aims to strengthen India's organic export sector, with an ambitious target of reaching **USD 2 billion** in organic food exports by **2030**.
 - Currently, India exports organic produce worth Rs 5,000- Rs 6,000 crore annually.
- ii. The Certification process required for organic grower groups has been simplified and these groups are now granted legal status in place of the Internal Control System (ICS).
 - The revised derogation provisions allow for a potential reduction of **up to 3 years** in the land conversion period to organic farm, subject to conditions and safeguards.
- iii. Transparency is improved through the disclosure of information about organic farmers and other relevant information in the public domain, strengthening system credibility.
- iv. Also, oversight mechanisms have been bolstered with the integration of Information Technology (IT) tools and the web-based traceability system, Tracenet, for monitoring, surveillance, and data analytics.
- v. The revised NPOP includes provisions for reduced conversion time from non-organic to organic farming and offers flexibility for farmers to switch service providers or production groups, ensuring they receive fair compensation.

Key Portals Unveiled at 8th NPOP:

- i. **NPOP portal:** This portal is designed to provide more visibility and ease of operations for Organic stakeholders.
- ii. **Organic Promotion Portal:** Through this portal, farmers, FPOs and exporters can demonstrate their certified organic products, generate Trade Leads and connect with international buyers.
 - The portal will also feature online training and capacity building sessions for operators on Organic Production and also information on Organic Trade events.
- iii. **TraceNet 2.0:** It is the upgraded online organic traceability system for seamless operations and improved tools for regulatory oversight.
 - It will ensure transparency, traceability, and adherence for organic agricultural and processed food products from farm to market.
 - This new version of TraceNet, which has integrated technology with agriculture, will empower the stakeholders to streamline operations and meet international organic certification standards.
- iv. **Redesigned APEDA portal:** It is the redesigned and revamped version of APEDA portal with enhanced user experience and information for the benefit of Agric and Processed food products' stakeholders.
- v. **AgriXchange portal:** It is the redesigned and revamped version of APEDA portal, which will enable more user-friendly data analysis and generation of reports and data of Agricultural exports, thus making it accessible for the general public.
 - This portal will enable the exporters to easily connect with global buyers and sellers as well as explore comprehensive trade insights at their convenience.

About Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I):

Union Minister- Piyush Goyal (Constituency- Mumbai North, Maharashtra)

Minister of State (MoS)- Jitin Prasada (Constituency- Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh, UP)

Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy Inaugurated "5G Use Case Test Lab" at CMPDI in Jharkhand

On January 09 2025, Union Minister **G. Kishan Reddy**, Ministry of Coal (MoC) and Ministry of Mines (MoM) inaugurated the "**5G Use Case Test Lab**" and launched a new corporate **logo** of Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Limited (**CMPDI**), a subsidiary of Coal India Limited (CIL), in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

- **Aim:** To promote digital transformation in the coal sector in India through 5G technology and also address the industry's evolving key challenges.



Key People: Vikram Dev Dutt, Secretary of MoC; Vismita Tej, Additional Secretary of MoC, P.M. Prasad, Chairman of Coal India Limited (CIL), Manoj Kumar, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of CMPDI, Nilendu Kumar Singh, CMD of Central Coalfields Limited (CCL), Satish Jha, CMD of Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL) and other senior officials were present at the event.

Key Points:

- i. MoC has designated CMPDI as the Centre of Excellence (**CoE**) for setting up a 5G Use Case Test lab for the coal industry to leverage 5G technology effectively.
- ii. During the event, Union MoS also unveiled '**Replica of CMPDI services**' sculpture made from scrap material from CMPDI like: delivery hose pipe, NQ drilling rod, core box, among others.

- This replica structure reflects the commitment of CMPDI to sustainable practices through intricate depictions of its services such as: geomatics, exploration, planning and design and environmental monitoring.

About 5G Use Case Lab:

- i. The facility will serve as a testbed for developing, testing, and adapting 5G-based applications(app), customized to cater the specific requirements of coal mining operations.
 - It is a lab-scale representation of an industry-specific 5G network, designed to support the coal mining industry.
- ii. It will integrate 5G radio and core technologies with advanced Information Technology (IT)/ Operational Technology (OT) applications and equipment.
- iii. It will test and develop 5G use cases like: voice, video and data communication applications, Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) sensors, and real-time monitoring in coal mining operations.
- iv. The key focus areas of this facility include: to develop high-resolution video and IoT applications for mission specific tasks like: smart mining, mines digital twin, Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs), among others.

About Ministry of Coal (MoC):

Union Minister- G. Kishan Reddy (Constituency- Secunderabad, Telangana)

Minister of State (MoS)- Satish Chandra Dubey (Rajya Sabha- Bihar)

Union MoS Dr. Jitendra Singh unveiled Indian Genomic Data Set & IBDC Portals

On January 9, 2025, Union Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge, IC) **Dr. Jitendra Singh**, Ministry for Science and Technology (**MoS&T**) unveiled the **Indian Genomic Data Set** at the Genome India Data Conclave held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, Delhi.

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- He also launched the Framework for Exchange of Data (**FeED**) Protocols and the Indian Biological Data Centre (**IBDC**) Portals, providing researchers in India and globally access to 10,000 whole genome samples.
- During the conclave, he announced a future target of sequencing 10 million genomes to accelerate India's advancements in genomics and personalized medicine.
- These initiative will create an ecosystem as a knowledge and innovation hub, contributing to the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

About Indian Genomic Data Set:

i. A compilation of 10,000 human genomes from 83 population groups in India, covering approximately 2% of the country's 4,600 population groups.

- This collection will serve as a foundation for future research on disease and drug therapies.

ii. It is now accessible to researchers worldwide to study genetic variations and develop more precise genomic tools. It is stored at the Indian Biological Data Centre (**IBDC**) in Faridabad, Haryana.

iii. This initiative aims to position India as a leader in genomics, facilitating the creation of genomic chips tailored to the Indian population, thus improving the accuracy of genetic studies.

About 'Framework for Exchange of Data (FeED)' Protocols:

The launch of FeED protocols under the Biotech-PRIDE Guidelines ensures that nation-specific data is shared transparently, fairly, and responsibly, reflecting India's commitment to ethical and secure data sharing.

Key Facts:

- India's bioeconomy has expanded from United States Dollar (USD) 10 billion in 2014 to more than **USD 130 billion** in 2024, with forecasts predicting it will reach **USD 300 billion** by 2030.
- India currently holds the 12th position globally in biotech and 3rd in the Asia-Pacific region.
- India is the largest producer of vaccines globally and has the third-largest startup ecosystem.
- The number of biotech startups in India has surged from 50 in 2014 to over 8,500 in 2023, highlighting the country's growing leadership in biotechnology and its potential to transform the global bioeconomy.

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BANKING & FINANCE

World Bank approves USD 35 million to enhance education in Meghalaya

On 7 January 2025, the World Bank's (**WB**) Board of Executive Directors approved **USD 35 million** loan for a project Meghalaya Multisectoral Project for Adolescent Wellbeing, Empowerment and Resilience

(**MPOWER**) aimed to improve education quality in **Meghalaya**. The project will help the state's youth by enhancing resources and infrastructure.



- The loan from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), part of the WB Group, has a final maturity of 15 years, including a grace period of 5 years.
- It aimed to better empower 5,00,000 adolescents to make the transition from school to work by lowering dropouts, improving learning outcomes and providing assistance for accessing jobs and starting businesses.

Note: The project draws inspiration from similar initiatives in Jharkhand, as well as successful WB operations in Tanzania and Bangladesh.

About MPOWER:

i. The project **MPOWER** will strengthen academic results for adolescents in **grades 6-12** and close gaps in students' reading and math skills.

- The total cost of the project is **USD 45 million** of which USD 35 million will be given by the WB and rest by the Government of India (GoI).

ii. It aims to lower dropout rates by giving students career assistance, mental health awareness, and life skills. Special focus will be on reaching dropout students and providing them with the same support.

- Meghalaya has one of the highest dropout rates in India, with 11% of students leaving school at the upper primary level and 22% of students dropping out at the secondary level.

iii. The project will also teach business skills to aspiring entrepreneurs and out-of-school adolescents in collaboration with the Meghalaya State Skills Development Society (MSSDS).

About World Bank(WB):

President – Ajay Banga

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

Established – 1944

About Meghalaya

Chief Minister (CM) – Conrad Kongkal Sangma

Governor – C H Vijayashankar

National Parks – Balphakram National Park, Nokrek Ridge National Park

Wildlife Sanctuaries – Siju Wildlife Sanctuary, Narpuh Wildlife Sanctuary

TMB Joins Bajaj Broking to Roll Out 3-in-1 Account Solution

On January 08, 2025, Thoothukudi (Tamil Nadu, TN)- based Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (**TMB**) Limited partnered with Pune (Maharashtra)- based **Bajaj Broking**, the broking arm of Bajaj Finance Limited (BFL), to launch a comprehensive **3-in-1 account solution** combining banking, broking, and investment services.

- The partnership aims to offer TMB customers seamless online trading via Bajaj Broking's platform while helping Bajaj Broking expand its digital services. Together, they plan to deliver client-focused solutions and explore new opportunities.



Key Points:

- i. The 3-in-1 account simplifies fund transfers, minimizes paperwork, and offers a tech-driven platform for investing in a variety of financial products.
- ii. The collaboration strengthens TMB's commitment to meet customers' financial needs by offering professional investment services through a trusted partner.
- iii. Bajaj Broking aims to provide technology-driven services and research insights to more investors base. This partnership will enhance decision-making tools and expand its presence across India.

Broking Firm:

A broking firm, or brokerage firm, is a financial institution that facilitates the buying and selling of securities between buyers and sellers.

- These firms act as intermediaries in various financial markets, including stocks, bonds, commodities, and derivatives.

About Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB) Limited:

Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Salee Sukumaran Nair

Headquarters – Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu (TN)

Founded – 1921

GSEDPL Secures Rs 21.28 billion loan from IREDA for Smart Meter Project in UP

On January 9, 2025, Uttar Pradesh(UP) based GMR Smart Electricity Distribution (**GSEDPL**), a subsidiary of Grandhi Mallikarjuna Rao (GMR) Power and Urban Infra (GPUIL), secured approval for a **Rs 21.28 billion** (USD 247.66 million) loan from the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (**IREDA**). This loan will help finance the installation of 7.57 million smart meters across UP as part of a larger project valued at Rs 34.67 billion (USD 403.75 million).

- GSEDPL will operate and maintain the smart meters under a **10-year** contract with the distribution companies (DISCOMs.)
- The project aims to install smart meters in 5 zones: Varanasi, Azamgarh, Prayagraj, Mirzapur, Agra and Aligarh, served by two state **DISCOMs**: Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam (**PuVNL**) and Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam (**DVVNL**).

i. The project will be implemented through three Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs): GMR Agra Smart Meters Limited, GMR Kashi Smart Meters Limited, and GMR Triveni Smart Meters Limited.

- Bosch Global Software Technologies Private Limited (**BGSW**) was the technical partner for the project.

ii. GPUIL has extended a corporate guarantee of **Rs 440 crore** (USD 51.21) million to each SPV until the Commercial Operation Date (COD).

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

RBIHub partners with IIM-A to launch 'Swanari TechSprint 3.0' For Women's Financial Inclusion

On January 9 2025, the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (**RBIH**), the innovation arm and a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (**RBI**) has partnered with Gujarat based Indian Institutes of Management Ahmedabad's (IIM-A) startup incubator, **IIMA Ventures** (Formerly IIMA-Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship, CIIE) to launch the 3rd cohort of the 'Swanari TechSprint 3.0' programme.



- The programme is designed to accelerate women-centric fintech startups to scale their businesses.
- This initiative aims to conceptualise, develop and support innovations in technology that enhance access, usage and quality of financial services for all women in India.

Key Points:

- i. The Swanari TechSprint allows startups to develop and scale gender-inclusive financial solutions and provides expert mentorship, funding grants, and other forms of support.
- ii. It focuses on empowering women-owned MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), self-help groups, and street vendors, addressing barriers such as inactive bank accounts, limited access to savings products, and difficulties in securing credit.
- iii. India has over **556 million** women aged 15–64 who remain underserved in financial services (according to the World Bank, WB).
 - The programme aims to overcome these challenges by supporting startups that address the unique financial needs of women.
- iv. The programme is open to startups that have developed gender-focused financial solutions.
 - Eligible applicants must have a minimum viable product and either pre-seed to pre-Series A funding or generate revenues or traction.
- v. Previous cohorts have highlighted successful startups like **Kaleidofin**, **Merakal**, Vitto, Anniyam Payment, MaksPay, Manipal Business Solutions, **Sampatti Card**, **Haqdarshak** and Agripal which have introduced innovative solutions for women's financial empowerment.

About Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH):

It has been set up as a Section 8 company under the Companies Act, 2013 with an initial capital contribution of Rs. 100 crore.

Chairman- Senapathy (Kris) Gopalakrishnan

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Rajesh Bansal,

Headquarters- Bengaluru, Karnataka,

Established – 2022

GHI and H2Carrier sign MoU to Advance Green Hydrogen and Ammonia Solutions

On January 9, 2025, New Delhi (Delhi) based Greenstat Hydrogen India (**GHI**) Private Limited, a unit of Norwegian renewable energy firm Greenstat ASA and Norway based **H2Carrier AS (H2C)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) to accelerate the development of green hydrogen and ammonia projects in **India** and **Sri Lanka**.

- The MoU aims to support global energy transition with scalable, cost-effective, and flexible green hydrogen and ammonia production.
- The collaboration will involve feasibility studies, project identification, and implementation of green hydrogen, ammonia production facilities, with an emphasis on floating production solutions.

i. The floating production solution will focus on leveraging **H2Carrier's P2X Floater technology**, the world's 1st floating green ammonia production facility.

ii. The projects will meet the rising demand for green ammonia, essential for clean fuel and decarbonization in sectors like shipping, agriculture, and heavy industries.

Note: GHI was established in 2020 to focus on the development of green hydrogen and its derivatives in Asia and the Middle East.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Anju Bobby George chaired Athletes Commission: Neeraj Chopra included among 9 athletes

On 8 January 2025, Long-jump great **Anju Bobby George** was named Chairperson of the Athletics Federation of India (**AFI**)'s **Athletes Commission**. Two-time Olympic medallist and javelin thrower **Neeraj Chopra** is one of the members in the Athletes Commission.



- This commission features India's **nine-athletes** with six women athletes and three men athletes.

Key Points:

i. The commission includes six women athletes: **Anju Bobby George**, a 2003 World Championships bronze medal winner and also a senior vice president in the AFI; runner **Jyotirmoyee Sikdar**; discus thrower **Krishna Poonia**; hurdler **MD Valsamma**; steeplechaser **Sudha Singh**; and runner **Sunita Rani**.

ii. Three men athletes including **Neeraj Chopra**, 3000m steeplechaser **Avinash Sable** and newly-elected AFI president **Bahadur Singh Sagoo**, a shot put gold medal winner at 2002 Asian Games.

- Bahadur Singh Sagoo was the chairman of the previous Athletes Commission.

iii. Outgoing AFI president Adille Sumariwalla, who served as AFI president for three consecutive terms from 2012, will continue to be a part of the executive council as an ex-officio member as he is a part of the World Athletics Council.

About Athletes Commission:

i. The Athletes Commission seeks to represent the viewpoints and interests of athletes within the Athletics Federation of India's governing bodies.

- ii. The eligibility criteria include being a champion at the Asian or Commonwealth Games or at least participating in an Olympics or World Championships.
- iii. The tenure of the Athletes Commission is four years; the current members are committed to the 2025–2029 cycle.

Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg to serve as the country's interim leader

Foreign Minister of Austria Alexander Schallenberg (55 years) of the Austrian People's Party (OVP) will be serving as the country's **Federal Chancellor** till the time the far-right Freedom Party is trying to form a new coalition government.

- Schallenberg was elected for this position after the existing leader **Karl Nehammer** announced his resignation on 4th January 2025.
- He will resume the office as interim Chancellor of Austria on **10th January 2025**.
- This marks Schallenberg's **second** tenure as interim Federal Chancellor. He served as chancellor for less than two months in **2021** after the resignation of then Chancellor **Sebastian Kurz**.
- Alexander Schallenberg has worked on the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government of Chancellor Karl Nehammer since 2021, and has served on the same position from **2019 to 2021**.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

MDL delivers 6th Scorpene Submarine 'INS Vagsheer' to IN

On January 9, 2025, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) delivered the **6th** and final Scorpene-class submarine, 'Indian Navy Ship (INS) Vagsheer (S26)' to the Indian Navy (IN) in Mumbai, Maharashtra, marking the successful completion of **Project P-75**.



- The Acceptance Document was signed by **Sanjeev Singhal**, Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), MDL and Rear Admiral (RAdm) **R Adhisrinivasan**, Chief Staff Officer (CSO) (Technical), Western Naval Command.
- India aims to be fully self-reliant in defence by **2047**, with numerous ships and submarines under construction in domestic shipyards.

Note: Other 5 Submarines: INS Kalvari (2015), INS Khanderi (2017), INS Karanj (2018), INS Vela (2021), and INS Vagir (2020).

Background :

i. **Vagsheer (S26)** was launched on **April 20, 2022**, underwent trials for more than a year, to ensure delivery of Combat Worthy Submarine.

- It was ordered in 2005, as part of the Project 75 program.

ii. These submarines have been completely built by MDL through a transfer of technology from Naval Group (France), in line with the Government of India's (GoI) "Make in India" policy.

Key Features of INS Vaghsheer :

i. Combat Capabilities: It is armed with wire-guided torpedoes and anti-ship missiles, which can be launched both underwater and at the surface.

- It boasts a very high level of automation with Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS) and a Combat Management System (CMS).

ii. Advanced Technology: It is equipped with **state-of-the-art** stealth technologies, including reduced radiated noise levels and a hydrodynamically optimized design, becoming the quietest submarines in the world.

- It can undertake multifarious types of missions such as Anti-Surface warfare, Anti-Submarine Warfare, Intelligence Gathering and Area Surveillance.

iii. Indigenous Systems: The submarine is fitted with indigenously developed systems including Air Conditioning Plant and Internal Communication & Broadcast System in addition to Main Batteries and Ku-Band SATCOM (Rukmini).

About Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL):

MDL is preparing for Project 75(I), which involves building 6 nuclear-powered attack submarines.

- As of September 2024, the government held an 84.83% stake in the defence PSU.

Chairman & Managing Director (**CMD**)– Sanjeev Singhal

Headquarters- Mumbai, Maharashtra

Established- 1934

OBITUARY

Renowned playback singer P Jayachandran passed away

On January 9 2025, Renowned playback singer **P Jayachandran**, affectionately called as '**Bhava Gayakan**' passed away at the **age of 80** in Thrissur (Kerala). He was born on March 3 1944, in Ernakulam.



- He has won numerous awards including the 'National Film award'.

About P Jayachandran:

i. P Jayachandran was an acclaimed playback singer, known for his versatility in singing in Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, and Hindi.

ii. His career began in **1966** with the song "Manjalayil Mungi Thorthi" from the Malayalam film Kalithozhan.

iii. Over a career spanning 5 decades, he recorded more than **16,000 songs** in various Indian languages.

- In 1986, he also acted in a Malayalam film for the 1st time (Nakhakshathangal).



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Awards and Honors:

- i. He received the '**National Film Award**' for Best Male Playback Singer (1986) for his outstanding contribution to Indian cinema .
- ii. He received the '**J C Daniel Award**' the highest award in Malayalam cinema, for his contributions to Malayalam industry (2020).
- iii. He received 5 Kerala State Film Awards and 4 Tamil Nadu (TN) State Film Awards: TN State Film Award (1994) and TN Kalaimamani Award (1997).

IMPORTANT DAYS

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2025 – January 9

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (**PBD**), also known as Non-Resident Indian (**NRI**) Day, celebrated once in two years on **9th January** is a significant event that honors the contributions of the Overseas Indian community (Indian diaspora) in the development of India.



Background :

The PBD is observed every year on 9th January since **2003** to commemorate the day in **1915** when **Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi**, popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi, returned to India from South Africa to lead the country's freedom struggle.

- Since 2015, under a revised format, PBD Convention has been organised once **every 2 years** with the theme-based PBD Conferences.

Overseas Indians/Indian Diaspora:

- i. Indian Diaspora is a generic term used for addressing people who have migrated from the territories that are currently within the borders of the Republic of India.
- ii. It constitutes Non Resident Indians (NRIs), and Persons of Indian origins (PIOs) including Overseas Citizens of India (OCI), who are foreign nationals with Indian roots.

- NRIs have rights like voting in India, which PIOs don't have.

- iii. As of November 2024, there are around **35.4 million** overseas Indians around the world (data by MEA).

Note: To streamline processes and enhance engagement, the government merged PIO and OCI cardholders into a unified category, OCI, in 2015.

Objectives:

- To Honor the Indian diaspora's contributions to India's development.
- To Foster a better understanding of India abroad.
- To Support India's causes and promote the welfare of Indian communities worldwide.
- To Provide a platform for engagement with India's government and people.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention:

The PBD Convention, the flagship event of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) was 1st introduced in 2003 by the Government of India (GoI), led by Late Prime Minister (PM) **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**. It aims to honor and connect with the overseas Indian community, acknowledging their role in India's development.

i. 17 Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conventions have been organised till date.

- The 17th PBD Convention took place in Indore, Madhya Pradesh (MP) from 8th to 10th January 2023.

ii. The **18th** PBD Convention was held for the 1st time in Bhubaneswar, Odisha from **8th to 10th** January 2025.

- The theme of PBD Convention 2025: "Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat" (Developed India).

Segments of PBD Convention 2025:

i. Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas:

On 8th January 2025, the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas event was inaugurated jointly by the Union Minister **Subrahmanyam Jaishankar**, MEA, Union Minister **Mansukh L Mandaviya**, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS), and the Chief Minister (CM) of Odisha, **Mohan Charan Majhi**.

- The day serves as a platform for Pravasi youth from Odisha to reconnect with their cultural roots.

ii. 18th PBD Convention:

On 9th January 2025, the Prime Minister (PM) of India, **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the 18th PBD Convention Event in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

- He also flagged off the **Pravasi Bharatiya Express**, a special tourist train under the 'Pravasi Teertha Darshan Yojana' scheme, MEA.
- He also inaugurated **4 exhibitions**:

1. Vishwaroop Ram – The Universal Legacy of Ramayana:
2. Diaspora's Contribution to Technology and Viksit Bharat.
3. Spread and Evolution of Indian diaspora in the world with special focus on Mandvi to Muscat.
4. Heritage and Culture of Odisha

The 18th PBD featured 5 thematic plenary sessions:

1. Diaspora Youth Leadership: Focus on leadership roles of youth in a globalized world.
2. Migrant Skills: Stories of overcoming barriers and contributing skills to bridge gaps.
3. Sustainable Development: Exploring the diaspora's contributions to green initiatives.
4. Women's Leadership: Recognizing the role of women in the diaspora, focusing on Nari Shakti (Women Power).
5. Cultural Connections: Exploring cultural dialogues and the sense of belonging among the diaspora.

iii. Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) 2025:

On 10th January 2025, the President of India, **Droupadi Murmu**, conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards (**PBSA**), highest honour conferred on overseas Indians, to 27 People to distinguished members of the Indian diaspora.

- The PBSA recognizes outstanding achievements of NRIs and PIOs in sectors like education, science and innovation, trade and industry, arts and culture, social work, public service and philanthropy. [Click Here to view the List of PBSA 2025 Awardees](#)

World Hindi Day 2025 – January 10

World Hindi Day or **Vishwa Hindi Diwas** is annually observed across the globe on **10 January** to highlight the significance of the Hindi language and its role in connecting people globally.

- The day is observed to honor Hindi's global significance and to showcase its cultural diversity to the world, as well as to promote Hindi as an international language.



- The **theme** of this year is "A Global Voice of Unity and Cultural Pride," which aims to promote linguistic and global interchange through the use of Hindi.

Note: Hindi Diwas, also known as Hindi Day, is annually observed on **September 14** to commemorate the adoption of Hindi written in Devanagari script as one of the 22 official languages of India.

Background:

- i. In 1949, Hindi was first spoken at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, the United States of America (USA).
- ii. In a meeting of the Follow up Committee on World Hindi Conference held on June 8, 2005, it was decided to commemorate 10th January as World Hindi Day every year.
- iii. In 2006, former Prime Minister (PM) Dr. Manmohan Singh presided over the inaugural celebration of Vishwa Hindi Diwas.

- Since then, January 10 has been observed globally as World Hindi Day.

iv. The **first-ever World Hindi Day** was celebrated on **10 January 2006** to mark the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference in Nagpur, Maharashtra on 10 January 1975.

v. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) commemorates this day around the world by organising a variety of events and activities through Indian embassies and cultural centres.

Significance of Hindi:

- i. The term "Hindi" is derived from the Persian language.
 - ii. Hindi is an Indo-European language and also a descendant of the Sanskrit language.
 - iii. Hindi is the third most spoken language in the world, with about 4.46% of the world population. It ranks fourth in the world in terms of the number of native speakers, behind English, Spanish, and Chinese.
 - iv. In 1950, Hindi was declared the official language of India and was designated as Hindi in Devanagari script in Article 343 of the Indian Constitution.
- Hindi is one of the 22 scheduled languages, listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

AICTE declared 2025 as 'Year of AI' to shape India as global leader

The **All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)** has announced **2025** as the "**Year of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**" to shape India as a global leader in AI.

- This initiative will be adopted by all AICTE-approved institutions, empowering around **14,000** colleges and benefiting **40 million** students nationwide.

Its key features

- i. The Institutes will adopt an **AI Affirmation Pledge** to make India a global leader in AI through innovation, ethics, and education.
- ii. **AI Awareness Campaigns:** A nation wide campaign "**AI for all: The Future Begins Here**" will be held which include workshops, hackathons, and guest lectures to raise awareness about AI's potential among the

students. Also council will organize **workshops and certifications** to provide training to **faculty** in AI education.

iii. The institutes will be encouraged to accommodate interdisciplinary **courses** and research programs related to AI, set up AI labs with industries and promote socially ethical AI practices.

iv. Moreover, students will be provided with the real-time experience through internships, projects, and mentorships through collaborations by the council with global companies like Adobe, CISCO, and International Business Machines (IBM).

v. **Top-performing institutions** will be recognized by **AICTE** and will serve as the role models of AI excellence for other institutes.

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