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English



# 20 FEBRUARY

# 2025

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Feb 29 2024 CA Q&A - English  
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Weekly: 24-29 Feb 2024 CA Q&A - English  
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Weekly: 24-29 Feb 2024 CA Quiz - English  
**START**

Monthly

Weekly

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**PIB News**



February 29 2024 PIB News - English  
Article



February 28 2024 PIB News - English  
Article



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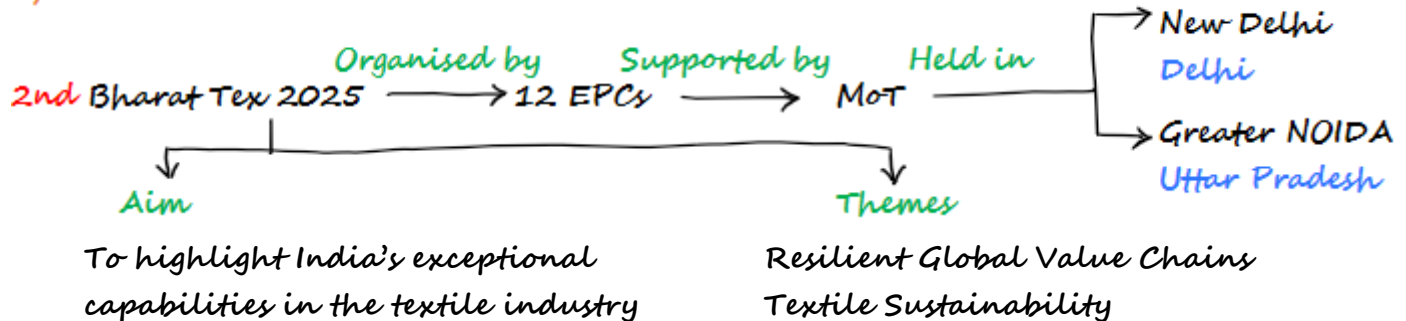
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## Hand Written Notes

### NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)



### Highlights

#### Events



**EPC** - Export Promotion Council

**MoT** - Ministry of Textiles

**NOIDA** - New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

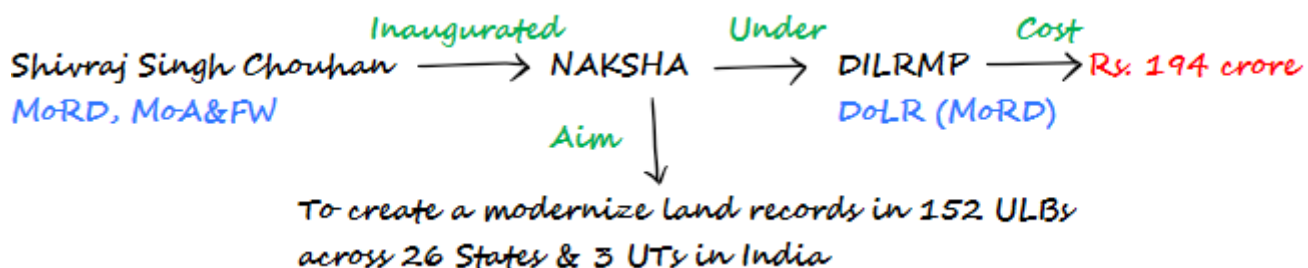
**MoS** - Minister of State

**CSB** - Central Silk Board

**CTR TI** - CSB-Central Tasar Research & Training Institute

**CSTR I** - CSB-Central Silk Technological Research Institute

2)



**MoRD** - Ministry of Rural Development

MoA&FW - Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

NAKSHA - National Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations

DILRMP - Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme

DoLR - Department of Land Resources

UCB - Urban local bodies

UT - Union Territories

3)

PMFBY      *Under*      *Completed*      *As on*  
→ MoA&FW → 9 years → February 18, 2025

→ *Aim*

A crop insurance scheme in India to protect farmers from financial losses due to natural calamities

→ *Duration*

Extended until 2025-26 with Rs.69,515.71 cr budget

→ *Premium rate for crop insurance under PMFBY*

<i>Crop Type</i>	<i>Premium Rate (Farmer's Share)</i>
Kharif Crops	2% of the sum insured
Rabi Crops	1.5% of the sum insured
Horticulture/Commercial Crops	5% of the sum insured

→ Govt pays entire premium for farmers in North-Eastern States, Jammu & Kashmir & Himachal Pradesh

→ *Achievements*

→ PMFBY - World's largest crop insurance scheme by farmer participation

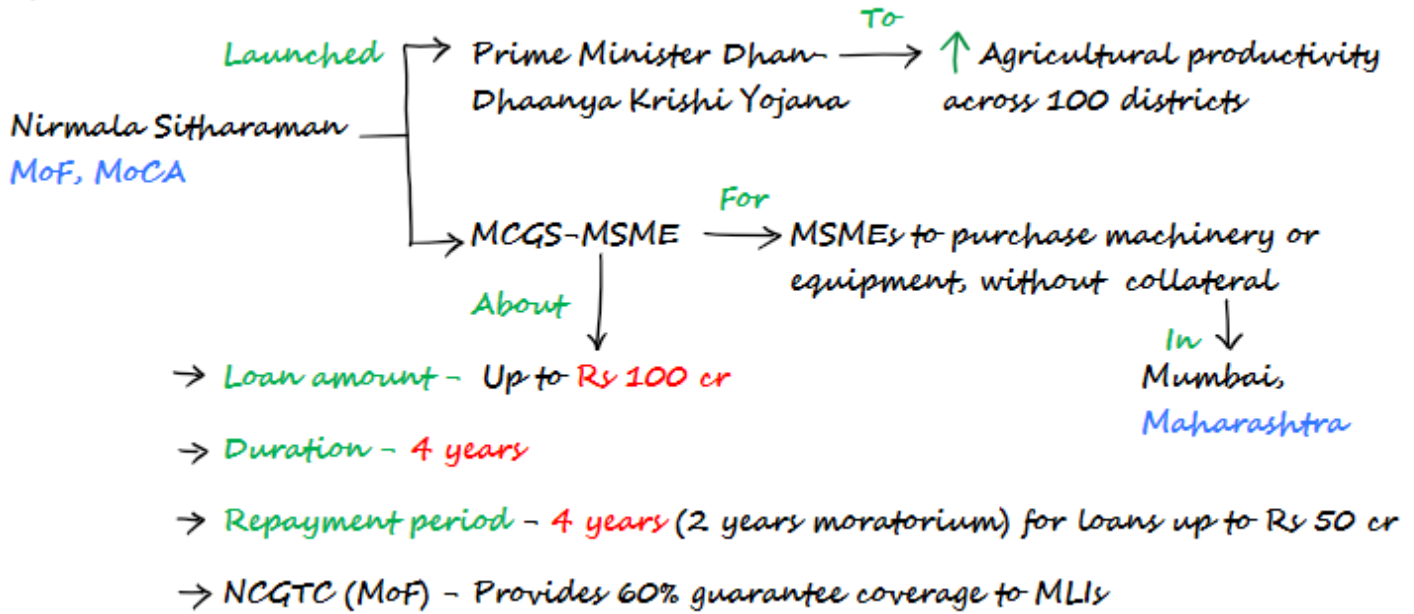
→ Since 2016, Rs. 1.70 lakh crore has been paid in claims, with a 25% increase in enrollment in 2023-24

PMFBY - Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

MoA&FW - Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

Govt - Government of India

4)



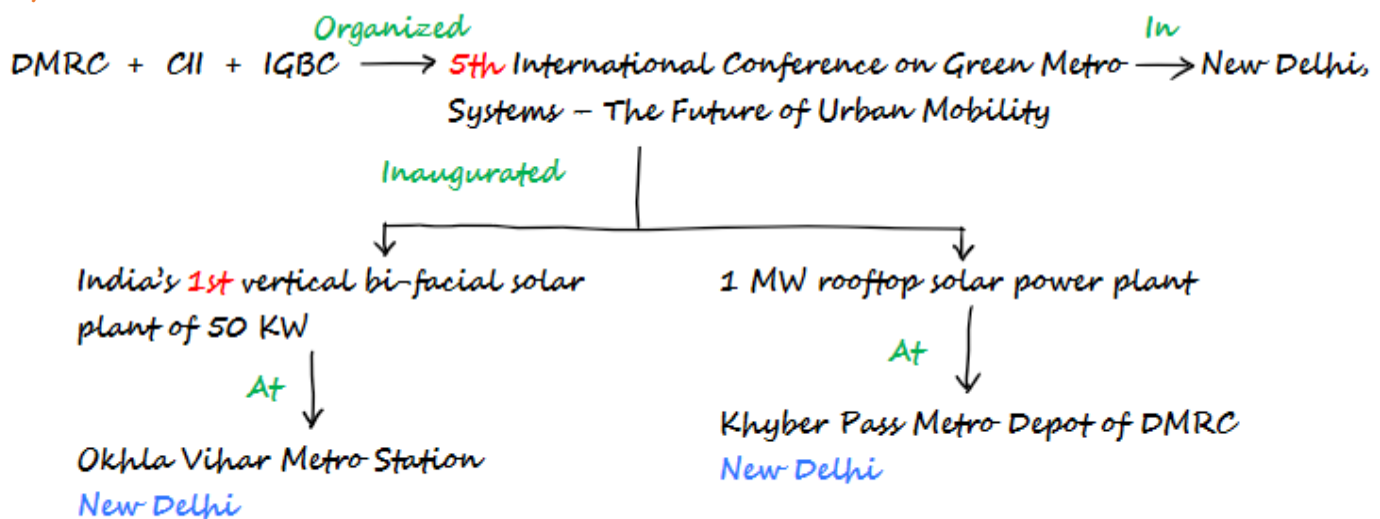
MoF - Ministry of Finance

MoCA - Ministry of Corporate Affairs

MCGS-MSME - Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

NCGTC - National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited

5)



DMRC - Delhi Metro Rail Corporation

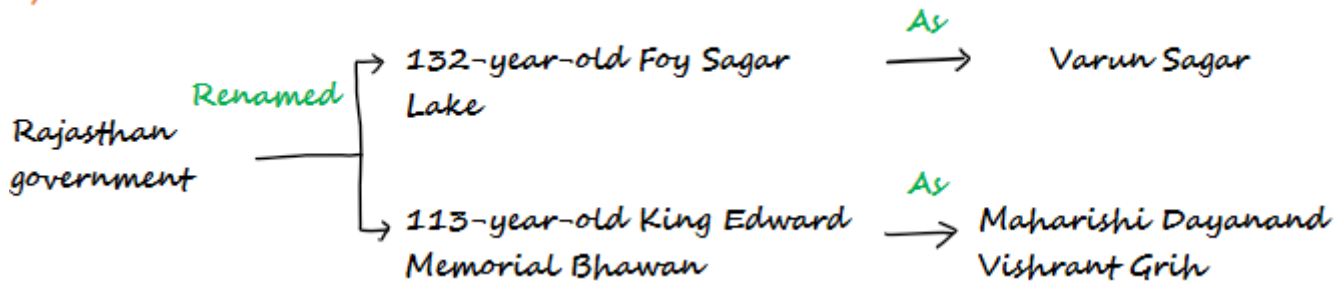
CII - Confederation of Indian Industry

IGBC - Indian Green Building Council

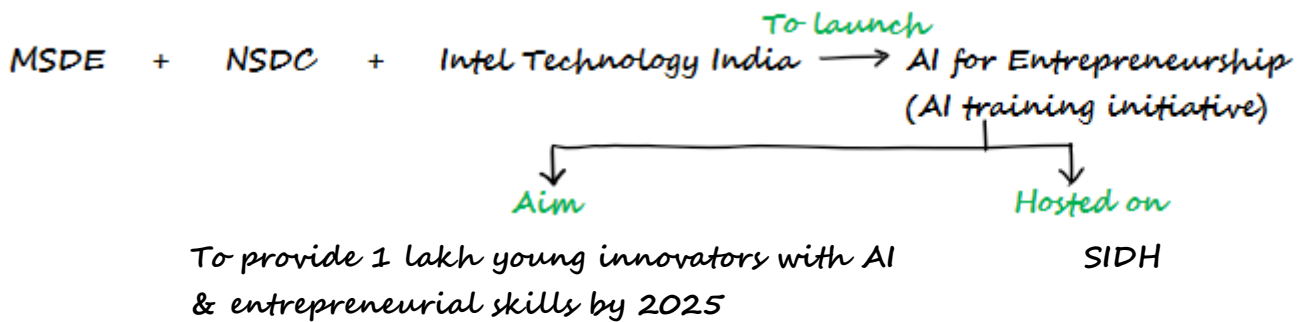
KW - Kilowatt

MW - Megawatt

6)



7)



MSDE - Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

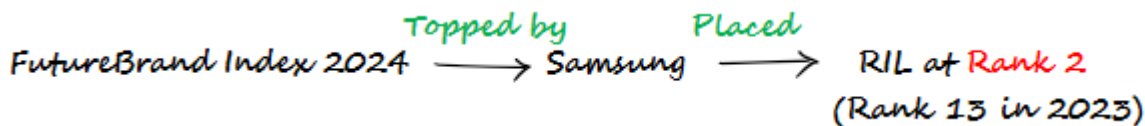
NSDC - National Skill Development Corporation

AI - Artificial Intelligence

SIDH - Skill India Digital Hub

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)



### Top 5 Global Brands

Rank	Brand Name	Country	Sector
1	Samsung	South Korea	Information Technology
2	RIL	India	Energy
3	Apple	USA	Information Technology
4	Nike	USA	Consumer Discretionary
5	ASML	Netherlands	Information Technology

RIL - Reliance Industries Limited

USA - United States of America



## BANKING & FINANCE

1)

LIC <sup>Launched</sup> → One Man Office <sup>To</sup> → ↑ Efficiency & productivity of LIC's sales force  
(Digital service platform)

LIC - Life Insurance Corporation of India

2)

UGRO Capital + FMO <sup>Secured</sup> → Rs 260 crore through NCDs Promote economic and social development in India  
(Maharashtra)  
↓  
Dutch entrepreneurial development bank

FMO - Field Marketing Organization

NCDs - Non-Convertible Debentures

3)

LTIMindtree + Eurobank S.A. <sup>Enabled by</sup> → Fairfax Digital Services <sup>For</sup> → Multi-year banking technology programme  
Greece Canada  
Services Partner for Eurobank Luxembourg's Temenos implementation programme

LTI - L & T Infotech Limited

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1)

MHI <sup>Grants</sup> → 10 GWh ACC manufacturing capacity <sup>To</sup> → RNEBL <sup>Eligible for</sup> → Rs.18,100 cr incentive under PLI ACC scheme

MHI - Ministry of Heavy Industry

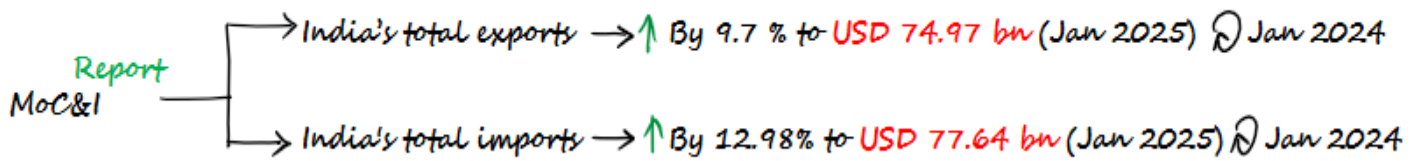
RNEBL - Reliance New Energy Battery Limited

GWh - GigaWatt hour

ACC - Advanced Chemistry Cell

PLI - Production Linked Incentive

2)



### Trade in January 2025 & April 2024- January 2025

Trade Category		January 2025 (USD Billion)	April 2024-January 2025 (USD Billion)
Merchandise	Exports	36.43	358.91
	Imports	59.42	601.90
Services	Exports	38.55	323.68
	Imports	18.22	168.17
Total	Exports	74.97	682.59
	Imports	77.64	770.06
Trade Balance		-2.67	-87.47

### During (Apr 2024 – Jan 2025)

- India's Top Export destinations - USA, UAE, Netherlands, UK, Japan
- India's Top Import countries - UAE, China, Russia, Switzerland, Thailand
- India's Merchandise exports - USD 358.91 bn
- India's Merchandise imports - USD 601.90 bn
- India's services exports - USD 323.68 bn
- India's services imports - USD 168.17 bn

MoC&I - Ministry of Commerce and Industry

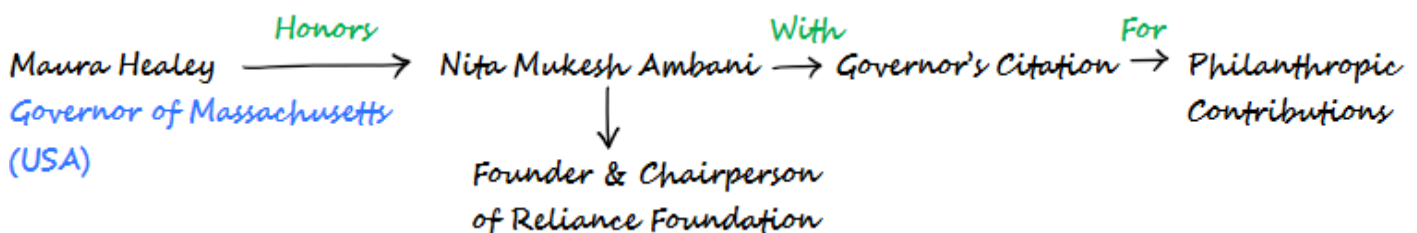
USA - United States of America

UAE - United Arab Emirates

UK - United Kingdom

### AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

1)



USA - United States of America

2)

5th BBC Indian sports woman Awards 2024 <sup>Held</sup> → New Delhi

Award Category	Winner	Sport Type
BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2024	Manu Bhaker	Shooting
BBC Emerging Athlete of the Year 2024	Sheetal Devi	Archery
Lifetime Achievement 2024	Mithali Raj	Cricket
Indian Para-sportswoman of the Year 2024	Avani Lekhara	Shooting

BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation

## ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

1)

PCTL <sup>Acquired</sup> → 25% stake <sup>In</sup> → Seven Technology LLC <sup>For</sup> → USD 1 million  
USA (Rs. 8.70 crore)

PCTL - Paytm Cloud Technologies Limited

USA - United States of America

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1)

PRL Scientists <sup>Discovered</sup> → TOI-6038A b <sup>Using</sup> → PARAS-2 spectrograph <sup>In</sup> → Rajasthan  
Ahmedabad (Exoplanet)  
<sup>About</sup> ↓  
→ Mass - 78.5 Earth masses (dense sub-Saturn size)  
→ Radius - 6.41 Earth radii

PRL - Physical Research Laboratory

PARAS-2 - PRL Advanced Radial-velocity All-sky Search-2

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

1)

Book : "The New Icon Savarkar and the Facts" <sup>Author</sup> → Arun Shourie

<sup>Published by</sup> ↓  
Penguin Random House India

**STATE NEWS**

1)

Mohan Charan Majhi *(CM of Odisha)* <sup>Presented</sup> → State's Annual Budget for 2025-26 <sup>Total Budget</sup> → **Rs.2,90,000 crore**

- Capital expenditure **Rs.65,012 crore**
- Revenue receipts - **Rs.2,32,000 crore**
- Revenue surplus at **3% of GSDP** , Fiscal deficit at **3.2%** for FY 2025

CM - *Chief Minister*

GSDP - *Gross State Domestic Product*

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## Detailed Content

Current Affairs 20 February 2025: Headlines



**AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY**

**ENGLISH**



**Reliance Industries ranks second globally on Future Brand Index 2024 ahead of Apple and Nike**



**Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister launches Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs in Mumbai**

**CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**20 FEBRUARY 2025**

- Bharat Tex 2025: India's Largest Textile Event Held in New Delhi & Greater Noida
- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana turns Nine: Empowering Annadata & Protecting Livelihoods
- Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Launched Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs in Mumbai
- 5th International Conference on Green Metro Systems held in New Delhi
- Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Inaugurates NAKSHA to Modernize Urban Land Records
- Rajasthan government renamed Foy Sagar as Varun Sagar & King Edward Memorial as Maharishi Dayanand Vishrant Grih
- MSDE, Intel collaborate to launch AI for Entrepreneurship initiative for youth
- FutureBrand Index 2024: Samsung Tops; India's Reliance Industries Ranks 2nd
- LIC Launches 'One Man Office' to Empower Agents with Digital Services
- UGRO Capital Partners with FMO & Secured Rs 2,600 Million in NCDs
- LTIMindtree Partners with Eurobank for Banking Technology Transformation
- India's Overall Exports during April 2024-January 2025 at USD 682.59 billion with an estimated growth of 7.21%
- MHI Inks Agreement With RNEBL for 10 GWh ACC Batteries Under PLI Scheme
- BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year Awards 2024: Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker won Top Honour
- Governor of Massachusetts Honors Nita Ambani with Citation for Philanthropic Contributions
- PCTL acquires 25% stake in Seven Technology LLC for USD 1 million
- PRL Scientists Discovered a New Exoplanet TOI-6038A b Using PARAS-2 Spectrograph
- A Book Titled "The New Icon: Savarkar and the Facts" by Arun Shourie
- Odisha CM Mohan Majhi presents Budget of Rs.2,90,000 crore for 2025-26 fiscal

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

### Bharat Tex 2025: India's Largest Textile Event Held in New Delhi & Greater Noida

**Bharat Tex 2025**, the 2nd edition of India's largest global textile event was organised by a consortium of 12 Textile Export Promotion Councils (EPCs), supported by the Ministry of Textiles (MoT) to highlight India's exceptional capabilities in the textile industry. The 2025 event was built around the twin themes of “Resilient Global Value Chains” and “Textile Sustainability”.



- Bharat Tex 2025 events were held at 2 state-of-the-art venues: the main event (14 to 17 February 2025) which covered the entire value chain of textiles from raw materials to finished products at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi(Delhi), and Related exhibitions(12 to 15 February 2025) held at India Expo Centre and Mart (IECM) in Greater New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (NOIDA), Uttar Pradesh (UP).

**Note:** The 1st edition of the Bharat Tex was held from 26-29 February 2024 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

#### Highlights of Bharat Tex 2025:

- i.Bharat Tex 2025 focuses on sustainability and innovation, driving global trade across sectors like apparel, home furnishings, technical textiles, etc. emphasising sustainable solutions and a circular economy.
- ii.The Bharat Tex 2025 event was inspired by the Government of India's (GoI) **5F vision**: “Farm to; Fibre to; Fabric to; Fashion to; and Foreign”.
- iii.The event hosted over 5,000 exhibitors, and 6,000 international buyers from over 120 countries, and attracted 1,20,000+ trade visitors including industry leaders, policymakers, and global Chief Executive Officers (CEOs).
- iv.The event hosted a dedicated multilateral conclave with nearly 10 United Nations (UN) and multilateral bodies to engage on issues of sustainability and circularity.

#### Key Events Under Bharat Tex 2025:

- i.Prime Minister(PM) **Narendra Modi** addressed Bharat Tex 2025 at Bharat Mandapam and emphasised its role in displaying India's rich cultural diversity through traditional garments.
- ii.Union Minister Giriraj Singh, MoT inaugurated a key event named **Indie Haat** at the National Crafts Museum & Hastkala Academy (**NCMHA**), New Delhi. The event featured traditional weaves and crafts, highlighting the fusion of tradition and innovation in the textile sector.
  - Indie Haat, organised by the Office of the Development Commissioners (DC) (Handicrafts & Handlooms) in collaboration with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), showcased India's traditional artistry to an international audience.
- iii.The Office of the Development Commissioner (DC) for Handlooms, MoT organised a fashion event titled “**Breathing Threads: A Fashion Show Celebrating Sustainability**” in Bharat Mandapam on the sidelines of Bharat Tex 2025.

- It featured contemporary handloom creations with a Zero Waste Strategy (ZWS) and sustainable fashion and craftsmanship.

iv. Union Minister Giriraj Singh also inaugurated the Bharat Tex 2025 at the India Expo Mart in Greater Noida. It featured accessories, garment machinery, dyes & chemicals, and handicrafts.

- The event also showcased **4 co-located events** that play a vital role in the global textile supply chain:
  1. Garment Technology Expo (GTE) 2025
  2. DyeChem World Bharat Tex 2025
  3. Indian Handicrafts Pavilion
  4. India Sourcing Conclave (ISC)

### CSB's International Conference – SILKTECH 2025:

Union Minister of State (MoS) **Pabitra Margherita**, MoT inaugurated the Central Silk Board's (CSB) 'International Conference on Emerging Technologies in Silk Sector – SILKTECH 2025' at Bharat Mandapam as part of the Bharat Tex 2025.

- The conference was organised by CSB-Central Tasar Research & Training Institute (CTRITI), Ranchi (Jharkhand) & CSB-Central Silk Technological Research Institute (CSTRI) under MoT.

### Dignitaries Present:

The event was also attended by Neelam Shami Rao, Secretary, MoT, Joint Secretaries Prajakta L. Verma, and Ajay Gupta, MoT, and P. Sivakumar, Member Secretary, CSB.

### Key Publications Released:

- i. A Souvenir cum Book of Abstracts on Emerging Technologies in the Silk Sector – SILKTECH 2025.
- ii. Pradhyogiki Vivranak, a Technology Descriptor.

### Key Discussions & MoUs:

- i. The conference covered both Pre-Cocoon & Post-Cocoon Sectors, with discussions on emerging technologies, novel silk applications, technical applications of silk, and sustainability in the silk industry.
- ii. **6 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)** were signed between the Research and Development (R&D) Institutes of the **CSB** and other R&D organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

### About India's Textile Industry:

i. India is the **6th largest exporter of Textiles & Apparel (T&A)** in the world. The share of T&A including handicrafts in India's total exports stands at a significant 8.21% in 2023-24.

- India's T&A exports grew by 7% in 2024, contributing 11% to India's manufacturing industry with a target of Rs 9 lakh crore by 2030.
- The Indian T&A market is valued at USD 176 billion in 2024, with USD 139 billion in the domestic market and USD 37 billion in exports.

ii. The textile sector contributes 2% to India's Gross domestic product (GDP) and the market share is projected to reach USD 350 billion by 2030.

iii. India is the 3rd largest startup ecosystem, with 108 unicorns valued at over USD 340 billion.

iv. India is the 2nd largest producer of cotton, polyester, viscose, and silk. India ranks 5th in technical textiles, with a market size of USD 22 billion.

### Government Initiatives Strengthening the Textile Sector:

- i. The Prime Minister Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (**PM MITRA**) Parks Scheme launched in 2023, creates 7 mega textile parks with a USD 10 billion investment.
- ii. The Production Linked Incentive (**PLI**) Scheme launched in 2020, allocates Rs 10,683 crore (~USD 1 billion) specifically targeting Man-Made Fiber (MMF) apparel, fabrics, and technical textiles.





iii. Samarth (Scheme For Capacity Building In Textile Sector) launched in 2017, to transform the unskilled manpower to skilled workforce in various sectors.

- In 2024, Samarth Scheme was extended for two years (Financial Year 2024-25(FY25) and FY26) with a budget of Rs. 495 Crore to train 3 lakh persons in textile-related skills.

**About Ministry of Textiles(MoT):**

**Union Minister** – Giriraj Singh (Constituency – Begusarai, Bihar)

**Minister of State(MoS)** – Pabitra Margherita (Rajya Sabha – Assam)

**Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana turns Nine: Empowering Annadata & Protecting Livelihoods**

The **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)**, launched in 2016 by Prime Minister(PM) Narendra Modi, marked its **nine-year anniversary** on February 18, 2025. PMFBY is a flagship crop insurance scheme in India that operates under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW), designed to protect farmers from financial losses due to natural calamities.



- This scheme has emerged as a cornerstone of India's agricultural resilience, protecting over **23.22 crore farmers** against crop losses caused by natural calamities and disbursing claims worth **Rs.1.75 lakh crore** over the past nine years.
- With its recent extension until 2025-26 and a **budget allocation of Rs.69,515.71 crore**, PMFBY continues to strengthen farmer welfare and sustainable agriculture.

**Objectives:**

- Mitigate financial risks** from natural disasters like droughts, floods, cyclones, pests, and unseasonal rains.
- Stabilize farmers' income** through timely compensation, preventing debt traps.
- Encourage technology adoption** and modern farming practices.

**Key Features:**

- Affordable Premiums:** Farmers pay only 2% (Kharif crops), 1.5% (Rabi crops), or 5% (horticulture/commercial crops), with the balance subsidized by the government.
- Comprehensive Coverage:** Includes yield losses, prevented sowing (up to 25% of sum insured), post-harvest losses (14 days post-harvest), and localized calamities.
- Voluntary Participation:** Non-loanee farmers

The Government of India(GoI) pays entire premium for the farmers in North-Eastern States, Jammu & Kashmir(J&K), and Himachal Pradesh(HP).

**Premium rate for crop insurance under PMFBY:**

Crop Type	Premium Rate (Farmer's Share)
Kharif Crops	2% of the sum insured
Rabi Crops	1.5% of the sum insured



Horticulture/Commercial Crops	5% of the sum insured
-------------------------------	-----------------------

### Implementing Agencies:

PMFBY is implemented through a **multi-agency framework** involving:

- **Insurance Companies:** Selected by the government to provide coverage.
- **Government Departments:** Agriculture, Cooperation, Horticulture, Revenue, and Panchayati Raj.
- **Financial Institutions:** Commercial Banks, Cooperative Banks, and Regional Rural Banks.
- **Regulatory Bodies:** Overseeing the implementation and ensuring transparency.

### Technological Innovations:

PMFBY's success hinges on its **technology-driven framework**, ensuring transparency and efficiency:

1. **Remote Sensing & Drones:** Used for crop area estimation, yield assessment, and loss evaluation, reducing human error.
2. **YES-TECH (Yield Estimation System Based on Technology):** Introduced in Kharif 2023, it blends satellite-based yield estimates with manual data, gradually phasing out traditional Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs). States like Madhya Pradesh (MP) have adopted **100% tech-based assessments**.
3. **CCE-Agri Application:** Direct upload of crop data to the National Crop Insurance Portal (NCIP) for real-time monitoring.
4. **Weather Information and Network Data System (WINDS) Initiative:** A Rs.824.77 crore **Fund for Innovation and Technology (FIAT)** supports hyperlocal weather data through Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) and Automatic Rain Gauges (ARGs), enhancing claim accuracy.



### Impact and Achievements

- **Financial Security:** Over Rs.1.70 lakh crore paid in claims since 2016, with 25% enrollment growth in 2023-24.
- **Global Recognition:** PMFBY is the **world's largest crop insurance scheme** by farmer participation.
- 23 states and Union Territories (UTs) are implementing the scheme. Non-loanee farmers' coverage has increased to 55% of the total coverage
- 25% growth in farmer enrolment numbers (2023-24 vs 2022-23). Sum insured of rs. 17,29,395 crore
- **Regional Focus:** Northeastern states receive **90% premium subsidies** to boost coverage.

### About Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):

**Ministry** – Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW)

**Administered** – Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW), MoA&FW  
**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** – Muktanand Agrawal

### Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Launched Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs in Mumbai

In February 2025, Union Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman**, Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA) launched the 'Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (**MCGS-MSME**)' in Mumbai, Maharashtra to support MSME sector in India.

**Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister launches Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs in Mumbai**



- It is a key initiative of Government of India (GoI) announced in the Union Budget for Financial Year 2024-25 (FY25).

**Key People:** Union Minister of State (MoS) Pankaj Chaudhary, MoF; Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Secretary, MoF; Ajay Seth, Secretary of Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), MoF; Ravi Agarwal, Chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT); and other officials from MoF were also present at the event.

**About Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MCGS-MSME):**

i. The MCGS-MSME aims to facilitate a maximum loan of **Rs 100 crore** to MSMEs for purchase of machinery or equipment without collateral.

- Minimum 75% of the total project cost must be for purchasing equipment or machinery.
- The scheme is available for **4 years** or until Rs 7 lakh crore in guarantees are issued, whichever comes first.

ii. Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (**NCGTC**), a private limited company which works under MoF, will provide 60% guarantee coverage to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) for loans approved to eligible MSMEs.

- Interest rate for this loan is charged as per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines.

iii. In order to avail the benefit of the initiative, the borrower is required to be an MSME with a valid Udyam Registration Number (**URN**).

- URN is a 16-digit unique registration number for a Udyam Certificate holder. It is issued by the Ministry of MSME (MoMSME) under the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006 (MSME Act 2006).

iv. The **repayment** period for loans up to Rs 50 crore loan will be up to 8 years with up to 2 years moratorium on principal instalments.

- For loans above Rs 50 crore, higher repayment schedule and moratorium period on principal instalments will be considered.

**Key Points:**

i. During the event, Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, virtually inaugurated the

1st '**Sachal Aaykar Seva Kendra**' in Navy Nagar Colaba, Mumbai to provide access to digital services, facilitate guidance for grievance redressal and to promote tax awareness.

ii. Union Minister also handed over keys to the home owners benefitted by the Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing (**SWAMIH**) **Investment Fund** of Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based SBI Ventures Limited (formerly known as SBICAP Ventures Limited).

- As of January 24 2025, SWAMIH Fund has successfully provided **more than 50,000 homes** to eligible beneficiaries. Also, MoF plans to deliver an additional 20,000 homes annually for the next 3 years.
- In the Union Budget for FY26, MoF announced the establishment of SWAMIH Fund-2 with an estimated budget Rs 15,000 crore and aims to accelerate the completion of another 1 lakh units.
- This fund will receive financial support from the government, banks, and private investors.

**Note:** The Union Budget for FY26 increased the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit for the insurance sector from **74% to 100%**.

iii. She introduced a new scheme named '**Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDKY)**' which aims to enhance agricultural productivity across 100 districts for low agricultural output.

- The scheme is estimated to benefit **1.7 crore farmers** to improve agricultural productivity, enhance irrigation facilities and to provide short-term as well long-term credit.

#### **About Ministry of Finance (MoF):**

**Union Minister-** Nirmala Sitharaman (Rajya Sabha- Karnataka)

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

#### **5th International Conference on Green Metro Systems held in New Delhi**

On February 18, 2025, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) under the i-Metro initiative in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), organized the '5th International Conference on Green Metro Systems – The Future of Urban Mobility' in New Delhi (Delhi).



- The conference highlighted the future of eco-friendly metro systems and their essential role in shaping the cities of tomorrow.

**Key people:** The conference was attended by Union Minister **Manohar Lal Khattar**, Ministry of Power (MoP) and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA); Union Minister of State (MoS) **Tokhan Sahu**, MoHUA, along with officials from IGBC, Indian Metros, and other guests.

#### **About India's 1st Vertical Bi-Facial Solar Plant:**

During the Conference, Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, MoP, and MoHUA inaugurated **India's first vertical bi-facial solar plant** installation on the Metro Viaduct at Okhla Vihar Metro station in New Delhi, aiming to promote more sustainable metro rail operations.

- He also inaugurated a 1 Megawatt (MW) rooftop solar power plant at the Khyber Pass Metro Depot of DMRC in Timarpur, New Delhi.
- These initiatives support India's renewable energy(RE) goal of reaching 500 Gigawatts (GW) from non-fossil sources by 2030.

i. The 50-kilowatt (KW) vertical solar plant at Okhla Vihar Metro Station will feature **bi-facial panels** designed to capture sunlight from both sides.

ii. It will utilize the metro's elevated structure for solar energy generation, eliminating the need for additional land space.



iii. Following this installation, DMRC now aims to achieve a 60 MW solar power plant capacity by the completion of Delhi Metro's Phase-4 project.

**Note:** Metros in Bengaluru (Karnataka), New Delhi (Delhi), Hyderabad (Telangana), Jaipur (Rajasthan), Kochi (Kerala), Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh, UP), Mumbai (Maharashtra), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and Pune (Maharashtra) have received IGBC Certification for their dedication to eco-friendly designs, use of green materials, and integration of solar power.

**About Indian Green Building Council (IGBC):**

The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) was formed by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

**Chairman** – B. Thiagarajan

**Headquarters** – Hyderabad (Telangana)

**Founded** – 2001

**Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Inaugurates NAKSHA to Modernize Urban Land Records**

On February 18 2025, Union Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) inaugurated the National Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations (**NAKSHA**) to create a modernize land records in 152 urban local bodies (ULBs) across 26 States and 3 Union Territories (UTs) in India.



- The inaugural session of NAKSHA took place in the Raisen district of **Madhya Pradesh (MP)**. The project was also launched in several locations, including Dindigul, Thanjavur, and Ariyalur in Tamil Nadu (TN), Puducherry, and Bogadi in Karnataka.
- The NAKSHA program aims to create and update land records in urban areas, ensuring precise and trustworthy documentation of land ownership.

**Key people:**

The inaugural session was attended by Union Minister of State (MoS) Dr. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, MoRD and Ministry of Communications (MoC); Manoj Joshi, Secretary of DoLR, MoRD, Mohan Yadav, Chief Minister (CM) of MP; Karan Singh Verma, Revenue Minister of MP; Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister for Panchayati Raj and Rural Development of MP; Narayan Singh Pawar, Minister of State (MoS) for Fisheries and Fishermen welfare, MP; and others dignitaries

**About NAKSHA:**

i. The program aims to ensure accurate and up-to-date urban land records, empowering citizens and improving urban planning.

- It is expected to cost around **Rs. 194 crore**, fully funded by the Government of India (GoI).

ii. It is a pilot program under the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (**DILRMP**) of the Department of Land Resources (DoLR), MoRD.

- **DILRMP** (erstwhile National Land Record Modernization Programme), which has been operational since 2016-17 with 100% funding by the Government of India (GoI) and is set to continue until March 2026.



- iii. This **one-year** pilot program will be carried out with Dehradun(Uttarakhand) based Survey of India (**SoI**) under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science & Technology(MoS&T) as the technical partner, responsible for aerial surveys and providing corrected images to state and UT governments through third-party vendors.
- iv. The MP State Electronic Development Corporation (**MPSEDC**) will create a comprehensive web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) platform, with storage managed by New Delhi(Delhi) based National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated (**NICSI**) under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY).
- v. The program will use drones for geospatial mapping and to create accurate property records. The data will be linked to the property tax records of local bodies, with advanced survey devices used to create the maps.
- vi. Property owners can raise objections to the field maps generated. After reviewing these objections, the final land records will be released. Once the process is done, owners will receive integrated property records.

### Rajasthan government renamed Foy Sagar as Varun Sagar & King Edward Memorial as Maharishi Dayanand Vishrant Grih

In February 2025, the Rajasthan government renamed a lake and a building in Ajmer, Rajasthan, that were over a century old and had British-era names. The 132-year-old Foy Sagar Lake was renamed **Varun Sagar**, and the 113-year-old King Edward Memorial Bhawan was renamed **Maharishi Dayanand Vishrant Grih**.

- The Ajmer Municipal Corporation accomplished the official renaming process.
- i. Foy Sagar was built in **1892** as a famine relief project and named after a British engineer Foy during British rule. The lake has now been renamed in honor of Lord Varun, the god of water.
- Additionally, a ghat and a statue of Lord Varun will be constructed around the lake for people to sit and pray.
- ii. King Edward Memorial Bhawan was established between 1912 and 1913 and named after King Edward VII during British rule. It is located in Railway Station Road, Ajmer, Rajasthan.
- iii. Now, it was renamed to honor Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the **Arya Samaj**, who attained nirvana in Ajmer.
- iv. By renaming, symbols of slavery are removed, and symbols of freedom and inspiration are built.

### MSDE, Intel collaborate to launch AI for Entrepreneurship initiative for youth

In February 2025, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (**MSDE**), the National Skill Development Corporation (**NSDC**), and Bengaluru(Karnataka) based **Intel Technology India** Private Limited have announced a collaboration to launch a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) training initiative titled '**AI for Entrepreneurship**'.

- The program is a micro-learning module hosted on the Skill India Digital Hub (**SIDH**) under MSDE and aims to provide **1 lakh** young innovators with AI and entrepreneurial skills by 2025.
- i. It will help in simplifying AI concepts and combine them with entrepreneurial thinking that will help learners to develop AI-driven business ideas.
- ii. The key features of the program include-
- It is designed for individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, including rural learners.
  - The learners will receive a certification jointly issued by MSDE, NSDC, Skill India, and Intel on the completion of the program.
  - The curriculum covers uses of AI in business, entrepreneurial strategies, and real-world problem-solving.

iii. Moreover, apart from theoretical learning, it also provides interactive video lectures, case studies of AI powered startups and firsthand experience to apply AI tools to give a clarity on the concepts to learners.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### FutureBrand Index 2024: Samsung Tops; India's Reliance Industries Ranks 2nd

According to '[The FutureBrand Index 2024](#)', a global brand perception study, South Korea's **Samsung** has secured the **top spot** in the global rankings, reflecting its strong brand perception and adaptability to market demands.



- **India's Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)** ranks **2nd** and made an impressive leap, 11 spots rising from **13th** in 2023. This marks the first time an Indian company has made it to the top three on the list.
- Reliance, the only Indian brand on the list ranks ahead of well-known global brands like Apple, Nike, Walt Disney, Netflix, Microsoft, Intel and Toyota.

### What is the FutureBrand Index?

i. The FutureBrand Index is an annual report that evaluates the **top 100 global brands**, based on the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Market Capitalization ranking. The report evaluates brand evolution from **2014 to 2024**, shedding light on key trends shaping growth and sustainability in the marketplace.

ii. The report assesses brands across **18 key attributes**, which are categorized under two primary pillars:

- **Purpose:** Premium, Resource Management, Indispensability, Individuality, Thought Leadership, Authenticity, Sustainability and Innovation.
- **Experience:** Brand Personality, Customer Attachment, Consistency, Premium Value, Trust, Engagement, Accessibility, Responsiveness, Empathy and Simplicity.

iii. **Methodology:** The FutureBrand Index utilizes QualiQuant® interviews with over 3,000 informed professionals who have knowledge of at least 7 companies in the PwC Top 100. These interviews assess companies based on their ability to deliver on experience and purpose, providing a nuanced understanding of brand perception.

### Highlights of FutureBrand Index 2024:

#### Top Performing Brands in 2024:

i. **Samsung** ranked 1st in 2024, excels in innovation, sustainability, and premium offerings. The brand is recognized for its authenticity, thought leadership, and emotional connection with consumers.

ii. **RIL**, India's largest private sector corporation, ranks 2nd with a diverse portfolio spanning energy, petrochemicals, textiles, retail, and telecommunications.

iii. **Apple**, the Mastering Brand Loyalty from the United States of America (USA), which was ranked No. 1 in 2023 slipped to **3rd rank**. It is known for its seamless customer experiences, product consistency, and a strong brand personality

iv. **Nike** from the USA, ranked **4th** and despite being in the top 5 brands, the brand experienced a USD 25 billion market capitalization drop due to inventory challenges and direct-to-consumer (D2C) strategy risks.

v. **ASML**, a Dutch company that designs and manufactures photolithography machines for the semiconductor industry ranks 5th.

vi. **Other Rankings:** Danaher from the USA (Ranks 6th), Disney (7th) from the USA, MOUTAI from China (8th), TSMC from Taiwan (9th) and IHC from the United Arab Emirates(UAE)(10th).

### Top 5 Global Brands:

Rank	Brand Name	Country	Sector
1	Samsung	South Korea	Information Technology (IT)
2	<b>RIL</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>Energy</b>
3	Apple	The United States of America (USA)	IT
4	Nike	The USA	Consumer Discretionary
5	ASML	The Netherlands	IT

### Key Findings of the FutureBrand Index 2024:

i. **Global Brand Performance and Changes Over a Decade (2014–2024):** In 2014, 7 of the top ten brands were from the USA.

- By 2024, the dominance has reduced, with four USA brands and 5 from Asia-Pacific (APAC) and the Middle East.

### ii. Sector Analysis (2014–2024):

- Finance Sector: 10 out of 15 financial brands showed growth, making it the best-performing sector.
- Healthcare Sector: 10 out of 15 brands saw a decline, facing regulatory and reputation challenges.
- IT: Mixed performance- 9 brands improved, while 11 declined.
- Energy and Communication Services (ECS): Underperformance due to sustainability issues and digital competition.
- Industrial Sector: Stagnant growth, with brands like Boeing and General Electric struggling.

### Major Risers and Fallers in 2024:

#### i. Top Gainers:

- China Construction Bank (Rank 23, moved up 147 places): Strength in financial stability and market influence.
- Agricultural Bank of China (Rank 24, moved up 84 places): Growth in business-to-business (B2B) banking and investment sector.
- Bank of America (Rank 61, moved up 27 places): Improved digital banking experience.

#### ii. Top Decliners:

- Shell (Rank 144, fell 83 places): Impacted by climate change and environmental concerns.
- Meta (Facebook) (Rank 57, fell 35 places): Declined due to data privacy issues and regulatory scrutiny.
- Berkshire Hathaway (Rank 106, fell 71 places): Declined due to corporate governance concerns and financial challenges.

### **About Reliance Industries Limited (RIL):**

Chairman and Managing Director (CMD)– Mukesh Ambani

Headquarters– Mumbai, Maharashtra

Established– 1958

## **BANKING & FINANCE**

### **LIC Launches 'One Man Office' to Empower Agents with Digital Services**

In February 2025, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) launched 'One Man Office' (OMO), a digital service platform aimed at empowering its agents and sales associates by providing seamless policy sales, customer servicing, and business tracking through mobile phones.



- It is a vital tool in promoting life insurance and ensuring excellent customer service. The initiative would contribute to LIC's long-term goal of achieving 'Insurance for All by 2047'.

### **About One Man Office(OMO):**

i.OMO is designed to improve the efficiency and productivity of LIC's sales force, which includes Agents, Development Officers, Senior Business Associates, Chief Life Insurance Advisors, LIC Associates, and Chief Organisers.

ii.Integrated with the **ANANDA** (Atma Nirbhar Agents New Business Digital Application) platform from LIC, which helps agents in onboarding clients, and serves as the foundation for the service.

iii.It provides services like a Premium calculator, benefit illustration, Electronic National Automated Clearing House(E-NACH) registration, change of address, online loan request, renewal premium payments, claim-related requirement submission, etc.

iv.Additionally, it will have a knowledge center, several health and insurance-related calculators, an office locator, National Electronic Funds Transfer(NEFT) search, and other tools to help agents to assist customers.

### **About Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC):**

As of January 2025, the Government of India(GoI) owns 96.5% in LIC.

Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Siddhartha Mohanty

Headquarters – Mumbai, Maharashtra

Established – 1956

### **UGRO Capital Partners with FMO & Secured Rs 2,600 Million in NCDs**

In February 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra) based **UGRO Capital Limited**, a data tech Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) announced its latest strategic financing collaboration with Financierings-Maatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden N.V. (FMO), the **Dutch entrepreneurial development bank** to promote economic and social development in India.



- The company has successfully raised **Rs 260 crore** through Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) to support initiatives in women empowerment, addressing territorial inequalities, and promoting youth empowerment.

i.FMO fully subscribed to the Indian Rupee (INR)-denominated NCD issuance, demonstrating the bank's dedication to promoting equitable and sustainable prosperity by assisting entrepreneurs.

ii.The successful transaction in December 2023, which supported mostly green finance with an unlisted NCD issue of USD 30 million (Rs 2,490 million), further solidifies UGRO Capital's standing as a reliable impact financing partner.

iii.The company has raised Rs 1.5 billion from global and domestic development financial institutions and impact funds, including Investment Fund for Developing Countries (IFU) (Denmark Govt Sovereign Fund), Asian Development Bank (ADB), ResponsAbility, Calvert Impact Capital, Enabling Capital, GMO, Water Equity, Microvest, Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA), etc.

### **LTIMindtree Partners with Eurobank for Banking Technology Transformation**

In February 2025, Mumbai(Maharashtra) based L & T Infotech Limited (**LTI Mindtree Ltd**), a subsidiary of Larsen & Toubro(L&T) Limited, has partnered with Greece's largest banking services providers, **Eurobank S.A.** for a multi-year banking technology programme to enhance customer experience, simplify operations, and develop creative Information Technology (**IT**) **solutions** for Eurobank and its subsidiaries.

- The collaboration is enabled by Canada based **Fairfax Digital Services** (A Fairfax Company).

i.Under the agreement, Eurobank S.A. has selected LTIMindtree as the **Services Partner** for Eurobank Luxembourg's **Temenos implementation** programme.

ii.LTIMindtree will provide maintenance, data migration, quality assurance, and post-production support services.

- Additionally, it will work on advancing the technology for Eurobank Group's operations in **Cyprus, Luxembourg, and Greece**.

iii.As part of the collaboration, LTIMindtree and Eurobank launched their new **Global Delivery Center** in **Pune**(Maharashtra), strengthening their commitment to innovate new banking technologies.

## **ECONOMY & BUSINESS**

### **India's Overall Exports during April 2024-January 2025 at USD 682.59 billion with an estimated growth of 7.21%**

According to the data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (**MoC&I**), India's **total exports**, including merchandise and services, were estimated at **USD 74.97 billion** in January 2025, marking a **9.72% increase** compared to January 2024.



- Meanwhile, **total imports**, covering merchandise and services, stood at **USD 77.64 billion**, reflecting a **12.98% rise** over the same period last year.

India's cumulative **exports** for **April 2024 – January 2025** are estimated at USD 682.59 billion, reflecting a **7.21%** increase compared to April 2023 – January 2024. Total imports for April 2024 – January 2025 are estimated at **USD 770.06 billion**, registering a growth of 8.96% over April 2023 – January 2024.

## Trade in January 2025 & April 2024- January 2025

Trade Category		January 2025 (USD Billion)	April 2024-January 2025 (USD Billion)
Merchandise	Exports	36.43	358.91
	Imports	59.42	601.90
Services	Exports	38.55	323.68
	Imports	18.22	168.17
Total	Exports	74.97	682.59
	Imports	77.64	770.06
Trade Balance		-2.67	-87.47

### Merchandise Trade

i. In **January 2025**, merchandise exports were **USD 36.43 billion**, slightly lower than **USD 37.32 billion** recorded in January 2024. On the other hand, **merchandise imports** for **January 2025** stood at **USD 59.42 billion**, showing an increase from USD 53.88 billion in January 2024.

ii. For the **April 2024 – January 2025** period, **merchandise exports** were estimated at **USD 358.91 billion**, rising from USD 353.97 billion in April 2023 – January 2024. **Merchandise imports** during this period reached **USD 601.90 billion**, higher than USD 560.27 billion recorded in April 2023 – January 2024.

- The trade balance **remained negative** in both periods. In January 2025, the **trade deficit** stood at **USD 2.67 billion** as imports exceeded exports.
- For the April 2024 – January 2025 period, the trade deficit widened to **USD 87.47 billion**, reflecting higher import growth compared to exports.

### Services Trade

i. In January 2025, India's **services exports** were estimated at **USD 38.55 billion**, increasing from USD 31.01 billion in January 2024.

- Meanwhile, **services imports** for January 2025 stood at **USD 18.22 billion**, up from USD 14.84 billion in January 2024.

ii. During **April 2024 – January 2025**, services exports were estimated at **USD 323.68 billion**, compared to USD 282.71 billion in April 2023 – January 2024.

- Similarly, **services imports** for this period reached USD 168.17 billion, rising from USD 146.48 billion in April 2023 – January 2024.

iii. The services **trade surplus** for April 2024 – January 2025 stood at **USD 155.52 billion**, higher than the USD 136.23 billion recorded in April 2023 – January 2024.

### Top Export and Import Countries

i. The top five export destinations that recorded positive growth in January 2025 compared to January 2024, based on the change in value, are:

United States of America (USA) (39.02%), Japan (53.53%), Bangladesh (17.27%), United Kingdom (UK) (14.84%), Nepal (20.84%)

ii. The top five export destinations showing positive growth in terms of value during April 2024 – January 2025 compared to the same period last year are: USA (8.95%), United Arab Emirates (UAE) (6.82%), Netherlands (9.17%), UK (14.17%), Japan (21.12%)

iii. The top five countries from which **India's imports increased in** January 2025 compared to January 2024 are:

China (17.06%), Thailand (136.63%), USA (33.46%), Germany (72.15%), UK (101.62%).

iv. During **April 2024 – January 2025**, the top five countries from which India's imports grew compared to the same period last year are:

UAE (35.58%), China (10.6%), Russia (7.17%), Switzerland (16.61%), Thailand (32.59%).

#### **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)

#### **MHI Inks Agreement With RNEBL for 10 GWh ACC Batteries Under PLI Scheme**

In February 2025, the Ministry of Heavy Industries (**MHI**) signed a Programme Agreement (PA) with Mumbai (Maharashtra) based Reliance New Energy Battery Limited (**RNEBL**), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cell (**ACC**).



- This agreement grants Reliance New Energy Battery, a **10 GigaWatt hour (GWh) ACC** manufacturing capacity, making it eligible for incentives under India's **Rs.18,100 crore** PLI ACC scheme.
- The signing is a critical milestone in the implementation of the technology PLI Scheme on the "National Programme on ACC Battery Storage," approved by the Union Cabinet in May 2021, with a total outlay of Rs.18,100 crore to achieve a total manufacturing capacity of 50 GWh.

#### **Key Points:**

i. Under the agreement, a cumulative capacity of **40 GWh** has been awarded to 4 selected beneficiary firms out of the targeted **50 GWh**.

ii. In the first round of bidding conducted in March 2022, three beneficiary firms were allocated a total capacity of 30 GWh, and the Programme Agreements (PA) for that round were signed in **July 2022**.

iii. This initiative aims to support the electric vehicle (**EV**) and renewable energy (RE) storage sectors by allowing beneficiary firms the flexibility to adopt the most suitable technology and associated inputs for establishing **state-of-the-art** ACC manufacturing facilities.

#### **About Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI):**

i. **PLI Scheme** was launched in March 2020, aiming to boost domestic manufacturing and reduce import dependence.

ii. The scheme was initially targeting 3 industries: mobile and allied components, electrical components, and medical devices, and later expanded to **14 sectors**.

iii. The 14 sectors are: mobile manufacturing, manufacturing of medical devices, automobiles and auto components, pharmaceuticals, drugs, specialty steel, telecommunication & networking products, electronic products, white goods (Air Conditioners, ACs and Light Emitting Diode, LEDs), food products, textile products, solar Photovoltaic (PV) modules, ACC battery, and drones & drone components.

iv. PLI offers financial incentives based on incremental with specific criteria for certain sectors: ACC Batteries, Textile Products, and Drones sales for over **5 years**, encouraging research and development (R&D).

v. In the PLI scheme, Domestic and Foreign companies receive financial rewards for manufacturing in India, based on a percentage (%) of their revenue over up to 5 years.

**Points to Note:**

i. Along with the PLI ACC scheme, the Union Budget for financial year 2025-26 (FY26) introduced key measures to boost domestic battery production and support the growth of electric mobility in India.

- These steps aim to strengthen the local battery manufacturing industry and expand the electric vehicle sector.

ii. Notably, the Budget exempted **35 additional** Capital Goods for EV battery manufacturing from Basic Customs Duty (BCD), a targeted initiative designed to boost the production of lithium-ion batteries within India.

**About Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI):**

**Union Minister-** HD Kumaraswamy (Constituency- Mandya, Karnataka)

**Minister of State (MoS)-** Bhupathi Raju Srinivasa Varma (Constituency- Narasapuram, Andhra Pradesh, AP)

## AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

### BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year Awards 2024: Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker won Top Honour

On February 17 2025, the **5th** edition of the “British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Indian Sportswoman of the Year (**ISWOTY**) Award 2024” was held in New Delhi, Delhi. The event celebrates and honors the outstanding achievements of Indian sportswomen, recognizing their excellence across various fields of competition.



- Indian shooter **Manu Bhaker** was honored with the ‘BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award 2024’, becoming the first Indian woman to win 2 bronze medals in a single edition of the Games at Paris 2024 Olympics.
- Para Shooter **Avani Lekhara** was named the ‘BBC Para Sportswoman of the Year 2024’, becoming the first Indian woman to win 3 Paralympic medals, including gold at Paris 2024 Olympics following a gold and bronze in Tokyo 2020 Olympics.



## Nominees:

- i. The nominations of the award 2024 were announced on January 16, 2025, showcasing 5 remarkable Indian sportswomen.
- ii. The shortlisted nominees, who proceeded to the public vote, included **Aditi Ashok**, professional golfer; **Manu Bhaker**, professional shooter; **Avani Lekhara**, professional shooter; **Smriti Mandhana**, India women's cricket vice-captain and **Vinesh Phogat**, professional freestyle wrestler

## BBC Awards 2024 Winners:

Award Category	Winner Name	Sport Type
BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year (ISWOTY) 2024	Manu Bhaker	Shooting
BBC Emerging Athlete of the Year 2024	Sheetal Devi	Archery
Lifetime Achievement 2024	Mithali Raj	Cricket
Indian Para-sportswoman of the Year 2024	Avani Lekhara	Shooting

## Highlights:

i. **Manu Bhaker** made history at the 2024 Olympics, winning an Olympic medal in shooting, with 2 bronze medals in the 10meter (m) pistol and mixed team events. She won 2 Olympic medals, 7 Asian Games and Championships medals, and 21 World Championship and World Cup medals.

- She won golds at the 2018 Commonwealth Games (10m air pistol) and 2022 Asian Games (25m pistol team).
- She became the youngest Indian at the age of 16 to win a World Cup gold in 2018.
- She previously won the BBC's ISWOTY Emerging Athlete of the Year award 2021.

**Awards:** She was received the '**Arjuna Award**' in 2020 for her outstanding performance in sports. In January 2025 she was honoured with the '**Khel Ratna Award**' (now Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award), formerly known as the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, for her spectacular performance in sports.

ii. **Avani Lekhara** is a pioneering Indian rifle shooter and a double gold medalist at the 2020 and 2024 Paralympics.

- She won bronze in the 50m rifle 3 positions SH1 at the 2020 Games, making history as the 1st Indian woman to win multiple Paralympic medals.
- She's a 2-time gold and 1-time silver medalist at the Para World Cup 2022.

iii. **Sheetal Devi**, the 18-year-old archer, was awarded the '**Emerging Athlete Award 2024**'. She became India's youngest Paralympic medallist, clinching a bronze in Paris 2024 Paralympics.

- She secured 2 golds and 1 silver at the 2022 Asian Para Games, a silver at the World Para Archery Championship 2023, and received the Arjuna Award in 2023.

iv. **Mithali Raj** was honored with the '**Lifetime Achievement Award 2024**' for her remarkable 18-year captaincy of the Indian women's cricket team.

- She holds the record at the age of 42, for the longest-serving captain in international cricket history, leading the team from 2004 to 2022.

## About BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year (ISWOTY) Award:

i. The BBC ISWOTY was introduced by BBC Hindi in December 2019 to honor Indian sportswomen in their respective fields of competition.

ii. The inaugural edition of the awards took place in March 2020, with badminton star **Pusarla Venkata Sindhu** receiving the first-ever honor for her unwavering dedication to the sport of Badminton.

iii. Padma Shri Awardee, **Koneru Humpy**, an Indian Chess Player, won the **2nd** edition of the BBC ISWOTY 2021.

iv. Padma Shri Awardee, **Mirabai Chanu**, an Indian Weightlifter, won the 3rd and 4th edition of the BBC ISWOTY 2022 and 2023 respectively.

#### **Nomination and Selection Procedure:**

i. A jury consisting of sports journalists, experts, and BBC editors is responsible for selecting a long-list of **50 Indian sportswomen**.

ii. These nominees are chosen based on their performances during the **12-month** period leading up to the year of the award.

iii. **Public Voting Process:** The 5 sportswomen who receive the most votes from the jury move forward to the public voting stage. The public cast their votes through various BBC Indian language websites and the BBC Sport website.

iv. **Jury-Selected Awards:** While the headline award is determined through public voting, the other 3 categories are solely decided by the jury.

#### **About British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC):**

Director-General (DG)- Timothy Douglas Davie

**Headquarters**- London, the United Kingdom (UK)

Established- 1922

### **Governor of Massachusetts Honors Nita Ambani with Citation for Philanthropic Contributions**

In February 2025, **Nita Mukesh Ambani**, renowned Indian philanthropist, and Founder and Chairperson of the **Reliance Foundation**, a charitable arm of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), was awarded the **Governor's Citation** by Maura Healey, Governor of Massachusetts (the United States of America, USA) during a special ceremony in Boston, the USA.

- The citation honors Ambani for being a compassionate philanthropist and her dedication to making a transformative impact in education, healthcare, sports, arts, culture, and women's empowerment in India and around the world.

#### **Achievements of Nita Ambani:**

i. In 2016, she became the first Indian woman to become a member of the Indian Olympic Committee (IOC).

ii. In 2017, she received the Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar (National Sports Promotion Award in India) and was honored by Vogue India with the Global Philanthropist and Leader of the Year award.

iii. In 2023, she won the Global Leadership Award for Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) from the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF).

## **ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS**

### **PCTL acquires 25% stake in Seven Technology LLC for USD 1 million**

In February 2025, Noida (Uttar Pradesh, UP) based Paytm Cloud Technologies Limited (**PCTL**), a subsidiary of Paytm acquired a **25%** stake in Delaware (the United States of America, USA) based **Seven Technology LLC** for **USD 1 million** (Rs. 8.70 crore).

- This move is part of Paytm's strategy to expand its merchant payments and financial services model internationally, especially in emerging markets with strong fintech potential.

i. Seven Technology LLC, the parent company of Dinie Correspondente Bancario e Meios de Pagamento (Dinie) in Brazil, is an Application Programming Interface (API) – the first embedded finance start-up.

ii. The acquisition is expected to be completed within 45 days. Once the acquisition is complete, Seven Technology and Dinie will become associate entities of Paytm.

**Note:** In December 2024, Paytm's parent company, One97 Communications Singapore Private Limited (Paytm Singapore), agreed to sell its Stock Acquisition Rights (SARs) in Japan's PayPay Corporation to SoftBank Vision Fund 2 for Japanese Yen (JPY) 41.9 billion (around Rs 2,364 crore).

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### PRL Scientists Discovered a New Exoplanet TOI-6038A b Using PARAS-2 Spectrograph

In February 2025, Scientists at the Physical Research Laboratory (**PRL**), an autonomous unit of the Department of Space (**DOS**) of the Government of India (GoI) in **Ahmedabad**, have discovered a new exoplanet, **TOI-6038A b**. It is classified as a **dense sub-Saturn size** with a mass of 78.5 Earth masses, and a radius of 6.41 Earth radii in a wide binary system. The planet orbits the main F-type star every 5.83 days in a circular orbit.

- The TOI-6038A b lies in the transition region between Neptune-like and gas-giant exoplanets, called "*Sub-Saturn*," (a category absent in our solar system) offering a rare opportunity to study planetary formation and evolution.
- This is the **2nd exoplanet** discovered using the PRL Advanced Radial-velocity All-sky Search-2 (**PARAS-2**) spectrograph attached to the 2.5-meter (m) telescope at **PRL's Mount Abu Observatory** at Gurushikhar, Rajasthan.
- It is also the **5th exoplanet** detected using the combined efforts of PRL Advanced Radial Velocity Abu Sky Search (**PARAS-1**) and **PARAS-2** spectrographs. It is only the **5th sub-Saturn exoplanet** discovered in a **binary system**.
- TOI-6038A b has a high density of 1.62 grams per cubic centimeter ( $\text{g/cm}^3$ ) and the planet's high density suggests formation through High-Eccentricity Tidal Migration (HEM) or early disk-driven migration.
- Its preliminary internal structure analysis indicates that 75% of its mass consists of a massive rocky core and the remaining 25% is a Hydrogen-Helium (H/He) envelope.
- Its host star, TOI-6038A is part of a binary system with a companion K-type star, TOI-6038B, which is located 3217 Astronomical Units (AU) away.

**Note:** PARAS-2 is Asia's highest-resolution stabilized radial velocity (RV) spectrograph.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

### A Book Titled "The New Icon: Savarkar and the Facts" by Arun Shourie

In February 2025, A book titled "**The New Icon Savarkar and the Facts**" was authored by **Arun Shourie**, a Scholar, Author, and former Minister for Disinvestment, Communications, and Information Technology (IT). Published by Penguin Random House India (**PRHI**), the book "The New Icon Savarkar and the Facts", analyses various myths built around **Vinayak Damodar Savarkar**, an Indian freedom fighter, activist, writer, and President of Hindu Mahasabha.

- Arun Shourie was an economist with the World Bank (WB) (1967-1976) and Editor of the Indian Express (IE) from 1987 to 1990.
- He became a nominated Member of Parliament (MP) and held the position of Minister of Disinvestment, Communications, and IT in Atal Bihari Vajpayee's cabinet.
- He was honoured with the **Ramon Magsaysay Award** for Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication Arts in **1982**. In **1990**, he was honoured with the **Padma Bhushan** for Literature and Education.

- His other notable works include Preparing For Death (2020), and The Commissioner For Lost Causes (2022).

## STATE NEWS

### Odisha CM Mohan Majhi presents Budget of Rs.2,90,000 crore for 2025-26 fiscal

Odisha Chief Minister (CM) **Mohan Charan Majhi** presented the State's annual Budget for 2025-26 on **17th February 2025** with total outlay of **Rs.2,90,000 crore** with capital expenditure been fixed at **Rs.65,012 crore** which was 6.1% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).



- The budgetary amount is expected to be financed mainly through revenue receipts of **Rs.2,32,000 crore** and borrowing and other receipts of **Rs.58,000 crore**.
- An outlay of **Rs 1,70,000 crore** was dedicated towards programme expenditure, which is more than 58.62% of the total budget outlay.
- The budget has projected the revenue surplus at **3%** of the GSDP, the fiscal deficit at **3.2%** of the GSDP and the year-end debt stock to remain at **12.7%** of the GSDP.

### Sectoral Allocations

#### Agriculture & Allied Sectors:

- Rs.37,838 crore (12% increase from 2024-25), reflecting the sector's critical role in employing 48% of the workforce and supporting 80% of the rural population.
- Mukhyamantri Kamdhenu Yojana: Rs.164 crore to boost milk production.
- CM Kisan Yojana: Rs.2,020 crore for farmer welfare.
- Shree Anna Abhiyan: Rs.600 crore to promote millet cultivation.

#### Top Sectors by Allocation:

- Finance: Rs.63,511.91 crore (highest allocation).
- School & Mass Education: Rs.31,185.47 crore.
- Panchayat Raj & Drinking Water: Rs.28,451 crore.
- Health & Family Welfare: Rs.22,741 crore.
- Women & Child Development: Rs.15,223 crore.
- Water Resources: Rs.14,894 crore.

### New Initiatives

The budget introduced 16 new schemes, including:

- **Shree Jagannath Darshan Yojana:** Rs.30 crore to facilitate temple visits for economically disadvantaged devotees.
- **Maa Tarini Temple Complex Development:** Rs.225 crore for infrastructure upgrades in Keonjhar.
- **Tourism Development:** Rs.820 crore for infrastructure and sustainable tourism promotion.



## Welfare & Development Schemes

- **Antyodaya Gruha Yojana:** Rs.2,603 crore for housing.
- **Swachha Odisha:** Rs.261 crore for cleanliness drives.
- **Southern Odisha Development Council:** Rs.200 crore to address regional disparities.
- **Mukhya Mantri Kanya Bibaha Yojana:** A new scheme to sponsor mass weddings, covering expenses and providing bridal gifts.
- **Road Development :-** The government has allocated Rs.13,000 crore for the Comprehensive City Road Decongestion Plan to ease traffic and improve mobility.
- **Road Development & Expressway:** Rs.6,502 crore will be spent on upgrading 3,000 km of roads and developing the Berhampur-Jeypore six-lane greenfield expressway.

## Government's Subhadra Plus Scheme

The **Subhadra Scheme** of the government was allocated an amount of **Rs. 10,145 crore**

- **Subhadra Plus:** A new umbrella scheme with multiple initiatives, including: Kishori Subhadra, Subhadra Sanchay, Subhadra Surakhya, Subhadra Sakhi, Subhadra Yatri, Subhadra Sangh (Subhadra Club), Kuha Subhadra (Call Centre), Subhadra Sahyogi, Subhadra Scholars, and Sujogya Subhadra.
- Rs.153 crore under Subhadra Surakhya for women's safety and security in 2025

## About Odisha:

**Chief minister**– Mohan Charan Majhi

**Governor**– Hari Babu Kambhampati

**Capital**– Bhubaneswar

**Heritage Sites** – Konark Sun Temple, Jagannath Temple, Barabati Fort

## Less Important NEWS

- [Indian scientists develop wearable devices to detect stress](#)
- [Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh releases Association of Physicians of India \(API\) Monograph on Pollution and Health](#)
- [Former judge Arun Mishra appointed BCCI Ombudsman](#)
- [Cabinet sub-committee gives approval to declare four forest areas as eco-sensitive zones](#)
- [21st Third Eye Asian Film Festival concludes in Mumbai](#)

## Aspirant Queries

**Aspirant:** Does Affairscloud covers all the Current affairs topics related to examinations?

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### GA Questions Asked in Exams

- [Affairscloud's Self Analysis for General Awareness Section](#)


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Current Static GK	2	1	—	—
Static Banking	—	—	—	—
Static GK	—	—	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>

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