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State Current Affairs



< Feb 2024

Monthly

Weekly

Daily

PIB News



Feb 29 2024 CA Q&A - English
Ebook



AffairsCloud Dailyscoop Feb 29 2024 - English
Ebook



Feb 29 2024 CA Quiz - English
START

Monthly

Weekly

Daily

PIB News



Weekly: 24-29 Feb 2024 CA Q&A - English
Ebook



Weekly Top 60: 24-29 Feb 2024 CA Q&A - English
Ebook



Weekly: 24-29 Feb 2024 CA Quiz - English
START

Monthly

Weekly

Daily

PIB News



February 29 2024 PIB News - English
Article



February 28 2024 PIB News - English
Article

AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY

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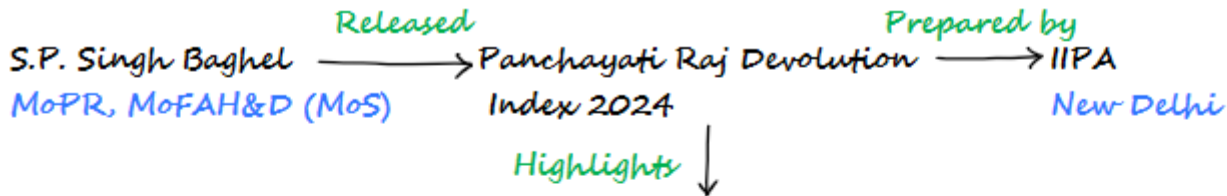
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Hand Written Notes

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)



→ Devolution to Rural Local Bodies ↑ to 43.9% (2021-22) ↻ 39.9% (2013-14)

→ Top 5 States in Devolution Index (DI Score > 55):

Rank	State	Score
1	Karnataka	72.23
2	Kerala	70.59
3	Tamil Nadu	68.38
4	Maharashtra	61.44
5	Uttar Pradesh	60.07

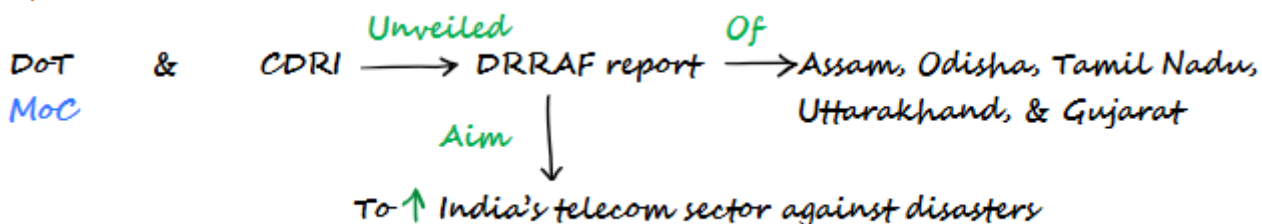
MoPR - Ministry of Panchayati Raj

MoFAH&D - Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying

MoS - Minister of State

IIPA - Indian Institute of Public Administration

2)

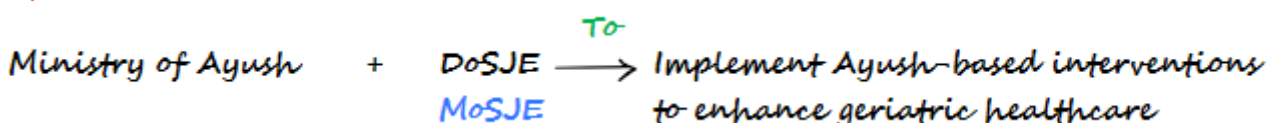


DoT - Department of Telecommunications

MoC - Ministry of Communications

CDRI - Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

3)

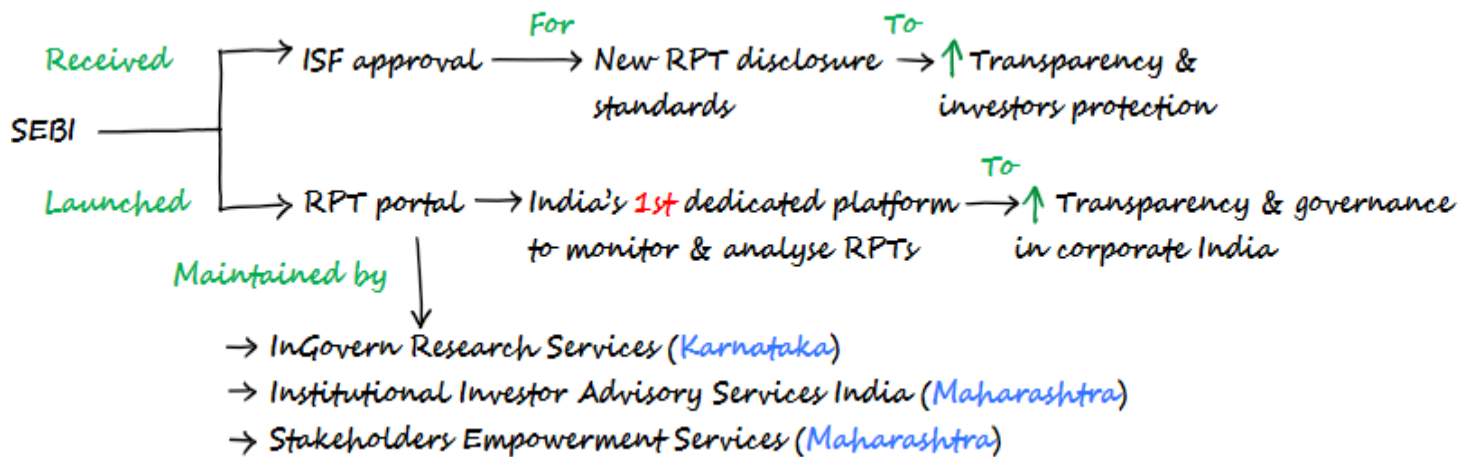


DoSJE - Department of Social Justice and Empowerment

MoSJE - Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

BANKING & FINANCE

1)

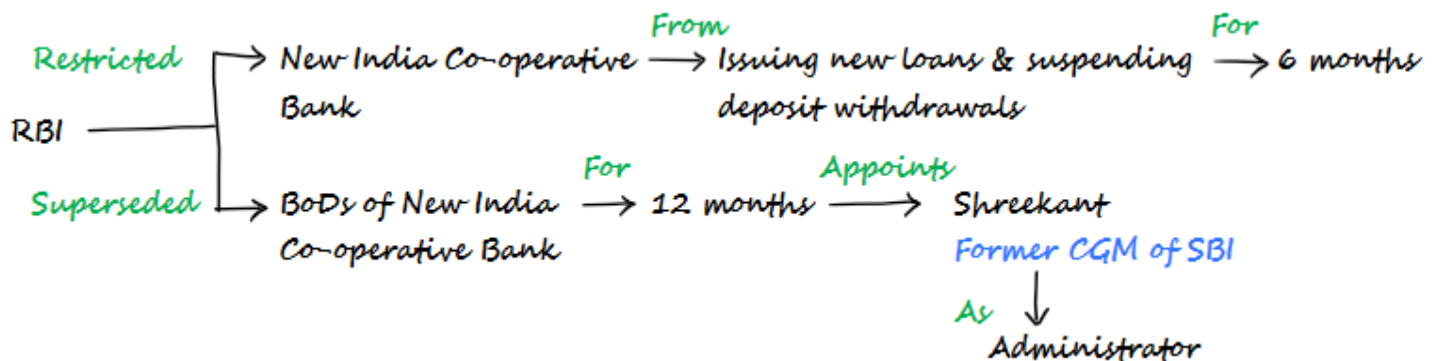


SEBI - Securities and Exchange Board of India

RPT - Related Party Transaction

ISF - Industry Standards Forum

2)



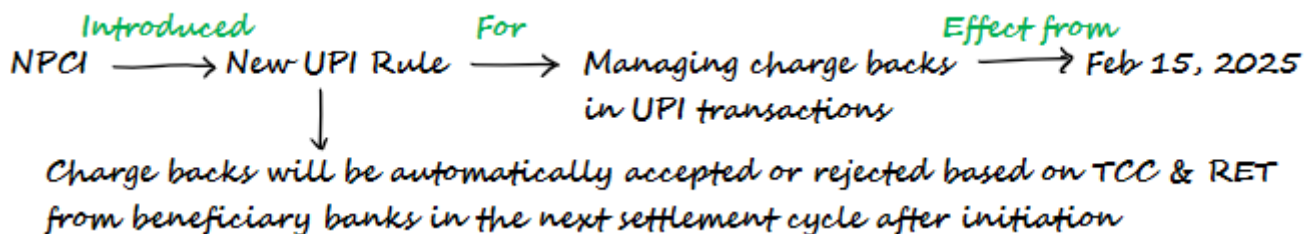
RBI - Reserve Bank of India

BoD - Board of Director

CGM - Chief General Manager

SBI - State Bank of India

3)



NPCI - National Payments Corporation of India

UPI - Unified Payments Interface

TCC - Transaction Credit Confirmation

RET - Return Requests

4)
RBI ^{Extended} → WLA Authorization ^{Of} → Vakrangee Limited ^{Until} → March 31, 2026

RBI - Reserve Bank of India

WLA - White Label ATM

5)
RBI ^{Removed} → Restrictions on Kotak Mahindra Bank ^{To} → Onboard new customers digitally & issue new credit cards

RBI - Reserve Bank of India

6)
RBI ^{Approved} → Zulia Investments ^{To} → ↑ Stake in AU SFB to 7% ↻ 1.37%

RBI - Reserve Bank of India

7)
IFC ^{Invested} → ₹ 860 Cr ^{In} → India's 1st SLB in Road Sector ^{Issued by} → Cube InvIT
(USD 98.35 mn)
^{To} ↓ Critical road infrastructure & climate resilience in highway

IFC - International Finance Corporation

SLB - Sustainability-Linked Bond

InvIT - Infrastructure Investment Trust

8)
EXIM Bank ^{Announced} → USD 300 mn credit ^{To} → Vietnam ^{For} → Buying high-speed guard boats & offshore patrol vessels

EXIM Bank - Export Import Bank of India

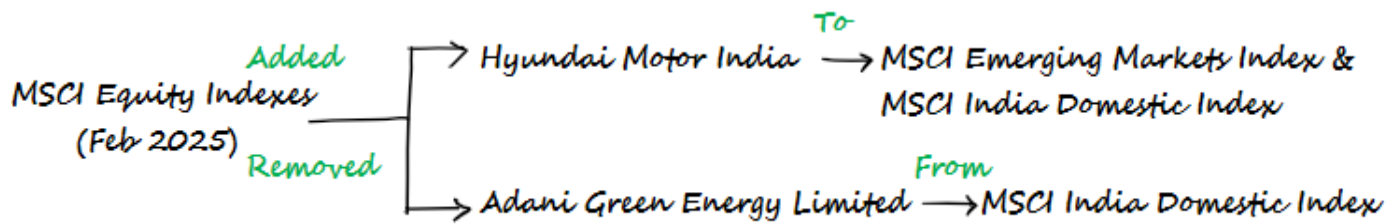
9)
Decentro ^{Launched} → India's 1st Self-Hosted CKYC Solution ^{To} → Easily switch to new CERSAI compliance framework

CKYC - Central Know Your Customer

CERSAI - Central Registry of Securitisation Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest of India

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

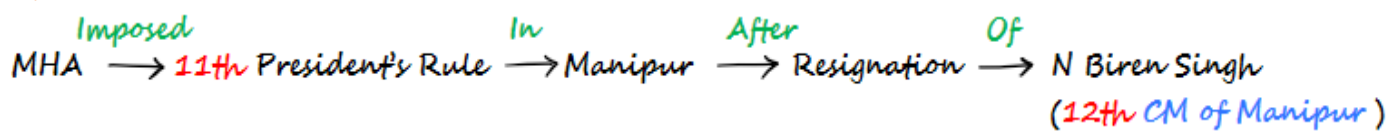
1)



MSCI - Morgan Stanley Capital International Incorporation

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

1)

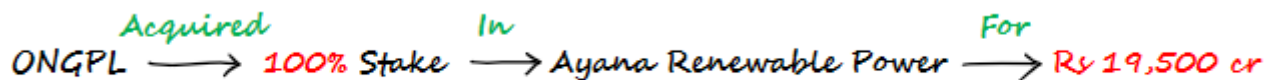


MHA - Ministry of Home Affairs

CM - Chief Minister

ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

1)



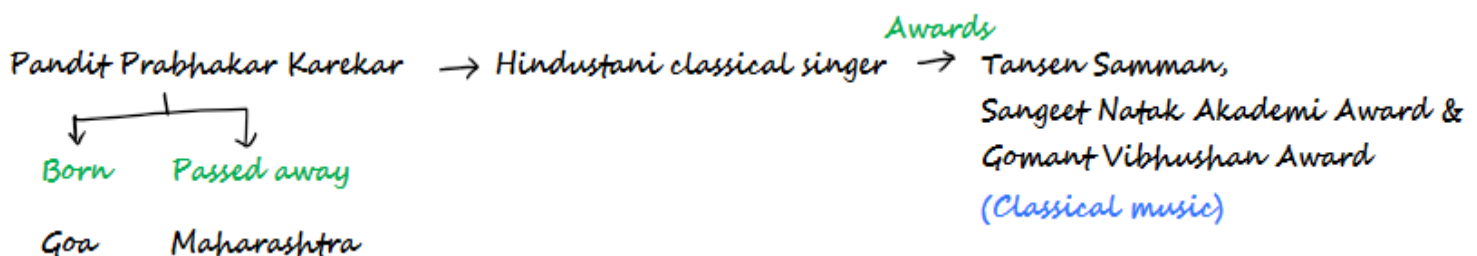
ONGPL - ONGC NTPC Green Private Limited

ONGC - Oil and Natural Gas Corporation

NTPC - National Thermal Power Corporation

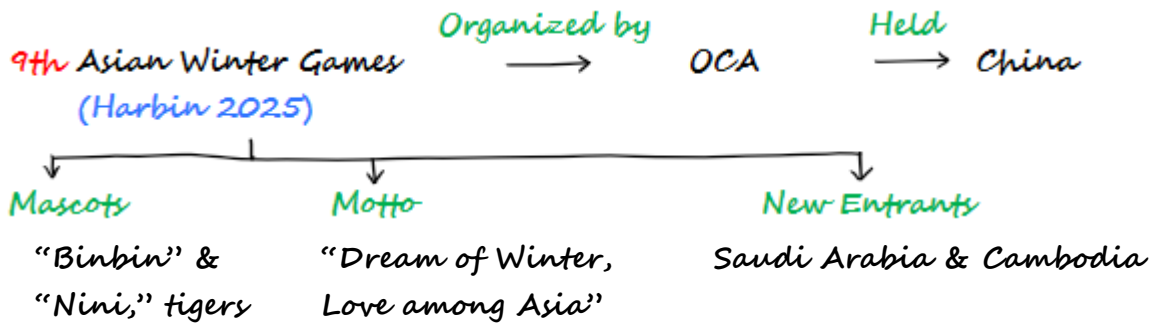
OBITUARY

1)



SPORTS

1)



Top 5 Medal Tally

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	China	32	27	26	85
2	Republic of Korea	16	15	14	45
3	Japan	10	12	15	37
4	Kazakhstan	4	9	7	20
5	Philippines	1	0	0	1

→ Tara Prasad, India's skater, delivered best performance, finishing 8th in women's skating event

→ Saudi Arabia **To host** 10th Asian Winter Games (NEOM) in 2029
1st country in West Asia to host

OCA - Olympic Council of Asia

IMPORTANT DAYS

1)

15 February → International Childhood Cancer Day

- **Aim**
To raise awareness about childhood cancer
- Campaign theme of ICCD 2025 - "Inspiring Action"
- Campaign theme of ICCD 2026 - "Demonstrating Impact"
- Campaign theme of ICCD 2024 - "Unveiling Challenges"
- 1st ICCD was observed on Feb 15, 2002
- **Symbol for childhood cancer awareness** - Gold ribbon

ICCD - International Childhood Cancer Day

IARC - International Agency for Research on Cancer

2)

15 February

↓
3rd Saturday
of February

14th World Pangolin Day

→ Aim

To highlight critical threats faced by Pangolin (Mammal)
due to illegal poaching and trafficking

→ 1st observed on February 2012

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

1)

7th "Sportstar Aces Awards 2025" → 24 distinct categories

↓ Held
Taj Mahal Palace
(Maharashtra)

Popular Choice Awards 2025

Award Category	Winner Name	Sport Type
Sportstar of the Year (Male)	Parattu Raveendran Sreejesh	Hockey
Sportstar of the Year (Female)	Manu Bhaker	Shooting
National Team of the Year	Indian Men and Women Chess Team	Chess
Club/State Team of the Year	Mumbai City Football Club	Football
Sporting Moment of the Year	Arshdeep Singh Aulakh match-winning performance in the Twenty20 World Cup	Cricket

Inspirational Icon Award 2025 → Pusarla Venkata Sindhu (Badminton)

Special Recognition Game Changer Award 2025 → Jay Shah (Contributions to Indian cricket & Globally)

2)

Forward Faster Sustainability Award 2025 → NTPC Limited (Ministry of Power) → ^{Category} Water Resilience

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Less Important NEWS

- [Lakshadweep: First-ever high-speed craft vessel berths at Amini Island's western jetty](#)
- [Bank of Baroda to provide AI-driven support, forex facility, ATMs, and coin vending machines for Maha Kumbh 2025](#)
- [India's inflation likely to stabilise around 4.3-4.7 pc in FY26: Report](#)
- [Department of Biotechnology Hosts the Fifth Webinar in its Webinar Series on Biomanufacturing and Biofoundry Initiative on the Theme "Biomanufacturing for Climate Resilient Agriculture"](#)
- [BHEL Commissions Two Units in Bhutan Hydropower Project](#)

Detailed Content

Current Affairs 16 & 17 February 2025: Headlines

AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY

ENGLISH

**International
Childhood
Cancer Day**

February 15 2025

Union Minister of State Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel releases Report on "Status of Devolution to Panchayats in States" in New Delhi

CURRENT AFFAIRS

16 & 17 FEBRUARY 2025

- Panchayati Raj Devolution Index 2024: Karnataka Tops, Followed by Kerala & TN
- DoT & CDRI Unveiled Roadmap to Strengthen India's Telecom Resilience
- Ministry of Ayush & DoSJE Sign MoU to Boost Geriatric Healthcare
- SEBI Launched 'RPT Portal' to Strengthen Corporate Governance and Transparency
- RBI Imposes Restrictions on New India Co-operative Bank on Supervisory Concerns
- NPCI Introduced New UPI Rule on Automatic Acceptance, Rejection of Charge Backs from February 15, 2025
- RBI Extends Vakrangee's WLA Authorization till March 2026
- RBI Removes Regulatory Barriers on Kotak Mahindra Bank
- RBI Approves Zulia Investments to Increase Stake in AU SFB
- IFC Invested Rs 860 Crore in India's 1st SLB in Road Sector Issued by Cube InvIT
- Exim Bank to Provide USD 300 Million Credit to Vietnam for Procurement of Guard Boats and Patrol Vessels
- Decentro Launched India's 1st Self-Hosted CKYC Solution to Align with CERSAI's New Compliance Mandate
- MSCI Equity Indexes February 2025: HMIL Included, AGEL Removed
- Sportstar Aces Awards 2025: PR Sreejesh, Manu Bhaker Bagged Top Honours "Sportstar of the Year Male & Female"
- NTPC Limited Conferred with Forward Faster Sustainability Award 2025 for Water Resilience
- President's Rule Imposed in Manipur, After CM Biren Singh's Resignation
- ONGPL Acquires 100% Stake in Ayana Renewable Power for Rs 19,500 Crore
- Asian Winter Games 2025: China Dominates, India Ends Medal-Less
- Renowned Classical Singer Pandit Prabhakar Karekar Passes Away
- International Childhood Cancer Day 2025 – February 15
- World Pangolin Day 2025 – February 15

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Panchayati Raj Devolution Index 2024: Karnataka Tops, Followed by Kerala & TN

On February 13, 2025, Union Minister of State (MoS), **S.P. Singh Baghel**, Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAH&D) released the comprehensive Devolution Index Report titled ["Status of Devolution to Panchayats in States – An Indicative Evidence-Based Ranking 2024"](#) at the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi (Delhi).



- As per the report, **Karnataka** ranked **1st** in the devolution of power to panchayats, excelling in terms of funds, functions, and functionaries, followed by Kerala, Tamil Nadu (TN), Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- This report marks a key milestone in India's efforts to empower Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and to fulfill the vision of "Local Self Government" outlined in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

Key People: The event was attended by Vivek Bharadwaj, Secretary of MoPR; Sushil Kumar Lohani, Additional Secretary of MoPR; Rajeev Singh Thakur, Advisor at National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog; Alok Prem Nagar, Joint Secretary of MoPR.

What is the Devolution Index?

i. The Devolution Index is the result of thorough research and empirical analysis, offering insights into decentralization progress across States and UTs.

- The report was prepared by the **IIPA** and assessed 31 states and Union Territories (UTs), sampling 172 Panchayats across 68 districts, with a total of 1,594 respondents interviewed.
- Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, UT of Chandigarh and National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi are not covered in this report.

ii. The Index evaluates **6 critical dimensions**: Framework, Functions, Finances, Functionaries, Capacity Building, and Accountability of Panchayats.

iii. It specifically examines the autonomy of Panchayats to make and implement independent decisions, reflecting the spirit of **Article 243G** of the Constitution.

Note: Article 243G empowers State legislatures to devolve powers and responsibilities to Panchayats across 29 subjects listed in the 11th Schedule.

Significance of the Devolution Index:

i. The Devolution Index serves as a tool for strengthening cooperative federalism and local self-governance.

ii. It enables states to identify areas for improvement and adopt best practices for more empowered and effective Panchayats.

iii. For citizens, it provides transparency in tracking Panchayat functioning and resource allocation, while elected representatives can utilize data-driven insights for advocacy and reform.

Key Highlights of the Report:

i. Increase in Devolution: The report indicates a rise in devolution to rural local bodies from **39.9%** in 2013-14 to 43.9% in 2021-22.

- **Financial Devolution:** The share of funds allocated to PRIs increased from 32.05% to 37.04%, enhancing financial resources for local governance.
- **Functional Devolution:** The proportion of functions transferred to PRIs declined from 35.34% to 29.18%, indicating a reduction in administrative responsibilities at the local level.

ii. Capacity Enhancement: Following the launch of the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (**RGSA**) on April 21, 2018, the capacity enhancement component of the Devolution Index 2024 increased from 44% to 54.6%, marking an improvement of over 10%.

iii. Functionaries: Efforts to strengthen **PRIs** through infrastructure development and recruitment have led to a significant increase in the functionaries component of the Devolution Index, rising from **39.6% to 50.9%**.

iv. Accountability & Transparency: Measures to enhance accountability and transparency resulted in scores growing from 46.1% to 47.5%, indicating stronger auditing and anti-corruption efforts.

Leading States based on 6 Dimensions:

i. Kerala leads in the 'Framework' dimension, setting the standard for mandatory structures.

ii. Tamil Nadu (TN) excels in 'Functions', establishing a benchmark for functional devolution.

iii. Karnataka demonstrates exemplary financial management in the 'Finances' category.

iv. Gujarat leads in 'Functionaries', showcasing excellence in personnel management and capacity building.

v. Telangana stands out in 'Capacity Enhancement', leading in institutional strengthening.

vi. Karnataka also sets new standards in 'Accountability', establishing benchmarks in transparency.

Top 5 States in Devolution Index (DI Score > 55):

Rank	State	Score
1	Karnataka	72.23
2	Kerala	70.59
3	Tamil Nadu (TN)	68.38
4	Maharashtra	61.44
5	Uttar Pradesh (UP)	60.07

Key points:

i. States namely Tripura (57.58), Rajasthan (56.67), West Bengal (WB) (56.52), Chhattisgarh (56.26) have scored **above 55**.

ii. States scored between **50 and 55**, includes Telangana (55.1), Andhra Pradesh (AP) (54.43), Himachal Pradesh (HP) (53.17), Madhya Pradesh (MP) (50.94), and Odisha (50.03) are categorized as 'medium scoring States', reflecting commendable performance across all sub-indicators.

iii. Bihar (48.24) along with the northeastern and hilly states of Assam (49.06), Sikkim (43.91), and Uttarakhand (49.11) emerged as moderate scorers but with values above the national average of **43.89**.

iv. States and UTs which have scored low are Goa (37.71), Haryana (39.33), Jharkhand (27.73) and Punjab (29.34).

v. **UP** has made a remarkable improvement, advancing from **15th to 5th position**, attributed to its enhanced accountability framework and anti-corruption measures.

vi. **Tripura's** impressive leap from **13th to 7th place**, particularly in revenue generation and fiscal management, demonstrates, even smaller states are equally capable of achieving excellence in local governance.

About Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA):

President – Jagdeep Dhankhar (Vice President of India)

Headquarters – New Delhi, Delhi

Established – 1954

DoT & CDRI Unveiled Roadmap to Strengthen India's Telecom Resilience

In February 2025, the Department of Telecommunications (**DoT**), Ministry of Communications (MoC), in partnership with the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (**CDRI**) unveiled a comprehensive report on Disaster Risk and Resilience Assessment Framework (**DRRAF**). This marks a significant step towards strengthening India's telecom sector against disasters.



- The report was launched as part of a comprehensive study on National and Sub-national Disaster Risk & Resilience Assessment for the Telecommunication sector by CDRI.
- The study was conducted across 5 Indian states: Assam, Odisha, Tamil Nadu (TN), Uttarakhand, and Gujarat, which focuses on disaster risks and resilience strategies specific to the telecom sector.
- DoT coordinated with State Governments, Telecom Service Providers, and Infrastructure Providers to gather critical data.

Key Findings and Recommendations from the Study:

- The study carried out a multi-hazard risk assessment across **0.77 million** telecom towers. It mapped risks from floods, cyclones, earthquakes, and other disasters.
- A disaster risk and resilience index has been developed to examine the vulnerability of telecom infrastructure based on factors like: disaster intensity, frequency, and impact.
- The report has outlined certain recommendations which aimed to bolster the resilience and preparedness of the telecom sector against disasters.

- These recommendations are based on a multi-pronged approach, which combines technical improvements, government reforms, financial investments, and collaboration with various stakeholders.

iv. The key strategic recommendations of the report are: improving technical planning and design to ensure telecom infrastructure can tolerate disaster impacts.

- Creating a robust multi-hazard information repository or database to enable data-driven risk management.



- Implementing risk-informed governance to incorporate disaster resilience into sectoral policies.
- Developing risk-sharing instruments to protect telecom operators against financial frauds.
- Setting-up a cross-sectoral framework to promote stakeholder collaboration and coordinated response mechanisms.
- Strengthening financial arrangements to support the resilience of important telecom infrastructure.
- Promoting last-mile connectivity and information access which will ensure inclusivity during disaster-induced emergencies.
- Using digital and collaborative efforts to improve service restoration in crisis situations.
- Upscaling institutional capacity and last-mile expertise to enhance emergency preparedness.
- Implementing accurate monitoring mechanisms to improve service quality and reliability.

Significance of the Report:

- i. The recommendations of the report aim to consolidate the telecom sectors' ability to withstand disasters, which will ensure seamless connectivity and rapid restoration of services.
- ii. With the leadership of DoT and multi-stakeholder engagement, the implementation of this roadmap will empower the telecom sector in India to effectively forecast, respond to, and recover from disasters, ensuring uninterrupted communication even in time of crisis.
- iii. This risk and resilience study and framework will help CDRI to mainstream resilience principles in telecom infrastructure at the policy and planning level, and promote cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination, both at national and international levels.

About Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI):

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi announced the launch of CDRI at the United Nations (UN) Climate Action Summit held in New York, the United States of America (USA) on 23rd September, 2019.

- It is an international collaboration of **49 members** dedicated to climate and disaster resilient infrastructure solutions. It is a collaboration of national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks (MDBs); and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and academia.

Director-General (DG)- Amit Prothi

Headquarters- New Delhi, Delhi

About Ministry of Communications (MoC):

Union Minister- Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia (Constituency- Guna, Madhya Pradesh, MP)

Minister of State (MoS) – Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani (Constituency- Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, AP)

Ministry of Ayush & DoSJE Sign MoU to Boost Geriatric Healthcare

On February 12, 2025, the **Ministry of Ayush** (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (**DoSJE**) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) in New Delhi (Delhi).

- The MoU aims to implement Ayush-based interventions to enhance geriatric healthcare and address substance abuse.
- It marks a milestone in India's healthcare journey, blending the strengths of Ayush systems with social justice initiatives to foster a healthier and more inclusive society.

Key Signatories: The MoU signing ceremony was attended by Union Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge, IC) **Prataprao Ganpatrao Jadhav**, Ministry of Ayush; Union MoS **Banwari Lal Verma**, MoSJE; Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary of Ministry of Ayush; Amit Yadav, Secretary of DoSJE and other distinguished officials.

Highlights:

- i. Geriatric healthcare and substance abuse are vital areas that require focused attention, especially to help an aging population lead a healthy life.
- ii. The MoU improves the health and well-being of senior citizens, with both ministries working together on initiatives such as awareness programs, training for service providers, and setting up geriatric health and de-addiction units under Ayush autonomous bodies.

Key Objectives of the MoU:

i. Cooperative Efforts: The Ministry of AYUSH and DoSJE will work together to create innovative initiatives that promote senior citizens' health, reduce drug demand, tackle substance abuse, and support mental rehabilitation.

- This will be done through awareness programs and training service providers using AYUSH systems.

ii. Research Promotion: Promoting research in geriatric health, substance abuse, and mental health, with an emphasis on exploring the therapeutic benefits of traditional healthcare practices.

iii. Health Promotion Activities: Supporting health promotion activities specifically designed for the elderly and individuals struggling with substance abuse.

About Ministry of Ayush:

Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge, IC) – Prataprao Ganpatrao Jadhav
(Constituency – Buldhana, Maharashtra)

Headquarters – New Delhi

Founded – 2014

BANKING & FINANCE

SEBI Launched 'RPT Portal' to Strengthen Corporate Governance and Transparency

On February 14 2025, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) launched 'Related Party Transaction (RPT) portal', India's 1st dedicated platform to monitor and analyse RPTs. The portal also aims to bolster transparency and governance in corporate India.



- The portal enables a wide range of stakeholders to access standardized and comparable data on RPTs.

Note: RPT is a transaction between related parties which involves transfer of resources, services or obligations between them regardless of whether a price is charged.

Key Points:

- i. SEBI clarified that executive compensation will be covered under RPTs, which means that promoters of companies can reward themselves without shareholder approval.
- ii. The portal will compile comprehensive information on RPTs, including shareholding voting patterns from the last 2 years, which will enable the investors and other entities to make well-informed decisions.

- Also, by compiling such data in a single platform, the initiative will fix information gaps and enhance corporate governance practices in India.
- iii. The portal will be maintained by 3 proxy advisories Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based **InGovern Research Services** Private Limited, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Institutional Investor Advisory Services India Limited (**IiAs**) and Mumbai based Stakeholders Empowerment Services (**SES**).
- iv. It will help investors to track RPTs and access opinions on such transactions.
- Retail investors will now have access to this information, which was previously limited to institutional investors.

SEBI Announced Approval of New RPT Disclosures by ISF

In February 2025, **Madhabi Puri Buch**, Chairperson of SEBI announced that new RPT disclosure standards have been approved by the Industry Standards Forum (ISF). These new standards aimed to ensure more transparency and protect investors.

- i. The new standards will require listed companies to provide more detailed information like: what are the minimum disclosures the companies would have to make when they take an RPT for approval, both by shareholders and audit committees (in certain cases).
- ii. Also, the standards will outline the minimum disclosures required when you go to the shareholders for approval.

About Industry Standards Forum (ISF):

It is a SEBI-established group of representatives from different industry sectors. The main objective of ISF is to develop and set standards for implementing regulatory guidelines within their respective sectors.

Chairman- Kundapur Vaman (K.V.) Kamath

Established- 2023

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RBI Imposes Restrictions on New India Co-operative Bank on Supervisory Concerns

In February 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (**RBI**) imposed restrictions on Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based **New India Co-operative Bank Limited** from issuing new loans and suspended deposit withdrawals amid supervisory concerns about its financial position.



- These restrictions were issued by the RBI under Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 to protect the interest of depositors.
- These restrictions came into force on February 13, 2025 and will remain in force for a period of **6 months**, but they are subject to a future review by the RBI.

Key Directions:

- i. As per the RBI directions, the bank does not have power/authority to grant or renew any loans or advances, make any new investments or accept new deposits without the prior approval from the RBI.
 - But, RBI has permitted loan set-offs against deposits under specific terms and conditions.
- ii. It has also allowed bank to incur essential expenses such as employee salaries, rent, and electricity bills.
- ii. RBI informed that eligible depositors will receive a deposit insurance claim of **up to Rs 5 lakh** for their deposits from the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), as applicable under the provisions of the DICGC Act, 1961.

RBI Superseded BoDs of New India Co-operative Bank for 12 Months:

The RBI in exercise of the powers given under **Section 36 AAA read with section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949** (as applicable to Co-operative Societies) has superseded the Board of Directors (BoDs) of New India Co-operative Bank for a period of **12 months**, to address its governance issues.

- It has appointed **Shreekant**, a former Chief General Manager (CGM), State Bank of India (SBI) as the administrator to manage the bank's affairs.
- It has also formed a committee of advisors to assist him, including **Ravindra Sapra**, former General Manager (GM) of SBI and **Abhijeet Deshmukh**, Chartered Accountant (CA).
- The primary function of the committee is to examine the financial situation, stabilize operations, and work towards the revival of the bank.

About New India Co-operative Bank Limited:

It was initially established as Bombay Labour Co-operative Bank Limited in 1968. Later, it was renamed as the New India Co-operative Bank Limited in 1977.

Headquarters- Mumbai, Maharashtra

NPCI Introduced New UPI Rule on Automatic Acceptance, Rejection of Charge Backs from February 15, 2025

In February 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has introduced a new rule for managing charge backs in Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions.



- As per new UPI rule, charge backs will now be automatically accepted or rejected based on Transaction Credit Confirmation (TCC) and Return Requests (RET) raised by the beneficiary banks in the next settlement cycle after the charge back has been started.
- The new above mentioned facility is implemented in UPI Dispute Resolution System (URCS) with effect from **February 15, 2025**.

Note: A charge back is a process which reverses a completed UPI transaction due to disputes, fraud or technical error. This reversal of UPI transaction is initiated by the payer's bank, and if approved, the transaction amount is returned to the payer.

Need for Introducing New Mechanism:

- i. At present, remitting banks can start charge backs from '**T+0**' onwards in URCS due to which beneficiary

banks are not getting sufficient time to reconcile transactions, leading to rejected RET.

ii. While, in some cases, charge backs are closed automatically with a deemed acceptance which resulted in penalties imposed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Key Highlights of New Mechanism:

i. The new UPI rule is applicable only to bulk upload options and Unified Dispute Resolution Interface (**UDIR**), and will not include front-end dispute resolution options.

ii. Now, Beneficiary banks will have an opportunity to reconcile transactions efficiently before charge backs are deemed approved.

About National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI):

It is an organisation that regulates the retail payment and settlement system in India. It was launched as a joint initiative of RBI and India Banks' Association (IBA). It was set up under the provisions of Payment and Settlement Systems (PSS Act, 2007).

Managing Director (**MD**) and Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) – Dilip Asbe

Headquarters- Mumbai, Maharashtra

Established- 2008

RBI Extends Vakrangee's WLA Authorization till March 2026

On February 12, 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) granted an extension to the Mumbai (Maharashtra) based **Vakrangee Limited** authorization to set up, own, and operate White Label ATMs (WLAs) across India until **March 31, 2026**.

- As of January 31, 2025, Vakrangee operates 6,036 WLAs and 76% of these are in Tier 4 and Tier 6 locations, aimed at enhancing financial accessibility in the unserved & underserved areas.

i. Vakrangee Limited offers a wide range of services, including banking, insurance, e-governance, e-commerce, and logistics solutions.

ii. In addition, Vakrangee operates 22,395 Vakrangee Kendra outlets, with 81% of these located in Tier-4 to Tier-6 areas.

iii. Vakrangee aims to achieve a revenue of USD 1 billion and a gross transaction value of USD 150 billion by 2030.

Note: As of December 2024, the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) held a 4.41% stake in Vakrangee Limited.

RBI Removes Regulatory Barriers on Kotak Mahindra Bank

In February 2025, Mumbai based Reserve Bank of India (**RBI**) removed the restrictions placed on Kotak Mahindra Bank (**KMB**) Limited, headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, **allowing** KMB to resume **onboarding new customers digitally and issuing new credit cards**.

i. The RBI imposed restrictions on **April 24, 2024**, under section 35A of Banking Regulation Act, 1949, after identifying serious Information Technology (IT)-related regulatory violations, including deficiencies in IT inventory management, security protocols and disaster recovery measures.

ii. These restrictions **had prevented** the bank from **adding new customers** through online and mobile banking and from issuing new credit cards.

iii. To **resolve these issues**, KMB took **corrective measures** and submitted compliance reports, conducted an **external audit** with RBI's approval. After reviewing the bank's improvements and compliance efforts, the RBI decided to lift the restrictions.

iv. As a result the "cease and desist" directive has been lifted for all banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFC), except for Paytm Payments Bank.

RBI Approves Zulia Investments to Increase Stake in AU SFB

In February 2025, Mumbai, Maharashtra based The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) permitted **Zulia Investments Pte. Ltd.**, a subsidiary of Singapore-based Temasek Holdings (Private) Limited, to raise its stake in Jaipur (Rajasthan)-based **AU Small Finance Bank (SFB) to 7%**.

- i. On February 12, 2025, AU SFB **received an RBI letter** approving Zulia and its associated entities to acquire up to 7% of the bank's paid-up capital or voting rights **within one year**.
- ii. If the acquisition is not completed by **February 12, 2026**, the approval will lapse.
- iii. Currently, **Zulia holds a 1.37% stake** in AU SFB, while **foreign institutional and portfolio investors own 39.35%**.

- If Zulia increases its stake, it could become the **largest foreign investor in the bank**.

Note: AU SFB, which began operations in **April 2017**, focuses on providing credit to retail customers and MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) while offering deposit and branch banking services.

IFC Invested Rs 860 Crore in India's 1st SLB in Road Sector Issued by Cube InvIT

In February 2025, Washington (the United States of America, USA)-based International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank Group (WBG), has invested **Rs 860 crore** (nearly USD 98.35 million) in India's 1st Sustainability-linked Bond (SLB) in the road sector, issued by Noida (Uttar Pradesh, UP)-based Cube Highways Trust (Cube InvIT (Infrastructure Investment Trust)).

- This investment by IFC aims to improve critical road infrastructure and strengthen climate resilience in highway development in India.

i. This SLB will fund the acquisition of NAM Expressway Limited (NAM), a strategic highway connecting Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN) and Hyderabad (Telangana), and support Cube InvIT's long-term corporate goal, including sustainability and inclusion initiatives.

ii. Cube InvIT raised this investment through long-term non-convertible debentures issued at a 7.67% coupon. These debentures have a tenor of 17 years and 10 months, with an anchor portion of Rs 258 crore.

iii. IFC's investment will mobilize additional capital, promoting advancements in India's road infrastructure while upholding international Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards.

Note: Cube InvIT is an irrevocable trust established under the Indian Trusts Act, 1882 and registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) as an InvIT.

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Exim Bank to Provide USD 300 Million Credit to Vietnam for Procurement of Guard Boats and Patrol Vessels

In February 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Export Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank) announced that it will provide lines of credit worth **USD 300 million** to **Vietnam** for buying high-speed boats and offshore patrol vessels.

- In July 2024, the EXIM Bank had signed an agreement with the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (GO-VNM), for making available to the latter, the Government of India (GoI) had pledged to provide Line of Credit (LoC) of **USD 180 million** for procurement of 4 Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV).

- i. The bank had also signed an agreement with GO-VNM for making available to the latter, GoI had committed to provide LoC of **USD 120 million** for procurement of high speed guard boats.
- ii. Both agreements are effective from January 20, 2025 and the last date for disbursement will be 60 months after the scheduled completion date of the project.

Decentro Launched India's 1st Self-Hosted CKYC Solution to Align with CERSAI's New Compliance Mandate

In February 2025, Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based **Decentro Tech Private Limited**, a leading fintech infrastructure platform, has launched India's 1st completely compliant, self-hosted Central Know Your Customer (**CKYC**) solution.

- This will enable financial institutions to seamlessly switch to the new Central Registry of Securitisation Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest of India (**CERSAI**) compliance framework.
- i. This new offering will remove the dependency on 3rd-parties, allowing banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), and insurers to onboard customers faster while ensuring regulatory compliance.
 - ii. Some of the key benefits of this new innovation are: 80% faster processing; 75% lower compliance costs, and zero vendor dependencies.

About CERSAI:

- CERSAI was established under Section 20 of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act (SARFAESI Act, 2002).
- CERSAI was incorporated as a company under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956. The Government of India (GoI) holds a 51% share in the company.

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

MSCI Equity Indexes February 2025: HMIL Included, AGEL Removed

In February 2025, the United States of America (USA) based Morgan Stanley Capital International Incorporation (**MSCI**), a leading service provider for the global investment community announced the [MSCI Equity Indexes February 2025 Index Review](#). The review revealed that Gurugram (Haryana) based Hyundai Motor India Limited (**HMIL**) has been added to the MSCI Emerging Markets (EM) Index, and also to the MSCI India Domestic Index, while Ahmedabad (Gujarat) based Adani Green Energy Limited (**AGEL**) has been removed from the index.



- The changes will be implemented around February 28, 2025, and will take effect from March 3, 2025.
- With this, India's weight in the index increases to **19%**, up from 18.8% in the previous review.

Note: Hyundai Motor is the only large-cap stock which has been added to the list.

Highlights:

i. United Airlines Holdings, Inc. (the USA), Reddit A (the USA), and Natera Inc., (the USA) will be the three largest additions to the MSCI All-Country World Index (ACWI) based on their full company market capitalization.

- 23 securities will be added and 107 securities will be deleted from the MSCI ACWI.

ii. Emaar Developments (the United Arab Emirates, UAE) and J&T Global Express Limited (China) are added to the MSCI EM Index.

iii. Indian Stocks Added: 20 Indian stocks added to the MSCI India Domestic Small Cap Index are Afcons Infrastructure Limited, Akums Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited, Allied Blenders & Distillers Limited, Ask Automotive Private Limited, Black Box Limited, Cartrade Tech Limited, E2E Networks Limited, Jyoti CNC Automation Limited, Kovai Med Center and Hospital Limited, Manorama Industries Limited, Niva Bupa Health Insurance, Ola Electric, Pearl Global, Shaily Engineering, Sundaram Clayton, TBO Tek, V2 Retail, Websol Energy and Zaggie Prepaid.

iv. Indian Stocks excluded: 17 stocks excluded are Advanced Enzyme, Bajaj Hindusthan Sugar, Balmer Lawrie, Bharat Bijlee, DCB Bank, Fineotex Chemical, Jai Corp, Jamna Auto, La Opala, Magellanic Cloud, Mahindra Logistics, Sanghvi Movers, Shivalik Bimetals, Spandana Sphoorthy, Sula Vineyards, Sun Pharma Advanced and West Coast Paper Mills.

v. 8 Indian stocks weight have been raised 9 Indian stocks weight have been reduced.

About MSCI Emerging Markets (EM) Index:

i. The MSCI Emerging Markets Index tracks the performance of growing economies around the world.

ii. It includes large and mid-cap companies from 24 Emerging Markets (EM) countries.

iii. With 1,251 constituents, the index covers 85% of the free-float-adjusted market capitalization in each of these countries.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Sportstar Aces Awards 2025: PR Sreejesh, Manu Bhaker Bagged Top Honours "Sportstar of the Year Male & Female"

On February 14, 2025, the **7th edition** of the "Sportstar Aces Awards 2025" was held at the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The event celebrated exceptional achievements in Indian sports, honoring the winners across **24 distinct categories**. The awards recognized the remarkable contributions and accomplishments of athletes, coaches, and organizations that have significantly impacted Indian sports.



- Indian hockey legend, **Parattu Raveendran (PR) Sreejesh** won the Sportstar of the Year 2025 (Male), while **Manu Bhaker** won the Sportstar of the Year 2025 (Female) and also the Sportswoman of the Year (Olympic Sport) respectively.
- The event featured 5 Popular Choice Awards and 16 Jury Awards, with over 2 lakh votes cast for the Popular Choice categories.

- This year 2025, 2 special awards: 'Special Recognition Gamechanger 2025' and 'Inspirational Icon Award 2025' were presented.

Key People:

i. The event was graced by sports legends such as Former Indian Cricketer, **Sunil Gavaskar**, Former Indian field Hockey player, **MM Somaya**, Former Indian Professional Shooter, **Abhinav Bindra**, Indian Chess Grandmaster, **Viswanathan Anand**, as well as Anjali Bhagwat and Aparna Popat.

ii. These distinguished personalities served as jury members, ensuring a thorough and impartial evaluation of the nominees.

Popular Choice Awards 2025:

Award Category	Winner Name	Sport Type
Sportstar of the Year (Male)	PR Sreejesh	Hockey
Sportstar of the Year (Female)	Manu Bhaker	Shooting
National Team of the Year	Indian Men and Women Chess Team	Chess
Club/State Team of the Year	Mumbai City Football Club (FC)	Football
Sporting Moment of the Year	Arshdeep Singh Aulakh match-winning performance in the Twenty20 (T20) World Cup	Cricket

Jury Awards 2025:

Award Category	Winner Name	Sport Type
Sportsman of the Year (Non-Olympic Sport)	Prathamesh Samadhan Jawkar	Kabaddi
Sportswoman of the Year (Non-Olympic Sport)	Divya Deshmukh	Chess
Sportsman of the Year (Track and Field)	Neeraj Chopra	Javelin Throw
Sportswoman of the Year (Track and Field)	Jyothi Yarraji	Sprinting
Sportsman of the Year (Olympic Sport)	Bajrang Punia	Wrestling
Sportswoman of the Year (Olympic Sport)	Manu Bhaker	Shooting

Sportsman of the Year (Para Sport)	Sumit Antil	Javelin
Sportswoman of the Year (Para Sport)	Avani Lekhara	Shooting
Coach of the Year	Pullela Gopichand	Badminton
Young Achiever of the Year (Male)	Lakshya Sen	Badminton
Young Achiever of the Year (Female)	Manu Bhaker	Shooting
Best State for Promotion of Sport	Madhya Pradesh (MP)	–
Best Corporate for Promotion of Sport	Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)	–
Best Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) for Promotion of Sport	National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC)	–
Best University for Promotion of Sport	Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT)	–
Lifetime Achievement Award	Gurbux Singh	Hockey
	Mary D'Souza Sequeira	Hockey

Highlights:

i.Arshdeep Singh Aulakh, the left-arm seamer was honored with the award for his exceptional performance in 2024, where he claimed 36 wickets, playing a vital role in India's T20 World Cup success.

ii.The "Chairperson's Award for Sports for Social Good 2025" Chairperson's Award for Sports for Social Good 2025 was presented to Downtown Heroes FC, a football club based in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).

- The award was received by the club's co-founders, Kaiser Bhat, Mushtaq Bashir, and Hinan Manzoor, in recognition of their remarkable vision and efforts to inspire positive change through sports

iii.Mukesh Ambani's Mumbai (Maharashtra) based Reliance Industries Limited (**RIL**) received the award, recognizing their significant contributions to sports development.

iv.The Best University for Promotion of Sport 2025 was presented to the **KIIT**, Deemed University (DU) in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha** for its significant contributions to sports development.

- The university has produced 23 Olympians, 3 Paralympians, 11 Arjuna Awardees, and 1 Khel Ratna Awardee, highlighting its commitment to nurturing athletic talent.

v.Pusarla Venkata Sindhu was honored with the "**Inspirational Icon Award 2025**" recognizing her exceptional achievements and unwavering dedication to the sport of Badminton.

vi.Jay Shah, Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), was honored with the '**Special Recognition Game Changer Award 2025**' in recognition of his transformative contributions to Indian cricket and the sport globally.

NTPC Limited Conferred with Forward Faster Sustainability Award 2025 for Water Resilience

In February 2025, **NTPC Limited** (formerly known as National Thermal Power Corporation Limited), an Indian 'Maharatna' Central Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) which works under the Ministry of Power

(MoP), has been conferred with **Forward Faster Sustainability Award 2025** in the category of 'Water Resilience', in recognition of the NTPC's exceptional efforts in water conservation and sustainable water management initiatives.

- Harekrushna Dash, ED (Sustainability, Environment & Ash) and K Karthikeyan, Additional General Manager (AGM), NTPC Limited received the award at ceremony organised by the United Nations (UN) Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN).
- NTPC is actively implementing the Reduce, Reuse & Recycle(RRR) approach to optimize water use.

i.The Forward Faster Sustainability Awards recognizes organisations/institutions in India that have made significant contributions in promoting sustainability and corporate responsibility, aligning with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ii.NTPC Limited, largest integrated power utility in India, is contributing 25% of India's power requirements and has an installed capacity of more than 77 Giga Watt (GW), with an additional capacity of 29.5 GW under construction, including 9.6 GW of Renewable Energy (RE) capacity.

- The company has set the target of achieving **60 GW** of RE capacity by **2032**.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

President's Rule Imposed in Manipur, After CM Biren Singh's Resignation

On February 13 2025, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) imposed **President's Rule** in **Manipur** following the resignation of Chief Minister (CM) **N Biren Singh**. This marks the **11th** instance of President's Rule being imposed in the state since its formation in 1951.



- The last instance occurred between June 2, 2001, and March 6, 2002, lasting 277 days.

Resignation:

i.**N Biren Singh** resigned on **February 9, 2025**, nearly 21 months after ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities began in May 2023, which resulted in over 250 deaths and the displacement of thousands.

ii.He submitted his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal, Manipur.

iii.He served as the 12th CM of Manipur from March 15 2017 to February 8 2025.

Political Instability and Constitutional Deadlines:

i.Due to the growing political instability, the **Manipur Assembly**,with a tenure lasting until 2027 was placed under suspended animation.

ii.According to **Article 174(1)** of the Indian Constitution, state Assemblies must convene within 6 months of their last session.

iii.The Manipur Assembly was required to reconvene by February 12, 2025, as the last session was held on August 12, 2024.

What is the President's Rule?

i.Under **Article 356** of the Indian Constitution, President's Rule suspends the state government, and the

Governor assumes executive powers on behalf of the President of India.

ii. Under President's Rule, the elected state government is dissolved, and its powers are suspended.

iii. The **Governor** takes over as the executive **head of the state**, managing the administration on behalf of the President of India.

iv. The Governor functions under the guidance of the Union Council of Ministers, headed by the **PM**.

v. President's Rule remains in effect for up to 6 months, with the possibility of extension for a maximum of **3 years**, but only with approval from Parliament every six months and under special conditions after the 1st year.

Points to Note:

i. Since 1950, President's Rule has been imposed **134 times** across 29 states and Union Territories (UTs).

ii. Manipur and Uttar Pradesh (**UP**) have seen the most frequent impositions, while Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) holds the record for the longest duration, exceeding 12 years.

About Manipur:

Governor- Ajay Kumar Bhalla

Capital- Imphal

National Park- Keibul-Lamjao National Park, Sirohi National Park

ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

ONGPL Acquires 100% Stake in Ayana Renewable Power for Rs 19,500 Crore

In February 2025, New Delhi(Delhi) based ONGC NTPC Green Private Limited (**ONGPL**), a 50:50 joint venture (JV) between Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Limited and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Limited, has made its first major investment by acquiring a **100%** stake in Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based **Ayana Renewable Power Private Ltd** for Rs 19,500 crore (USD 2.3 billion).

- The Share Purchase Agreement(SPA) was signed at **India Energy Week** in New Delhi between ONGPL and Ayana's Renewable Power previous stakeholders, National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (**NIIF**) headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra, British International Investment Plc (**BII**) based in London, United Kingdom (UK) and its subsidiaries, and **Eversource Capital** based in Mumbai.
- It is the second-largest acquisition in India's renewable energy(RE) sector, following Adani Green Energy Limited's(AGEL) 2021 purchase of SoftBank's RE assets in India for Rs.26,000 crore.

i. The acquisition aligns with ONGC's and NTPC's net-zero targets for 2038 and 2050, respectively, with ONGPL planning to utilize Ayana's platform for further expansion in the sector.

ii Ayana Renewable Power currently has a portfolio of 4 gigawatts (GW) of operational and under-construction assets.

SPORTS

Asian Winter Games 2025: China Dominates, India Ends Medal-Less

The **9th Asian Winter Games**(Harbin 2025), held in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China, from February 7 to February 14, 2025, marked a significant milestone in the promotion of winter sports across Asia.

- Organized by the Olympic Council of Asia (**OCA**) and supported by the International Skating Union (**ISU**), the event brought together athletes from **34** countries.
- Asian Winter Games 2025 featured 64 events across 11 winter sports disciplines.

Note: 9th Asian Winter Games mascots are “Binbin” and “Nini,” tigers and the motto is “Dream of Winter, Love among Asia”.

China's Dominance:

China **topped** the medal tally with **32 Gold**, 27 Silver, and 26 Bronze medals, total 85 medals.

- Republic of Korea secured the **second** position with 16 Gold, 15 Silver, and 14 Bronze medals, total 45 medals.



- Japan followed closely with 10 Gold, 12 Silver, and 15 Bronze medals, total 37 medals, excelling in short-track speed skating and skiing.

India's Performance:

India had sent their largest contingent of 59 athletes to the Asian Winter Games 2025.

- India ended its campaign without any medals but showcased potential through its athletes.
- Tara Prasad, India's skater, delivered a personal best performance, finishing 8th in the women's skating event.

New Entrants:

Saudi Arabia participated in alpine skiing & snowboarding and **Cambodia** participated in cross-country skiing, marking their first appearance in the Asian Winter Games.

Top 5 Medal Tally :

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	China	32	27	26	85
2	Republic of Korea	16	15	14	45
3	Japan	10	12	15	37
4	Kazakhstan	4	9	7	20
5	Philippines	1	0	0	1

Note: Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines all won Asian Winter Games medals for the first time.

Next Host:

Saudi Arabia officially received the flag of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), as the host of the 10th Asian Winter Games (NEOM) in 2029, becoming the first country in West Asia to host the continental sporting event.

About People's Republic of China

President – Xi Jinping

Capital – Beijing

Currency – Chinese Renminbi or Yuan (CNY)

OBITUARY

Renowned Classical Singer Pandit Prabhakar Karekar Passes Away

In February 2025, renowned Hindustani classical singer **Pandit Prabhakar Karekar** passed away in Mumbai, Maharashtra at the age of 80. He was born in 1944 at Lingakaden, Fatorda (then known as Mhadd) in Goa.

- He was known for his soulful singing, especially in devotional songs like Bolava Vithal Pahava Vithal and Vakratund Mahakay.

i. Besides being a remarkable performer, he was also a dedicated teacher. A graded artist with All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan (DD), he gained a nationwide audience.

ii. Prabhakar Karekar is the founder and Chairman of the Swarprabha Trust.

iii. Throughout his career, he received many prestigious awards, including the **Tansen Samman**, **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award**, and **Gomant Vibhushan Award**, recognizing his contributions to classical music.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Childhood Cancer Day 2025 – February 15

International Childhood Cancer Day (ICCD) is a global collaborative campaign, observed annually on **15 February** across the globe to raise awareness about childhood cancer, highlighting its distinct challenges, and to show solidarity with children and adolescents fighting cancer, as well as with survivors and their families.



Campaign:

- The 3-year campaign of ICCD (2024-2026) aims to address the challenges faced by childhood cancer patients, caregivers, survivors and health care professionals worldwide.
- The campaign theme of ICCD 2025 is **"Inspiring Action"**.
 - The campaign theme of ICCD 2026 is "Demonstrating Impact" and the campaign theme of ICCD 2024 is "Unveiling Challenges".

Background:

- ICCD is an annual event established in 2002 by Childhood Cancer International (CCI), a global umbrella organization for national and grassroots childhood cancer parent groups.
 - The first-ever ICCD was observed on **February 15, 2002**.



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ii. The ICCD campaign is a collaborative initiative between CCI and the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP) or Société Internationale d'oncologie Pédiatrique (SIOP).

Note: The International SIOP was founded on **November 6, 1969**, by a group of specialists at the Institut Gustave-Roussy in Paris, France with a mission to advance childhood cancer research and treatment.

Symbol:

i. The **gold ribbon** serves as the universal symbol for childhood cancer awareness, representing all forms of cancer affecting children and adolescents.

ii. **Gold** was chosen for this symbol because it reflects the preciousness of children, highlighting their value and the importance of supporting them through their cancer journey.

What is Cancer:

i. Cancer is a group of diseases characterized by the uncontrolled growth which occurs in any organ of the body and spread of abnormal cells through the blood and lymphatic systems.

ii. **Common types** include lung, breast, prostate, colorectal, and skin cancer, with **lung cancer** being the deadliest worldwide due to its high mortality rate.

Global Challenge:

i. According to the CCI, more than **400,000 children** and adolescents **under 20** are diagnosed with cancer globally each year.

ii. Survival rates vary significantly by region, with an **80%** survival rate in most High-Income Countries (HICs), while in Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), the rate is as low as 20%.

iii. In the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR), over 70% of children diagnosed with cancer in 2022 succumbed to the disease.

iv. Globally, approximately 275,000 new cases of cancer are diagnosed annually in children aged 0–19 years.

v. The most prevalent types include leukaemias, lymphomas, and central nervous system tumours, with incidence rates peaking at ages 0–4 and 15–19.

WHO Initiative:

i. The WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer (GICC), launched in 2018, aims to eliminate pain and suffering for children battling cancer and to achieve at least a 60% survival rate for all children diagnosed worldwide by **2030**.

ii. Currently, about 80% of children with cancer in HICs are successfully treated and survive.

National Challenge:

i. The Indian Cancer Society (ICS), India's first voluntary organization dedicated to supporting children with cancer, reports that over **50,000 new cases** of childhood cancer are diagnosed annually in India.

ii. While survival rates in Western countries reach 80-90% for certain cancers, even a conservative estimate of **70% survival** in India indicates that many childhood cancer survivors are added to the population each year.

2025 Events:

On February 15, 2025, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (**IARC**) commemorated ICCD by releasing a series of videos highlighting the "Targeting Childhood Cancer through the Global Initiative for Cancer Registry Development (**ChildGICR**)" project and the ChildGICR Masterclass in Lyon, France.

About Childhood Cancer International (CCI):

CCI is a global network of 183 organizations, including parent groups, childhood cancer survivor associations, support groups, and cancer societies, spanning **94 countries** across 5 continents.

President– João de Bragança

Headquarters– Amsterdam, Netherlands

Established– 1994

World Pangolin Day 2025 – February 15

World Pangolin Day is observed annually on the **third Saturday of February** to celebrate pangolins or the scaly anteater, the most unique mammals on Earth and raise awareness about their conservation. The day aims to highlight the critical threats faced by these unique mammals, primarily due to illegal poaching and trafficking for their scales and meat.



- In 2025, World Pangolin Day falls on **15th February 2024** marking the observance of the **14th World Pangolin Day**.
- The 13th World Pangolin Day was observed on 17th February, 2024 and the 15th World Pangolin Day will be observed for February 21, 2026

Background:

- The **first-ever** World Pangolin Day was celebrated in **February 2012** and has since gained international recognition from animal welfare organizations and individuals around the globe.
- The day serves as a powerful reminder of the urgent need to protect pangolins and raise awareness about their endangered status.

About Pangolins:

- Pangolins**, also known as scaly anteaters, get their name from the Malay word “**penggulong**,” meaning “**roller**,” which refers to their unique **self-defence behavior** of curling up into a tight ball when threatened.
- These creatures are the only mammals fully covered in scales made of **keratin**, the same material found in human nails.
- With their distinct **armor-like appearance** and curled-up defence mechanism, pangolins stand out in the animal kingdom.
- As insectivores, they help control insect populations, particularly ants and termites, by consuming them in large quantities.
- Pangolins **lack teeth** but have large curved claws for digging and a long, sticky tongue often longer than their body to retrieve insects.

Species of Pangolins:

- There are **8 different species** of pangolins, distributed across **Asia** and **Africa**.
- 4 species in Asia:** Chinese (Manis pentadactyla), Sunda (Manis javanica), Indian (Manis crassicaudata), and Philippine pangolins (Manis culionensis).
 - The Sunda pangolin, also known as the Malayan or Javan pangolin, was found throughout South-East Asia (SEA).
- 4 species in Africa:** Temminck’s Ground (Smutsia temminckii), Giant Ground (Manis gigantea), White-bellied (Phataginus tricuspis), and Black-bellied pangolins (Phataginus tetradactyla).
 - They live across the whole of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and was found as far south as Botswana and the Kalahari.

iv. Known locations: Brunei, Cambodia, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, the Lesser Sunda Islands, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam. There are Indian and Chinese species, too.

Conservation Status of Pangolin Species:

i. All 8 species are listed as threatened with extinction on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

ii. The 2019 assessment by the Species Survival Commission (SSC) Pangolin Specialist Group categorized them as follows.

iii. Critically Endangered: Chinese (*Manis pentadactyla*), Sunda (*Manis javanica*), and Philippine (*Manis culionensis*) pangolins.

iv. Endangered: Indian (*Manis crassicaudata*), Giant (*Manis gigantea*), and White-bellied (*Phataginus tricuspis*) pangolins.

v. Vulnerable: Temminck's Ground (*Smutsia temminckii*) and Black-bellied (*Phataginus tetradactyla*) pangolins.

Pangolin Trafficking and Conservation Efforts:

i. Pangolins are the most trafficked mammals globally, with an estimated **one million** individuals illegally harvested in the past decade.

ii. In China and Vietnam, pangolin scales are falsely believed to treat conditions like skin diseases and rheumatism, fueling the illegal trade of pangolins and their scales.

iii. Nigeria and other African nations hunted and consumed pangolins as bushmeat, contributes to their declining populations.

iv. In 2023, Nigeria took a stand against wildlife trafficking by publicly incinerating USD 1.4 million worth of seized pangolin scales.

v. From November to December 2024, a massive global operation against wildlife trafficking led to the seizure of nearly 20,000 live animals and the arrest of 365 suspects.

- Among the seized items were 12 live pangolins and over 4,472 kilograms (kg) of pangolin scales in Nigeria.

International Measures to Combat Trafficking:

i. CITES Appendix I: Pangolins are listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) by the IUCN Red List.

ii. International Trade Ban (CoP17): In 2016, the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP17), held in Johannesburg, South Africa (SA) saw the introduction of a global commercial trade ban for all 8 species of pangolins.

iii. CoP19: In 2022, the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19) held in Panama City (Panama), CITES urged countries to remove references to pangolin parts and derivatives from official pharmacopoeia.

Species in India:

i. India is a home of **2 species** of pangolins- Chinese Pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*) found in north-eastern India and Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) were distributed in other parts of the country (Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan).

ii. The 2 species are protected & are listed under the Schedule I Part I of the **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** and under Appendix I of the CITES.

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