

# AffairsCloud Daily Scoop



English



## 21 FEBRUARY

## 2025

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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



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## AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY

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## Hand Written Notes

### NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)

- Highlights  $\xrightarrow{\text{Of}}$  Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani  $\xrightarrow{\text{Visit to}}$  India  
Prime Minister of Qatar
- $\rightarrow$  India-Qatar Joint Business Forum  $\xrightarrow{\text{Organized by}}$  CII & DPIIT (MoC&I)  $\xrightarrow{\text{Held}}$  New Delhi
- $\rightarrow$  Qatar  $\xrightarrow{\text{To invest}}$  USD 10 billion  $\xrightarrow{\text{In}}$  India  $\xrightarrow{\text{For}}$  Infrastructure, technology, manufacturing, food security, logistics, & hospitality
- $\rightarrow$  Qatar National Bank  $\xrightarrow{\text{Established}}$  An office  $\xrightarrow{\text{In}}$  GIFT City  
Gujarat
- $\rightarrow$  MoUs signed b/w 2 countries
- CEPA  $\xrightarrow{\text{To}}$  Double bilateral trade to USD 28 billion by 2030
- Invest India + Invest India  $\xrightarrow{\text{For}}$  Mutual investment opportunities & bilateral economic growth
- CII (India) + QBA  $\xrightarrow{\text{To}}$   $\uparrow$  Commercial ties between private sectors of both nations
- Cooperation in Youth and Sports  $\xrightarrow{\text{For}}$  Youth development & sports collaboration

CII - Confederation of Indian Industry

DPIIT - Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

MoC&I - Ministry of Commerce and Industry

GIFT - Gujarat International Finance Tec-City

CEPA - Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

QBA - Qatari Businessmen Association

2)

- India + Argentina  $\xrightarrow{\text{To}}$   $\uparrow$  Cooperation in Lithium Exploration & Mining

3)  
Released  
NSO → 25th Quarterly Bulletin of PLFS → For Q3 of FY 2025  
MoSPI

Urban	Persons >= 15 years	Males >= 15 years	Females >= 15 years
UR	↓ to 6.4% ↻ 6.5% (Q3 FY24)	5.8%	↓ to 8.1% ↻ 8.6 % (Q3 FY24)
LFPR	↑ to 50.4% ↻ 49.9%	↑ to 75.4% ↻ 74.1%	↑ to 25.2% ↻ 25.0%
WPR	↑ to 47.2% ↻ 46.6%	↑ to 70.9% ↻ 69.8%	↑ to 23.2% ↻ 22.9%

NSO - National Statistics Office

MoSPI - Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

PLFS - Periodic Labour Force Survey

UR - Unemployment Rate

LFPR - Labour Force Participation Rate

WPR - Worker Population Ratio

4)  
Launched To During  
MeitY → DBIM → Create a unified & consistent digital brand → 1st CIO Conference 2025  
all ministries, departments, & agencies of Govt New Delhi

MeitY - Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

DBIM - Digital Brand Identity Manual

Govt - Government of India

CIO - Chief Information Officer

5)  
28th GBBC → Total number of bird species in India → ↑ To 1,068 (2025) ↻ 1,036 (2024)  
Highest number of bird species in India → West Bengal → 543 species  
(3rd consecutive year) With

GBBC - Great Backyard Bird Count

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)

Brazil → To become Member of Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries plus  
(Total members - 22)

Note: Brazil to host 30th United Nation Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Nov 2025

## BANKING & FINANCE

1)

Karnataka Bank → Celebrated 101st Founders' Day → Released Rs 100 commemorative coin



For women to define their own success, whether as homemakers, professionals, or entrepreneurs

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2)

IRDAI → Launched Bima-ASBA → A payment mechanism via UPI Effect from March 1, 2025



To allow OTM to block funds in policyholder's bank a/c for premium payments

For max. of 14 days

IRDAI - Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India

Bima-ASBA - Bima-Applications Supported by Blocked Amount

UPI - Unified Payments Interface

OTM - One-Time Mandate

3)

Federal Bank → Launched Prospera NRE Savings Account → For NRIs, PIO, OCIs

NRE - Non-Resident External

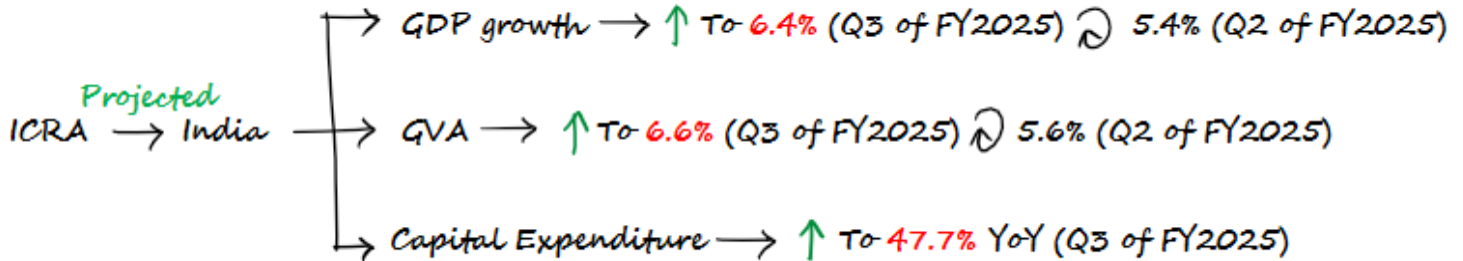
NRI - Non-Resident Indian

PIO - Persons of Indian Origin

OCI - Overseas Citizens of India

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1)



GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GVA - Gross Value Added

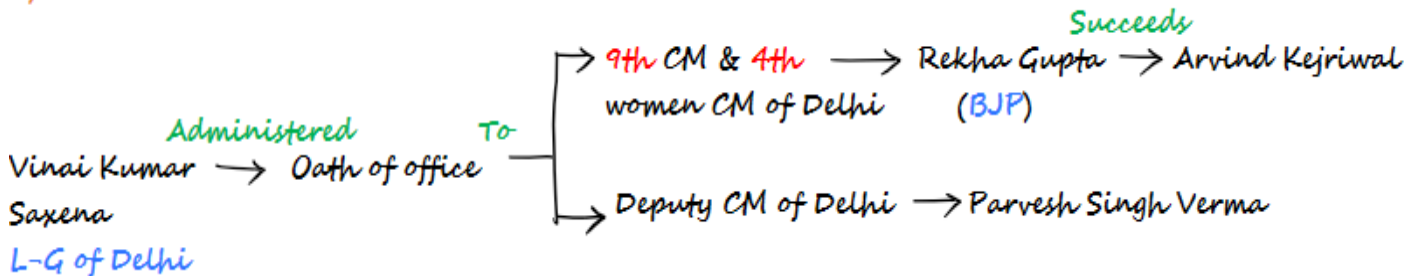
YoY - Year-over-Year

2)

Godrej Enterprises Group + Bisiach & Carru <sup>For</sup> → Advanced railway & aerospace equipment manufacturing  
*Italy*

## APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

1)



L-G - Lieutenant Governor

CM - Chief Minister

BJP - Bharatiya Janata Party

2)

MD & CEO of SBICPSL → Salila Pande <sup>Succeed</sup> → Abhijit Chakravorty <sup>Tenure</sup> → 2 years <sup>Effect from</sup> → April 1, 2025

MD - Managing Director

CEO - Chief Executive Officer

SBICPSL - SBI Cards and Payment Services Limited

SBI - State Bank of India



## AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

1)

Released  
Forbes → 5th "Top 10 Richest Women in the World in 2025" list

### Lists of Top 5 Richest Women in the World

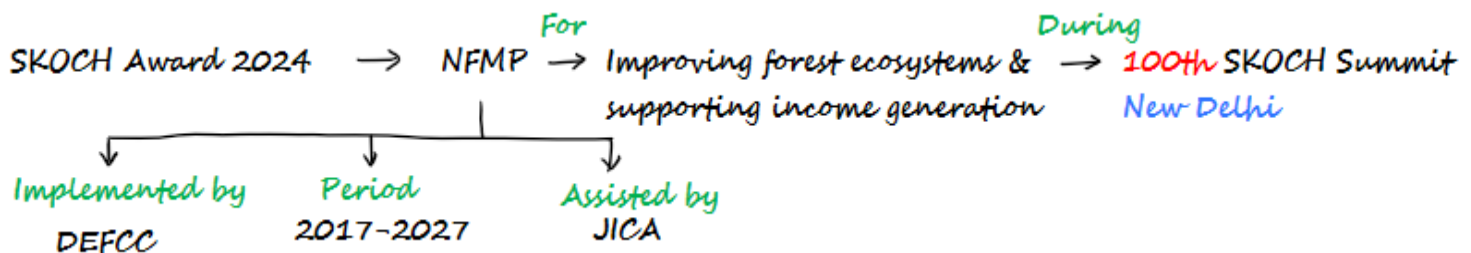
Rank	Name	Net Worth (USD)	Source of Wealth	Country
1	Alice Louise Walton	112.5 billion	Walmart Inc.	USA
2	Francoise Bettencourt Meyers & Family	74.4 billion	L'Oréal SA	France
3	Julia Margaret Flesher Koch & Family	74.2 billion	Koch Inc.	USA
4	Jacqueline Mars	42.3 billion	Mars Inc.	USA
5	Rafaella Aponte-Diamant	39.0 billion	MSC SA	Italy
7	Savitri Devi Jindal	32.3 billion	JSW Group	India

JSW - Jindal South West

USA - United States of America

MSC - Mediterranean Shipping Company

2)



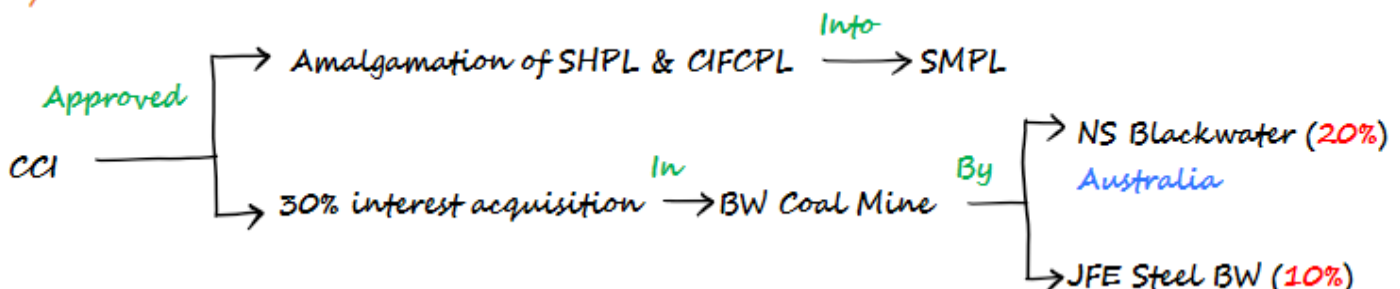
NFMP - Nagaland Forest Management Project

DEFCC - Department of Environment, Forests & Climate Change

JICA - Japan International Cooperation Agency

## ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

1)



CCI - Competition Commission of India

SHPL - Svatantra Holdings Private Limited

CIFCPL - Chaitanya India Fin Credit Private Limited

SMPL - Svatantra Microfin Private Limited

BW - Blackwater

NS - Nippon Steel

### IMPORTANT DAYS

1)

20 February → World Day of Social Justice <sup>Observed</sup> → United Nations

- <sup>Theme</sup> "Strengthening a Just Transition for a Sustainable Future"
- <sup>Aim</sup> To highlight the importance of social justice worldwide
- <sup>1st</sup> observed on Feb 20, 2009

USA - United States of America

### STATE NEWS

1)

<sup>2nd</sup> Simoluh Festival → Celebration of Bombax <sup>From</sup> February 15 <sup>Held</sup> → Nagaon, <sup>to 16, 2025</sup> Assam  
Ceiba flowers  
(Simul or Silk Cotton trees)

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## Less Important NEWS

- [Dhrab and Bhopavandh become Kutch's first fully solar villages under Adani Foundation's Suryaghar Yojana](#)
- [WHO launches USD 1.5 billion Health Emergency Appeal to tackle unprecedented global health crises](#)
- [Aurum and Jupiter Money Revolutionize Bank Lockers with Strategic Partnership](#)
- [CCI fines Goldman Sachs manager Rs 40 lakh over Biocon deal failure](#)
- [Haveus Aerotech gets DGCA approval for cargo handling-related maintenance](#)

## Detailed Content

### Current Affairs 21 February 2025: Headlines



**AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY**

**ENGLISH**

**Unemployment rate dips to 6.4% in Oct-Dec 2024, labour market sees steady gains: NSO data**





**Rekha Gupta takes oath as Delhi CM**  
**Parvesh Verma as deputy CM**

**CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**21 FEBRUARY 2025**

- Overview of Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani's visit to India from February 17 to 18, 2025
- 25th Quarterly Bulletin PLFS by NSO: India's Urban Unemployment Rate Slightly Decreased to 6.4% in Q3FY25
- India & Argentina signed MoU to Strengthen Cooperation in Lithium Exploration and Mining
- MeitY Unveils Digital Brand Identity Manual to Standardize Government Websites & Digital Platforms
- 28th GBBC: WB Lead in India's Bird Count for 3rd Consecutive Year
- Brazil to Join Major Oil-Exporting Nations in OPEC+ Group
- Karnataka Bank Celebrated its 101st Founders' Day by Launching Two New Products
- IRDAI Launches Bima-ASBA to Make Insurance Premium Payment Easier via UPI
- Federal Bank Launches Prospera NRE Savings Account for NRIs
- ICRA estimates India's GDP Growth to Rise to 6.4% in Q3 FY2025
- Godrej Partners with Bisiach & Carru for Advanced Railway, Aerospace Equipment
- Forbes' Top 10 Richest Women in the World in 2025: USA's Alice Louise Walton Tops, India's Savitri Devi Jindal Ranks 7th
- Nagaland Forest Management Project receives the SKOCH Award
- Rekha Gupta Sworn-in as 4th Women CM of Delhi, Parvesh Verma Sworn-in as Deputy CM
- SBI Cards Appoints Salila Pande as MD & CEO
- CCI approved the amalgamation of SHPL and CIFICPL into SMPL
- World Day of Social Justice 2025 – February 20
- 2nd edition of Simolu Festival held in Assam



## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

### Overview of Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani's visit to India from February 17 to 18, 2025

The Amir of Qatar, His Highness (HH) **Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani** visited India from **February 17 to 18, 2025**, at the invitation of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi. This visit marked his 2nd bilateral trip to India, following his first official visit in March 2015. He was accompanied by high-level delegations, including Ministers, Senior Officials and a Business Delegation.



- During his visit, he engaged in significant discussions with Indian President **Droupadi Murmu** and PM **Narendra Modi** in New Delhi (Delhi).
- As part of his visit, both countries signed several pivotal agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (**MoUs**), ranging from strategic partnerships and economic cooperation to cultural and energy exchanges.

### Highlights of the Visit:

#### India-Qatar Joint Business Forum:

i. On the sidelines of the visit, the Confederation of Indian Industry (**CII**), New Delhi (Delhi) in partnership with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (**DPIIT**), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I) organized the '**India-Qatar Joint Business Forum**' on February 18 2025 in New Delhi (Delhi).

ii. **Key People:** Union Minister, Piyush Vedprakash Goyal, MoC&I and His Excellency (HE) Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal Al Thani, Minister of Commerce and Industry, State of Qatar and key leaders of both nations attended the forum.

iii. Union Minister Piyush Goyal reaffirmed India's ambition to become a **USD 30-35 trillion** economy by **2047**, aligning with the 'Viksit Bharat' vision.

iv. **Bilateral Cooperation:** Focused on discussions on collaboration beyond hydrocarbons, targeting sectors like Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum computing, Internet of Things (IoT), and semiconductors.

v. **Bilateral Trade Growth:** India became Qatar's 3rd largest trading partner, with bilateral trade surpassing USD 15 billion in Financial Year 2023-24 (FY24).

- The 2 countries have seen an increase in investment flows, with Qatar ranking among the top 3 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) investors in India.

vi. **Ecosystem Collaboration:** Union Minister of State (MoS), Jitin Prasada, MoC&I invited Qatari businesses to participate in the Startup Mahakumbh 2025, an initiative to deepen collaborations in the tech and innovation space.



**vii.Qatar's Investment:** Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) and Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP) were identified as key pillars to attract global investments, while the Qatar Free Zone (QFZ) aims to drive investments across sectors.

### Key Outcomes of the visit:

**i.Elevation to Strategic Partnership:** The bilateral relationship between India and Qatar was elevated to a Strategic Partnership, setting the stage for deeper cooperation across various sectors.

**ii.Bilateral Mechanisms:** Two Joint Ministerial Commissions were established at the levels of Foreign Ministers and MoC&I to facilitate closer cooperation.

### iii.Trade and Investment:

- **Qatar's Investment Commitment:** Qatar committed to investing **USD 10 billion in India**, focusing on key areas such as infrastructure, technology, manufacturing, food security, logistics, and hospitality.
- **Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) Office :** QIA announced plans to open an office in India.
- **Bilateral Trade Target:** Both nations set a target to double bilateral trade by 2030, reflecting their ambition for deeper economic integration.
- **FTA:** The two sides agreed to explore the possibility of an India-Qatar Free Trade Agreement (FTA). India and Qatar signed a strategic partnership agreement, enhancing ties in trade, investment, energy, and security.
- **Operationalization of UPI:** India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) was operationalized at Qatar National Bank (QNB) Point of Sale systems in Qatar, further integrating financial systems.
- **Expansion of Qatar National Bank:** Qatar National Bank (QNB) will expand its presence in India by establishing an office in the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) City, Gujarat (India).

### iv.Other Initiatives:

- **e-VISA Extension:** India extended its electronic -Visitors International Stay Admission (**e-VISA**) facility for Qatari nationals, further facilitating ease of travel and enhancing people-to-people ties.
- **Year of Culture, Friendship, and Sports:** India and Qatar agreed to celebrate a 'Year of Culture, Friendship, and Sports' to foster closer cultural and sporting ties in the near future.

**Note:** Qatar is the largest supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to India, accounting for over 40% of India's global LNG imports

### List of Agreements/MoUs Signed:

During the Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani's visit to India, Qatar and India signed two agreements and five MoUs.

**i.Agreement on Establishment of Bilateral Strategic Partnership:** India and Qatar agreed to explore the possibility of entering into a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (**CEPA**) with an aim to double bilateral trade to **USD28 billion by 2030**.

- PM and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani and External Affairs Minister(EAM) S Jaishankar exchanged the agreement in New Delhi.

**ii.Revised Double Tax Avoidance Agreement (DTAA):** An updated agreement on tax matters between the 2 countries to enhance fiscal cooperation.

- PM of Qatar and Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Ministry of Finance(MoF) exchanged the agreement at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi.

**iii.MoU on Financial and Economic Cooperation:** Signed between India's Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Qatar's Ministry of Finance to strengthen financial and economic collaboration.

**iv.MoU for Cooperation in Youth and Sports:** Signed between India's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) and Qatar's Ministry of Sports and Youth, focusing on youth development and sports collaboration.

**v. MoU for Cooperation in Documents and Archives:** Signed between New Delhi based National Archives of India (NAI) and Qatar's National Archives, aimed at enhancing archival and document cooperation.

**vi. MoU for Cooperation between Invest India and Invest Qatar:** Signed between Nivruti Rai, Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of e National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of India (Invest India), Sheikh Ali bin Alwaleed Al Thani, CEO of Invest Qatar to facilitate mutual investment opportunities and fostering bilateral economic growth.

**vii. MoU between CII (India) and Qatari Businessmen Association (QBA) (Qatar):** Promoting business collaboration and fostering stronger commercial ties between the private sectors of both nations.

#### **About Qatar:**

**Prime Minister (PM)**– Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani

**Capital**– Doha

**Currency**– Qatari Riyal (QAR)

### **25th Quarterly Bulletin PLFS by NSO: India's Urban Unemployment Rate Slightly Decreased to 6.4% in Q3FY25**

The National Statistics Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) launched its **25th Quarterly Bulletin of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**, which presents data for the period October – December 2024 (Q3) for the Financial Year (FY) 2024-25.



- As per the data, **India's urban Unemployment Rate (UR)** in Current Weekly Status (CWS) among **persons aged 15 years and above** decreased to **6.4%** during **Q3 FY25** from 6.5% during Q3 FY24.
- UR among males aged 15 years and above remained the same at **5.8%** during Q3 FY24 and Q3 FY25 and the UR among females aged 15 years and above decreased to **8.1%** in Q3 FY25 from 8.6 % in Q3 FY24.

#### **Note:**

**i. UR** is defined as the percentage of unemployed persons among the persons in the labour force.

**ii.** The activity status determined based on a reference period of the last 7 days preceding the date of the survey is known as the **CWS** of the person.

#### **Key Findings:**

**Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** LFPR is defined as the percentage of persons in the labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.

**i.** Overall **LFPR** in urban areas (for individuals aged 15 years and above) **increased** to **50.4%** in Q3 FY25 from 49.9% in Q3 FY24.

**ii.** **Male LFPR** increased to **75.4%** from 74.1%, and the **Female LFPR** in urban areas **increased** slightly to **25.2%** from 25.0%, showing an overall rising trend.

**Worker Population Ratio (WPR):** WPR is defined as the percentage of employed persons in the population.



i. Overall **WPR** for urban areas among individuals aged 15 and above, **increased** to **47.2%** in Q3 FY25 from 46.6% in Q3 FY24.

ii. **Male WPR** rose to **70.9%** from 69.8%, indicating an increase in male employment and the **Female WPR** has also **increased** to **23.2%** from 22.9%.

- The workers in the CWS are classified into 3 broad categories according to their status in employment namely: Self-employed, Regular wage/salaried employee, and Casual labour.

#### **PLFS Fieldwork (Q3FY25):**

i. For the **Q3 FY25**, the survey covered **5,742 FSUs** (urban sampling units curved out from the Urban Frame Survey) in urban areas across India.

ii. The number of urban households surveyed was 45,074 and the number of persons surveyed was 1,70,487 in urban areas.

- Urban Frame Survey Blocks (UFS) are the smallest area units taken as FSUs in urban areas for PLFS.

#### **About the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS):**

The **NSO** launched the **PLFS** in **April 2017** to provide labour force data at more frequent intervals. Its objectives include:

i. Estimating key employment and unemployment indicators, such as the LFPR, WPR, and UR in urban areas every 3 months under CWS.

#### **About the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI):**

Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge (IC))- Rao Inderjit Singh (Constituency: Gurgaon, Haryana)

### **India & Argentina signed MoU to Strengthen Cooperation in Lithium Exploration and Mining**

On February 19, 2025, **India** and **Argentina** formalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in **lithium** exploration and mining.



- The agreement was formalised during the meeting chaired by the Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, Ministry of Coal(MoC) and Ministry of Mines(MoM) and H.E. Raúl Alejandro Jalil, Governor of Catamarca, Argentina, in New Delhi, Delhi.
- The agreement, signed between Nagpur(Maharashtra) based **Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited** (MECL), a Public Sector Undertaking(PSU) under the Ministry of Mines(MoM), and Argentina's **Catamarca Provincial Government**.

#### **Objective:**

To strengthen collaboration in critical mineral resource development, particularly lithium, a key component for electric vehicle (EV) batteries and renewable energy(RE) storage.

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### Key Highlights of the Partnership:

**i.Strategic Resource Security:** Argentina, part of the “Lithium Triangle” (with Chile and Bolivia), holds over 50% of global lithium reserves. This collaboration aims to diversify India’s lithium supply chain, reducing reliance on China.

**ii.Ongoing Projects:** New Delhi based Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) and Greenko are already engaged in lithium exploration in Catamarca. The MoU will expand India’s participation through long-term supply agreements and infrastructure investments.

- In 2024, KABIL and Argentina’s CAMYEN (Catamarca Minera y Energética Sociedad del Estado) signed USD 200 million project for exclusive exploration rights to five lithium brine blocks (15,703 hectares) in Catamarca.
- It marked India’s first government-led lithium mining initiative abroad, granting exploitation rights post-discovery.

**iii.Sustainable Practices:** Emphasis on eco-friendly mining, knowledge exchange, and regulatory frameworks to ensure mutual benefits.

### Economic and Geopolitical Implications

**i.Energy Transition:** Lithium access supports India’s 500 Gigawatt (GW) RE target by 2030 and EV adoption goals

**ii.Latin American Outreach:** Strengthens India’s foothold in Latin America, fostering trade diversification and geopolitical alliances

#### About Argentina:

**President** –Javier Gerardo Milei

**Capital** – Buenos Aires

**Currency** – Argentine Peso (ARS)

### MeitY Unveils Digital Brand Identity Manual to Standardize Government Websites & Digital Platforms

On 18 February 2025, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (**MeitY**) released the Digital Brand Identity Manual (**DBIM**) to standardize government websites and digital platforms.



- The DBIM was launched by Union Minister of State(MoS) **Jitin Prasada**, MeitY, during the inaugural Chief Information Officer (**CIO**) **Conference 2025** in New Delhi, Delhi.
- As part of the ‘**Gov.In the: Harmonization of Government of India’s Digital Footprint**’ initiative, the DBIM aims to provide a unified online presence for all ministries, departments, and agencies.

### Key people:

The launch event was attended by key officials, including S. Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY; Sanket S Bhondve, Joint Secretary, MeitY; Indian Police Service (IPS) Sethi, Director General (DG), National Informatics Centre (NIC); and Alka Misra, Deputy DG, NIC.

### About Digital Brand Identity Manual (DBIM):

- i. The DBIM aims to create a unified and consistent digital brand for the Government of India (GoI) by defining key elements of digital identity, including visual components such as logos, colour palettes, typography, and imagery, as well as verbal identity aspects like brand voice, messaging frameworks, and taglines.
- ii. This project is part of a larger effort to improve the accessibility, usability, and compliance of government services with the most recent digital standards.
- iii. This toolkit is powered by **Bhashini's** multilingual support which streamlines content discovery and service access for everyone by making government apps more user-friendly, compliant, and accessible in all official languages.
- iv. DBIM is an extensive guide designed to fulfil the government's particular requirements for creating a consistent visual identity across all of its digital channels.
- v. It aimed at ensuring digital harmonization by improving the recall value for the citizens and facilitating simplified citizen interactions for easy discovery of content and services.
- vi. This manual serves as a blueprint for aligning the different digital platforms of GoI, including websites, web apps, mobile apps, and social media, under a unified brand language.

### Other Launches:

During the event, the MeitY also launched several critical components to harmonize India's digital presence:

- DBIM Toolkit for ensuring uniformity in digital identity.
- Gov.In Content Management System (CMS) Platform for streamlined website management.
- Central Content Publishing System (CCPS) for centralized content governance.
- Social Media Campaign Guidelines to standardize digital communication.
- DBIM-compliant MeitY website, demonstrating a consistent and citizen-friendly digital experience.

### 28th GBBC: WB Lead in India's Bird Count for 3rd Consecutive Year

In February 2025, West Bengal (WB) recorded the highest number of bird species across 37 states and union territories (UTs) in India, with **543** species, topping the national list for the **third consecutive year**. This achievement came during the **28th** annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), one of the world's largest birding events, held from February 14 to February 17, 2025.



- According to preliminary results, the total number of bird species in India increased to **1,068** in 2025, up from 1,036 in 2024. Additionally, the number of checklists (a list of birds that one can see, hear, or identify) submitted from India reached 44,300 in 2025.
- In the GBBC India 2025 rankings, WB led with the highest number of species, followed by **Uttarakhand** in second place with 446 species. Other states in the list include Assam with 414

species, Karnataka with 380 species, Maharashtra also with 414 species, and Kerala with 342 species.

### Key Highlights:

- i. In 2025, WB uploaded 1,909 checklists, a slight decrease from the 2,223 entries in 2024. Kerala topped India in terms of checklists, with 9,856 entries.
- ii. Darjeeling topped the WB list with the highest number of species, recording 252 species, which is lower than last year's total of 308 species.
- iii. South 24 Parganas emerged as the top district in WB with 513 checklists. Last year, however, Darjeeling (WB) held the top spot with 342 checklists.

### About Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC):

- i. The GBBC is an annual global bird-watching event held every February, where bird enthusiasts from around the world count and report the bird species they observe through eBird, an online platform. This initiative helps monitor bird populations and biodiversity on a global scale.
- ii. It was launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society in the United States of America (USA)
- iii. India joined the GBBC for the first time in 2013, with 200 participants taking part in the event.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### Brazil to Join Major Oil-Exporting Nations in OPEC+ Group

In February 2025, **Brazil's** government approved its membership in Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+) plus, a coalition of 22 major oil-producing nations, marking a significant move for the country. Brazil was officially invited to join in 2023.



- The 'National Council for Energy Policy' (Conselho Nacional de Política Energética, **CNPE**) authorized the move, marking a key step in Brazil's emergence as a significant contributor in the global oil market.
- This decision comes ahead of Brazil's role as the host of the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (**COP30**) in November 2025.

**Note:** As of January 2025, OPEC+ has 22 member countries.

### Key Points:

- i. Brazil's participation in OPEC+ is limited to the Charter of Cooperation (**CoC**), a forum for oil-producing countries to discuss production strategies.
- ii. Brazil is the **7th-largest** oil producer globally, producing approximately 4.3 million barrels per day, which accounts for 4% of global oil output.
  - In **2024**, crude oil became Brazil's top export, contributing **13.3%** to the country's foreign sales, surpassing its soy exports.

### What is OPEC?

i.OPEC is an intergovernmental organization established in September 1960 in Baghdad, Iraq, with an agreement signed by 5 founding nations: the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia (SA), and Venezuela.

ii.Its main goal is to align petroleum policies among members to maintain stable prices, ensure reliable supply to consumers, and offer fair returns to investors.

iii.As of January 2025, OPEC comprises 12 member countries, including Saudi Arabia (SA), Venezuela, Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Algeria, Nigeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, and the Republic of the Congo.

### What is OPEC+?

i.OPEC+ refers to a coalition of OPEC member countries and 10 other major oil-producing nations that have agreed to collaborate on oil production targets to influence global oil prices.

- The non-OPEC countries which export crude oil are termed as **OPEC +** countries.

ii.This alliance was formalized in **2016** and includes countries such as Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan, Sudan with **Russia** being the largest non-OPEC member.

iii.OPEC consists solely of its 12 member countries, while OPEC+ includes these members plus additional non-OPEC oil-producing nations.

### About Brazil:

**President**– Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

**Capital**- Brasília

**Currency**- Brazilian Real (BRL)

## BANKING & FINANCE

### Karnataka Bank Celebrated its 101st Founders' Day by Launching Two New Products

On 18 February 2025, **Karnataka Bank Limited (KBL)** celebrated its 101st Founders' Day, marked over a century of the bank's operations, by launching two new products '**KBL Stri**' and '**KBL One Family Banking Programme**'. It also introduced a savings account for children and a high-interest term deposit scheme.



- During the ceremony, KBL released a **Rs 100** commemorative coin and a special **postal stamp**, and it has expanded its branch with 15 new branches in various locations.
- The bank also released 101 symbolic lapel pins, launched new products, and presented Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) commitment letters to three eligible beneficiaries.
- In addition to these, KBL inaugurated a centenary building and two museums which showcase the KBL's 100-year journey at its headquarters in Mangaluru( Karnataka).



### Key People:

P Pradeep Kumar, chairman of KBL; Srikrishnan K, managing director(MD) and Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) of KBL and spiritual leader Sadguru Madhusudan Sai were present at the event.

### About KBL Stri:

'KBL Stri' is a savings bank account that enables women to determine their success, whether they are homemakers, professionals, or entrepreneurs.

- It has two accounts namely, **Signature** account and **Premium** account.

### Signature Account:

- The signature account requires a monthly average balance of **Rs 5,000**.
- It offers various benefits, including one domestic lounge per quarter with National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) RuPay Platinum Domestic Debit Card with free issuance.
- It also provides personal accident insurance coverage up to **Rs 2 lakh** and home shield insurance coverage of **Rs 10 lakh**.

### Premium Account:

- The premium account requires a monthly average balance of **Rs 25,000**.
- It offers a range of exclusive benefits like one domestic lounge access per quarter and two international lounge accesses per year with the NCMC RuPay Platinum International Debit Card with free issuance and Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC).
- The programme provides personal accident insurance coverage of up to **Rs 2 lakh** and home shield insurance coverage of **Rs 10 lakh**, ensuring financial security.
- The programme also includes cancer indemnity coverage of **Rs 25 lakh**, along with access to health consultations and medical checkups, including pap smear tests.

### About KBL One Family Banking Programme:

'KBL One Family Banking Programme' is a banking solution that connects the family under a single Identification(ID), providing personalized advantages, shared privileges, and seamless access.

### About Karnataka Bank:

Managing Director (**MD**) & Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) – Srikrishnan Harihara Sarma

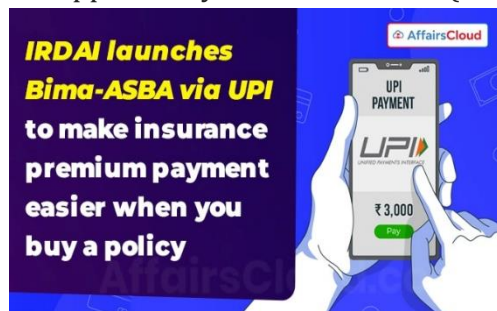
**Headquarters** – Mangaluru, Karnataka

**Established** – 1924

**Tagline** – Your Family Bank Across India

### IRDAI Launches Bima-ASBA to Make Insurance Premium Payment Easier via UPI

In February 2025, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) allowed a One-Time Mandate (**OTM**) on Unified Payments Interface (**UPI**) for insurance companies through a new payment mechanism called Bima-Applications Supported by Blocked Amount (**Bima-ASBA**).



- The initiative intends to simplify the payment procedure for life and health insurance policies, allowing policyholders to block funds in their bank accounts for premium payments, assuring seamless transactions without rapid debits.
- This new payment mechanism will be effective from **March 1, 2025**.

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**About Bima-Applications Supported by Blocked Amount (Bima-ASBA):**

- i. Bima-ASBA requires the prospect to transfer money to the insurer only when an insurance coverage is granted.
- ii. In this facility, insurers can offer an OTM for blocking a certain amount in the bank account for the concerned prospect via UPI.
- iii. The amount for the insurance premium will be deducted when the insurer chooses to accept the proposal. If the insurer does not accept the plan, the funds will be unblocked and released.
- iv. The blocked funds remain in the policyholder's account until an underwriting decision is reached. The premium will be deducted after the insurance is issued.
  - If rejected, the funds will be immediately unlocked within **one business day**. The block is valid for up to **14 days**, or until the underwriting decision is reached.
- v. Insurers have been requested to send a proposal form to policyholders through a standard declaration to block the amount using UPI.
- vi. UPI-OTM service helps in multiple scenarios when the consumer chooses to authorize a block on money rather than direct debits, allowing for quicker transaction processing.

**About the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI):**

IRDAI was constituted as an autonomous body in 1999 and later incorporated as a statutory body in April 2000.

**Chairman-** Debasish Panda

**Headquarters** – Hyderabad, Telangana

**Federal Bank Launches Prospera NRE Savings Account for NRIs**

On February 19, 2025, Aluva (Kerala)-based **Federal Bank Limited**, an Indian Private Sector Bank (PVB) has launched a new savings account called “**Prospera Non-Resident External (NRE) Savings Account**” an exclusive banking solution designed for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Persons of Indian Origin (PIO), and Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs).

- This account offers attractive benefits, including complimentary insurance benefits worth Rs 60 lakh, competitive interest rates, special reward points for debit card expenditures, etc.
- The insurance coverage is provided by Mumbai, Maharashtra based TATA AIG General Insurance Company Limited.
- The customers of Prospera NRE Savings Account must maintain an Average Monthly Balance (AMB) of Rs 25,000 and this balance can be maintained in either the NRE Prospera Savings Account alone or in the NRE Prospera and Non-Resident Ordinary (NRO) accounts together (with a maximum of one NRO account permitted).
- The account follows the Savings Bank (SB) interest rate slab of Federal Bank, and it comes with a Mastercard Prospera Debit Card. There are no Account Maintenance Charges (AMC) for Prospera NRE Savings Account holders.

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

**ICRA estimates India's GDP Growth to Rise to 6.4% in Q3 FY2025**

In February 2025, Gurgaon, Haryana based **ICRA Limited** (formerly Investment Information and Credit Rating Agency of India Limited), one of the most experienced Credit Rating Agencies in India, has projected **India's** Gross Domestic Product (GDP) **growth to rise to 6.4%** in the October – December 2024 Quarter (Q3), from 5.4% in Q2 of the Financial Year (FY) 2025, supported by increased government spending.



- However, the growth rate is projected to stay below Q1 FY2025 levels, with GDP lagging behind Gross Value Added (GVA) for the third consecutive quarter.
- The GVA growth is estimated to record a broad-based improvement to 6.6% in Q3 from 5.6% in Q2 of FY2025, driven by the Industrial: 6.2% (up from 3.6%); Services: 7.7% (up from 7.1%); and Agricultural: 4.0% (up from 3.5%) sectors.
- The Government of India's (GoI) Capital Expenditure (CapEx) rose 47.7% (from 10.3%) YoY in Q3 FY2025, the highest in 6 quarters.
- Aggregate capital outlay and net lending of 24 state governments (excluding Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, and Manipur) grew 9.9% Year-over-Year (YoY), up from 7.0% in Q2.
- Service exports hit an all-time high of USD 36.9 billion in December 2024, with Q3 exports rising 17.5% YoY. Merchandise exports rebounded with a YoY growth of 3.3%, reversing the 4.3% contraction in Q2.

### **Godrej Partners with Bisiach & Carru for Advanced Railway, Aerospace Equipment**

**Godrej Enterprises Group** has announced its partnership with the Italian automation specialist **Bisiach & Carru** on 17th February 2025 for manufacturing advanced **railway** and **aerospace** equipment in the country.

- The aim of the collaboration with the tooling business of **Godrej & Boyce** is to boost cost competitiveness, efficiency, quality, and technological innovation in critical industries.

It aligns with the **Make in India** initiative to become self-reliant in critical sectors and will initially work upon higher local manufacturing content and would expand with the increase in capabilities.

The partnership will involve the development of advanced equipment including developed **robotic spot-welding systems** that would increase the quality and efficiency of production.

- Moreover, the development of **high-precision jigs and fixtures** will enhance the accuracy in coach manufacturing, the specialized automated technologies will meet India's specific manufacturing needs and **assembly machinery** will help in achieving international quality standards.

## **AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS**

### **Forbes' Top 10 Richest Women in the World in 2025: USA's Alice Louise Walton Tops, India's Savitri Devi Jindal Ranks 7th**

In February 2025, Forbes India released its 5th Edition of the ["Top 10 Richest Women in the World in 2025"](#) list, highlighting the significant wealth amassed by women across different sectors.

- **Alice Louise Walton**, the daughter of United States of America (USA) based Walmart Inc. founder Sam Walton, has secured the **top position** globally with a net worth of **USD 112.5 billion**.
- India's **Savitri Devi Jindal** and Family claimed the **7th position**, with a net worth of USD 32.3 billion, from the JSW (Jindal South West) Group.



- The women billionaires in the list have accumulated significant wealth through a wide array of industries such as retail, cosmetics, energy, finance, and technology, each leading their family's companies to global prominence.

**Points to Note:**

i. The top 10 wealthiest women worldwide, as highlighted by Forbes, have established themselves as powerful leaders across various industries, with their combined net worth exceeding USD 500 billion (approximately).

ii. According to the Forbes Billionaire List 2024, women now account for **3%** of the global billionaire population in 2024.

**Lists of Top 5 Richest Women in the World:**

Rank	Name	Net Worth (USD)	Source of Wealth	Country
1	Alice Louise Walton	112.5 billion	Walmart Inc.	The United States of America (USA)
2	Francoise Bettencourt Meyers & Family	74.4 billion	L'Oréal SA	France
3	Julia Margaret Flesher Koch & Family	74.2 billion	Koch Inc.	USA
4	Jacqueline Mars	42.3 billion	Mars Inc.	USA
5	Rafaela Aponte-Diamant	39.0 billion	Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) SA	Italy
7	Savitri Devi Jindal	32.3 billion	JSW (Jindal South West) Group	India

**Highlights:**

i. **Alice Louise Walton** (USA) secures the top spot with a net worth of **USD 5 billion** (approximately Rs. 8.40 lakh crore), daughter of Walmart founder Sam Walton, her wealth is primarily derived from her family's retail giant, **Walmart Inc.**



- ii. **Françoise Bettencourt Meyers** (France) ranks 2nd holding a net worth of USD **74.4 billion** (approximately Rs.5.55 lakh crore) and the granddaughter of L'Oréal's SA founder Eugène Paul Louis Schueller. She oversees the global cosmetics giant **L'Oréal S.A.**, contributing significantly to her fortune.
- iii. **Julia Margaret Flesher Koch** (USA) ranks 3rd with a combined wealth of USD **74.2 billion** (approximately Rs.5.53 lakh crore), along with her family, controls **Koch Inc.**, one of the largest privately-held companies in the USA with diverse interests in chemicals, energy, and finance.
- iv. **Jacqueline Mars** (USA) ranks 4th valued at USD **42.3 billion** (approximately Rs.3.15 lakh crore). She is an heir to the **Mars Inc.** fortune, the global food and candy company behind iconic brands such as M&M's and Snickers.
- v. **Rafaela Aponte-Diamant** (Italy) ranks 5th, holding a net worth of USD **39.0 billion** (approximately Rs.2.91 lakh crore), through **MSC SA** controls one of the world's largest container shipping companies, contributing to her wealth.
- vi. **Abigail Pierrepont Johnson** (USA) ranks 6th with USD **36.0 billion** (approximately Rs.2.70 lakh crore). She is the chairman of **Fidelity Investments**, a financial services giant specializing in investment management, retirement planning, and brokerage services.
- vii. **Savitri Devi Jindal & Family** (India) ranked 7th have a net worth of USD **32.3 billion** (approximately Rs.2.43 lakh crore). The wealth comes from **JSW Group**, one of India's largest industrial conglomerates with interests in steel, energy, and infrastructure.
- viii. **MacKenzie Scott** (USA) ranked 8th, with a net worth of USD **32.3 billion** (approximately Rs.2.43 lakh crore), the ex-wife of Amazon founder Jeffrey Preston Bezos, made her fortune through **Amazon.com Inc** and continues her philanthropic efforts with major charitable donations.
- ix. **Miriam Adelson & Family** (USA) hold the 9th spot, valued at USD **31.5 billion** (approximately Rs.2.36 lakh crore). Their wealth comes from their stake in **Las Vegas Sands Corp**, a leading global casino and resort company.
- x. **Marilyn Simons & Family** (USA) ranks 10th holding USD **31.0 billion** (approximately Rs.2.32 lakh crore). The wealth is primarily derived from their ownership of **Simons Capital Management Inc**, a private hedge fund.

#### About Forbes India:

**Editor-** Suveen Sinha

**Headquarters-** Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Established-** 2009

#### **Nagaland Forest Management Project receives the SKOCH Award**

**Nagaland Forest Management Project** (NFMP) was awarded with the prestigious **SKOCH Award 2024** for improving forest ecosystems and supporting income generation.

- The award was presented on **15th February 2025** as part of the **100th SKOCH Summit** held at Silver Oak Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.
- It was received by **Ango Konyak**, Deputy Project Director, NFMP along with **Wennyei Konyak**, Resident Commissioner Nagaland House, New Delhi on behalf of the Department of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (DEFCC), Government of Nagaland (GoN).

The NFMP is a project implemented by **DEFCC**, Government of Nagaland and is assisted by **Japan International Cooperation Agency** (JICA).

The project aims to improve forest ecosystems and income generation by re-establishing **Jhum areas** and supporting livelihoods through village specific interventions carried out by Joint Forest Management Committees.

- The timeline of the project is **2017-2027** and will cover **185 villages** in **11 districts** and **22 Forest Ranges**.

- It aims to cover an area of **79,096 hectare** under Forest Intervention and to form **555 Self Help Groups (SHGs)** to enhance livelihood.

The SKOCH Award is one of the highest independent honors given to states and organizations since **1997** in the field of governance, technology, economics and social sector for their dedicated and independent outcome-based assessment process.

## **APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS**

### **Rekha Gupta Sworn-in as 4th Women CM of Delhi, Parvesh Verma Sworn-in as Deputy CM**

On 20 February 2025, **Rekha Gupta**, Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP) leader, took oath as the **9th Chief Minister** (CM) of Union Territory (UT) of Delhi at Ramlila Maidan, New Delhi, Delhi. She succeeded Atishi Marlena Singh.



- She has also become **Delhi's fourth woman CM**, following Sushma Swaraj, Sheila Dikshit, and Atishi Marlena Singh
- Along with her, six cabinet ministers were sworn in, including **Parvesh Singh Verma**, who took oath as the **Deputy CM**.
- Lieutenant Governor (L-G) of Delhi **Vinai Kumar Saxena** administered oath of office and secrecy to the CM and the ministers at the function.

**Note:** This marks the end of the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s 10-year rule.

**Key Attendees:** The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Prime Minister **(PM)** of India **Narendra Modi**; Union Minister **Amit Shah**, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA); BJP President **Jagat Prakash (JP) Nadda**, and several BJP-led state CMs, including those from Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh (AP).

#### **Background:**

i. In 2025 Delhi assembly elections, the BJP won 48 seats out of the 70 total seats while AAP won 22 seats.

ii. She met LG VK Saxena to stake claim to form the government after BJP legislators picked her as the CM.

#### **About Rekha Gupta:**

i. Born on July 19, 1974, in Nandgarh village, Jind district of Haryana, Rekha Gupta had started her **political career** as a student by joining Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (**ABVP**), the student wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (**RSS**).

ii. She served as the **President** of the Delhi University Students' Union (**DUSU**) for the 1996-1997 term.

iii. In 2000, she joined the BJP and served as the National Secretary of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (**BJYM**) from 2004 to 2006.

iii. She served as the President of the Women's Welfare and Child Development Committee in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) from 2007 to 2009.

- She was elected a councillor from North Pitampura in 2007 and re-elected in 2012. She also served as the mayor of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC).

iv. In 2025 assembly elections, she won the Shalimar Bagh Assembly (one of the seventy Delhi assembly constituencies) seat as a first-time Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA).

**About Delhi:**

Chief Minister (CM)- Rekha Gupta

Lieutenant (Lt.) Governor- Vinai Kumar Saxena

Capital- New Delhi

**SBI Cards Appoints Salila Pande as MD & CEO**

In February 2025, SBI Cards and Payment Services Limited, SBICPSL (SBI Cards), a subsidiary of State Bank of India (SBI), announced **Salila Pande** as its new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with effect from April 1, 2025, for a period of two years.

- Salila Pande will succeed **Abhijit Chakravorty**, who will retire from SBI on March 31, 2025. She is currently working as a Chief General Manager (CGM) at SBI.

i. She began her banking career as a Probationary Officer (PO) with SBI in 1995.

ii. She has gained extensive experience through various positions across the Bank in several locations.

iii. She has served in important roles as the President and CEO of SBI California (the United States of America, USA), Vice President – Mid Office at SBI Singapore, and Deputy General Manager (DGM) (Business and Operations) in Delhi.

## ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

**CCI approved the amalgamation of SHPL and CIFCPL into SMPL**

In February 2025, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) granted approval for the amalgamation of Mumbai (Maharashtra) based Svatanttra Holdings Private Limited (SHPL), and Bengaluru (Karnataka) based Chaitanya India Fin Credit Private Limited (CIFCPL), a Non-Banking Financial Company – Micro Finance Institution (NBFC-MFI) into Mumbai (Maharashtra) based Svatanttra Microfin Private Limited (SMPL), an NBFC-MFI.



- This amalgamation will take place as per the Scheme of Amalgamation agreed upon by SHPL, CIFCPL, SMPL, and their respective shareholders, with approval from the boards of directors.
- As a result of this merger, Svatanttra Micro Housing Finance Corporation Limited (SMHFCL), a NBFC Housing Finance Company (NBFC HFC) (Middle Layer) based in Mumbai, Maharashtra, will become a wholly owned subsidiary of SMPL.

**Key Points:**

i. SHPL is involved in investing in equity shares, preference shares, and other securities. It is an unregistered Core Investment Company in terms of Core Investment Companies (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2016.

ii. CIFCPL and SMPL provide microfinance and personal loans to low-income individuals and households in rural and semi-urban areas.

iii. SMHFCL provides secured housing loans to low-income rural and urban families, loans against property, and loans to corporations/institutions for construction and real estate projects.

### CCI approves interest acquisition in BW Coal Mine by NS Blackwater and JFE Steel

In February 2025, the CCI approved the acquisition of a combined 30% interest in Queensland, (Australia) based **Blackwater (BW) Coal Mine** by NS Blackwater Proprietary Limited, an Australian subsidiary of Japan-based Nippon Steel (NS) Corporation and JFE Steel Australia (BW) Pty Limited, a subsidiary of JFE Holdings, Inc

- Under the approved deal, **NS Blackwater** will acquire a **20%** interest, while **JFE Steel BW** will take a **10%** interest in the BW Coal Mine, an open-cut mining operation in Queensland, Australia.

#### Key Point:

i. NS Blackwater and JFE Steel BW are newly formed special-purpose vehicles created for the proposed combination, while BW Coal Mine imports and supplies coking coal.

ii. The acquisition aligns with India's growing demand for high-quality coking coal, a key raw material in steel production.

#### About Competition Commission of India (CCI):

It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA), responsible for enforcing the Competition Act, 2002.

**Chairman** – Ravneet Kaur

**Headquarters** – New Delhi (Delhi)

**Established** – 2003

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### World Day of Social Justice 2025 – February 20

The United Nations (UN's) **World Day of Social Justice** is observed annually on **February 20** across the globe to highlight the importance of social justice worldwide. This day raises awareness about critical issues such as poverty alleviation, employment, gender equality, and access to essential services like education, healthcare, and social services.



- It also advocates for the promotion of social security, equality, human rights, and fundamental freedoms for all.
- The theme for World Day of Social Justice 2025: “**Strengthening a Just Transition for a Sustainable Future**” focusing on the importance of inclusive policies and social protection in addressing systematic inequality.

#### Background:

i. On November 26, 2007, during its 62nd session, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution **A/RES/62/10**, declaring February 20th of each year as World Day of Social Justice.



ii. The first-ever World Day of Social Justice was observed on **February 20, 2009**.

#### **ILO's Commitment to Social Justice:**

i. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization was unanimously adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on **June 10, 2008**.

- This marks the 3rd major statement of principles and policies endorsed by the International Labour Conference (ILC) since the 1919 ratification of the ILO Constitution.

ii. Building upon the 1944 Philadelphia Declaration and the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the 2008 Declaration outlines the ILO's current understanding of its mandate in the context of globalization.

#### **Significance:**

i. The **ILO** plays a key role in fostering social justice through its 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

ii. This declaration expands on earlier **ILO frameworks** and places the **Decent Work Agenda** at the forefront of the organization's policies.

iii. World Day of Social Justice aligns with the broader mission of the UN's to promote human dignity and development.

#### **What is Social justice?**

i. **Social justice** refers to the fair and just distribution of resources, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

ii. Social justice promotes human dignity, equity, and the protection of human rights for all.

#### **2025 Events:**

i. On February 20, 2025, the UN's Headquarters in New York, United States of America (USA) hosted a conference titled "**Strengthening a Just Transition for a Sustainable Future**," addressing inclusive climate policies and social justice.

- The conference was convened by the Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the UNs and the ILO, in collaboration with the Division for Inclusive Social Development at the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

ii. The ILO organized **5 global events**, focusing on advancing social justice in collaboration with International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and UN DESA.

iii. The initiative "Bridging Gaps and Building Alliances" was launched to address social justice deficits and accelerate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Decent Work Agenda.

iv. **Publications:** The UN Secretary-General (SG) António Guterres and ILO Director-General (DG), Gilbert F. Houngbo issued statements on World Day of Social Justice 2025, and the ILO's "Social Security for All" publication focused on investing in social justice and economic development.

#### **Evolution of Social Justice in India:**

i. **India** has observed World Day of Social Justice annually since **2009** and the vision is rooted in India's independence movement and the Constitution, which guarantees equality, dignity, and justice for all citizens, particularly marginalized communities.

#### **ii. Constitutional Foundations:**

- **Preamble:** Guarantees social, economic, and political justice, equality of status and opportunity, and promotes fraternity to uphold dignity and national unity.
- **Fundamental Rights** (Part III): Articles 23 and 24 prohibit human trafficking, forced labour, and child labour in hazardous occupations, protecting vulnerable groups from exploitation.
- **Directive Principles of State Policy** (Part IV): Articles 37-46 focus on reducing social and economic inequalities, ensuring equal livelihoods, fair wages, and special promotion for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and other marginalized groups.

iii. In 1998, the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MSJE) was formed, focusing on building an inclusive society for marginalized groups.

**Initiatives launched by the Indian Government :**

i. **Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY):** The scheme launched in 2021-22 to uplift SC communities through skill development, income generation, and infrastructure in Schedule Caste dominated villages.

ii. **Scheme for Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas (SRESHTA):** The scheme, launched in 2023, aims to bridge service gaps in Schedule Caste dominant areas by supporting grant-in-aid institutions and high-quality residential schools. It provides financial assistance to top Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)/State Board-affiliated private schools for SC students in classes 9 and 11, ensuring education till class 12.

iii. **Purple Fests:** The Festival of Inclusion have been organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MSJE), since 2023.

iv. **National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE):** It is a Central Sector Scheme launched in FY 2023-24 as a joint initiative of the MSJE and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). It aims to ensure the safety, dignity, and sustainable livelihood of sanitation workers in urban India.

v. **Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood & Enterprise (SMILE):** It is a comprehensive initiative aimed at the rehabilitation of transgender individuals and persons engaged in begging. Its primary objective is to create a 'Bhiksha Vritti Mukh Bharat' (Begging-free India) by ensuring the reintegration of beggars into mainstream society.

vi. **PM-DAKSH Yojana:** The Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi Yojana (PM-DAKSH Yojana) launched in 2021, aims to enhance the skill levels of marginalized communities. The scheme, with a budget of Rs. 450.25 crore (2021-26), provides short-term and long-term training to facilitate wage and self-employment, ensuring at least 70% placement.

**Note:** In the Union Budget 2025-26, the Government of India (GoI) allocated Rs 13,611 crores to the MSJE, a 6 percent increase from 2024-25, to ensure saturation coverage of welfare schemes.

**About International Labor Organization (ILO):**

Director-General (DG) – Gilbert Fossoun Hounbo (Togo)

**Headquarters** – Geneva, Switzerland

**Established** – 1919

## STATE NEWS

### 2nd edition of Simolu Festival held in Assam

The 2nd edition of the **Simolu Festival**, a vibrant celebration of the stunning **Bombax Ceiba flowers**, was held from February 15 to 16, 2025, in Nagaon, Assam. This festival celebrates nature, culture, and community, attracting nature enthusiasts, cyclists, and culture lovers to enjoy the beautiful simolu track.

- The Simolu Festival revolves around the majestic Bombax Ceiba trees, also known as **Simul** or **Silk Cotton trees**, which burst into bloom with striking red flowers.
- A central **theme** of the Simolu Festival is fostering a deeper understanding of the environment, especially among young people.

i. The two-day event was organised by Nagaon Wildlife Division under Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (Assam), showcased the region's rich cultural heritage through traditional performances, ethnic cuisine, and community activities.

ii. The festival included a 20 kilometer (km) cyclothon and a nature orientation program for school students.

iii. The event also highlights the importance of preserving Assam's biodiversity, which is under threat from various environmental challenges.

## Aspirant Queries

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

**Affairscloud:** We Guaranteed All the Important topics related to examination are covered in Our Daily CA content and Daily CA Quizzes.

**Aspirant:** Why is there a delayal in news?

**Affairscloud:** As some of the major news sites doesn't provide the required data on the exact day, we take extra time for important data to be presented to the aspirants on the examination basis to ensure nothing is missed.

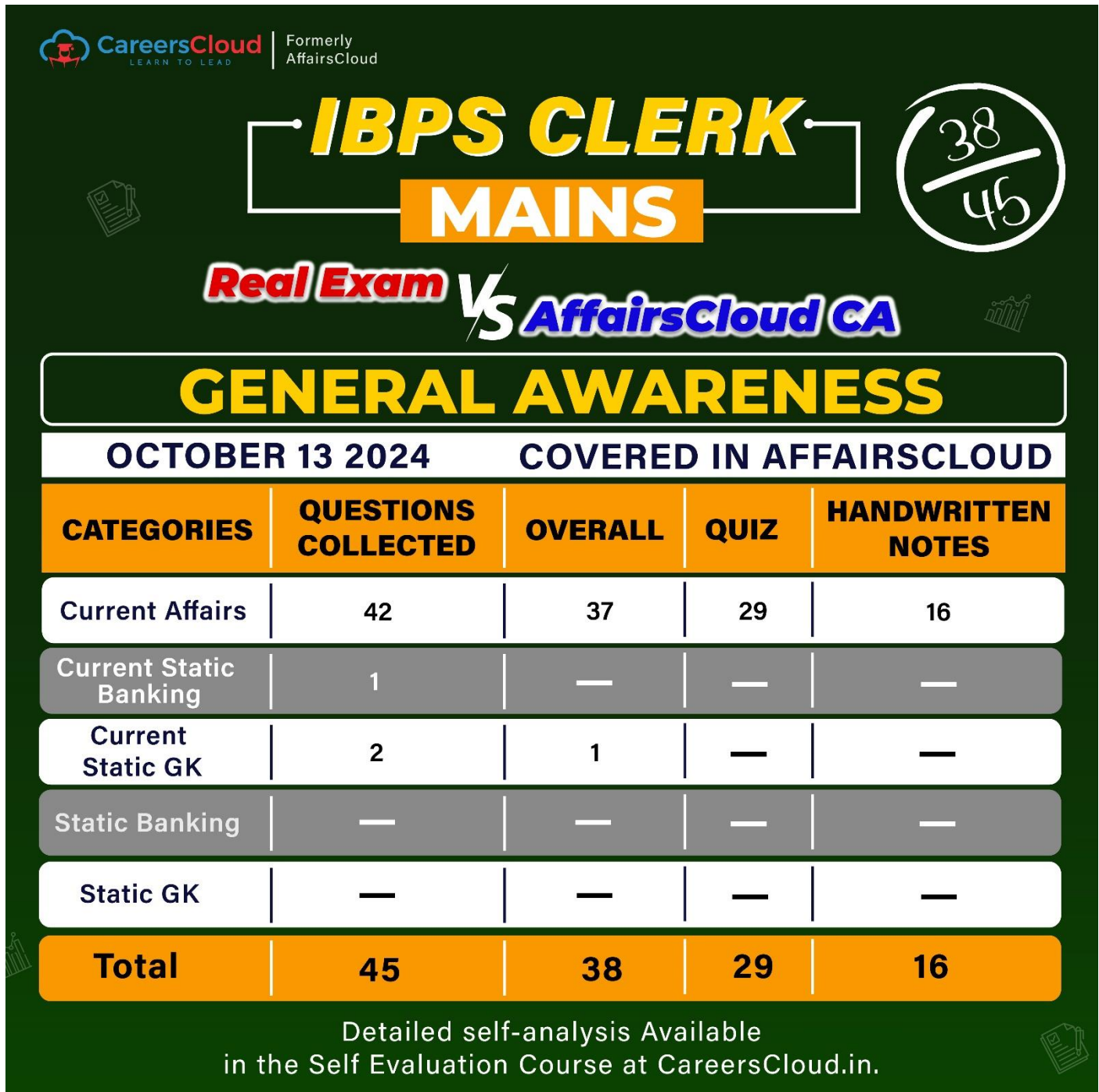
**Example:** In 'Important Days' topics the International Organisations publish their reports and Rankings in the evenings, to make sure every data is covered, we delay the topics to the next day Candidates appearing for Competitive Exams. Kindly Share the General Awareness questions, which asked in their respective exams to “[gaanalysis.ac@gmail.com](mailto:gaanalysis.ac@gmail.com)”

## GA Questions Asked in Exams

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

**Most Trusted Source!!!!** Since 2014, nearly 85% of the questions in the General Awareness section on Bank Exams have been covered by [Affairscloud@Careerscloud](https://Affairscloud@Careerscloud).

**Detailed Analysis of GA Questions asked in IBPS Clerk Mains Exam 2024:**





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# Current Affairs

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