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14 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

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PIB News



February 29 2024 PIB News - English
Article



February 28 2024 PIB News - English
Article

AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY

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Hand Written Notes

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)

NITI Aayog ^{Report} → Expanding Quality Higher Education through States & State Public Universities

^{Findings} ↓

Top Performing States in GER in HEIs in 2021-22 (Achievers category)

Tamil Nadu
Himachal Pradesh
Uttarakhand
Kerala

Worst Performing States in GER in HEIs in 2021-22 (Front-runners category)

Sikkim,
Andhra Pradesh
Karnataka

Top states with Higher Education budgets as % of GSDP

Bihar
Jammu and Kashmir
Manipur

Top state spending for education as % of GDP

Jammu and Kashmir
Manipur
Meghalaya

Universities of states with lowest PTR

Tamil Nadu
Goa
Karnataka

Universities of states with highest PTR

Jharkhand
Bihar

Top Performing States in decadal improvement in PTR

Arunachal Pradesh
Uttarakhand
West Bengal

NITI - National Institution for Transforming India

GER - Gross Enrolment

HEI - Higher Education Institution

GSDP - Gross State Domestic Product

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

PTR - Pupil-Teacher Ratio

2)

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana Under → MNRE Completed → 1 year
(World's largest domestic rooftop solar initiative)

→ Aim - To provide free electricity of 300 units per month to 1 crore households in India by March 2027

→ Budget - Rs 75,021 crore

→ Duration - Till FY 2026-27

→ Implemented by - NPIA (National level), SIA (State level)

→ Subsidy - Upto 40%

Average Monthly Electricity Consumption (units)	Suitable Rooftop Solar Plant Capacity	Subsidy
0-150	1-2 kW	Rs 30,000 to Rs 60,000
150-300	2-3 kW	Rs 60,000 to Rs 78,000
> 300	> 3 kW	Rs 78,000

→ Collateral-Free Loans → 7% interest for RTS systems up to 3 kW

→ Progress

→ As of Jan 2025, 8.46 lakh households benefited through rooftop solar installations

→ Got disbursed Rs 4,308.66 cr as CFA to 5.54 lakh residential consumers

→ Top 5 states with highest number of households benefited

1. Gujarat
2. Maharashtra
3. Uttar Pradesh
4. Kerala
5. Rajasthan

PM - Prime Minister

MNRE - Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

NPIA - National Programme Implementation Agency

SIA - State Implementation Agency

kW - kilowatt

RTS - Residential rooftop solar

CFA - Central Financial Assistance

3)

Issued
DPIIT → Stainless Steel Seamless Pipes & Tubes QCO 2025
MoC&I

To → Prevent import of sub-standard goods

Effect from → Aug 1, 2025

About ↓

- Mandatory Bureau of Indian Standards mark
- Manufacturers are permitted to import up to 500 kg of goods for R&D
- Penalty - 2 years imprisonment or Rs 2 lakh fine (1st offence)

DPIIT - Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

MoC&I - Ministry of Commerce and Industry

QCO - Quality Control Order

R&D - Research and development

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)

Released
Transparency International → Corruption Perceptions Index 2024
Germany

Topped by → Denmark

Placed → India at Rank 96 (Out of 180)

Top 5 Countries:

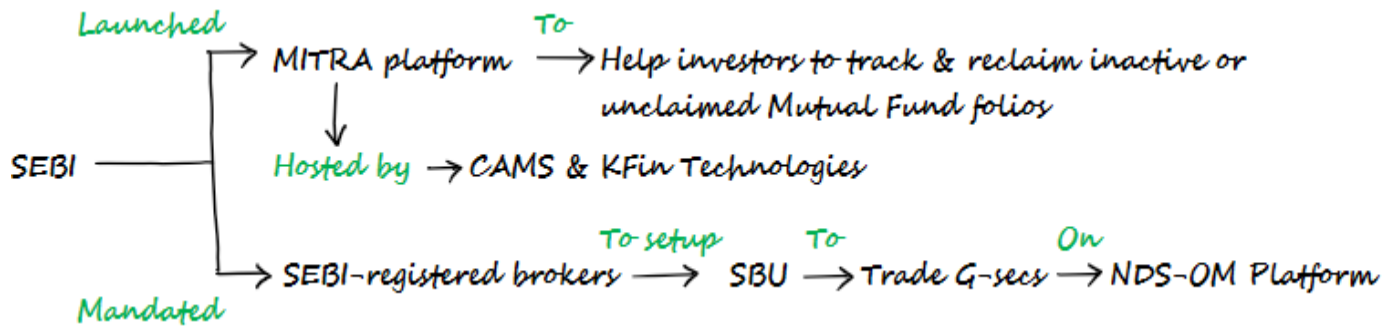
Rank	Country	Score
1	Denmark (7th consecutive time)	90
2	Finland	88
3	Singapore	84
4	New Zealand	83
5	Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland	81
96	India, Gambia, Maldives	38

Bottom 3 Countries:

180	South Sudan	8
179	Somalia	9
178	Venezuela	10

BANKING & FINANCE

1)



SEBI - Securities and Exchange Board of India

MITRA - Mutual Fund Investment Tracing and Retrieval Assistant

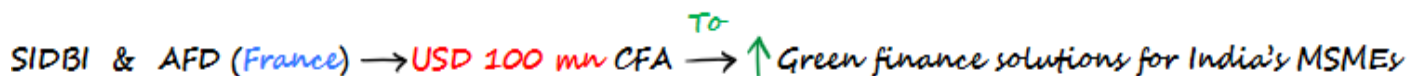
CAMS - Computer Age Management Services Limited

SBU - Separate business unit

G-secs - Government Securities

NDS-OM - Negotiated Dealing System Order Matching

2)



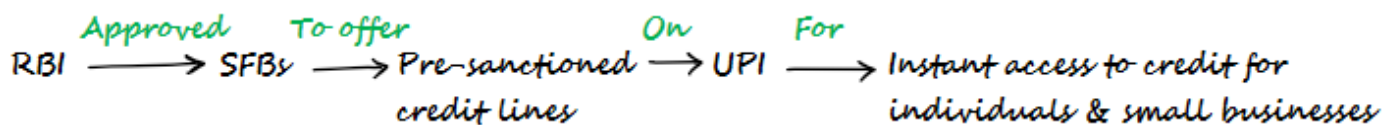
SIDBI - Small Industries Development Bank of India

AFD - Agence Française de Développement

CFA - Credit Facility Agreement

MSME - Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise

3)

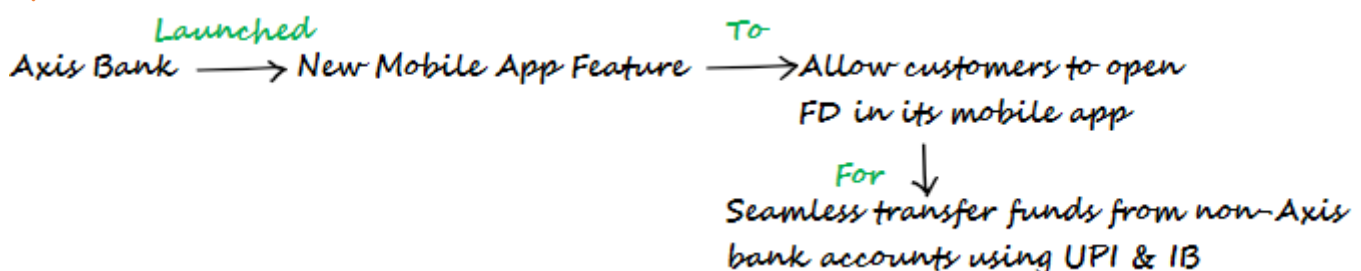


RBI - Reserve Bank of India

SFB - Small Finance Bank

UPI - Unified Payments Interface

4)



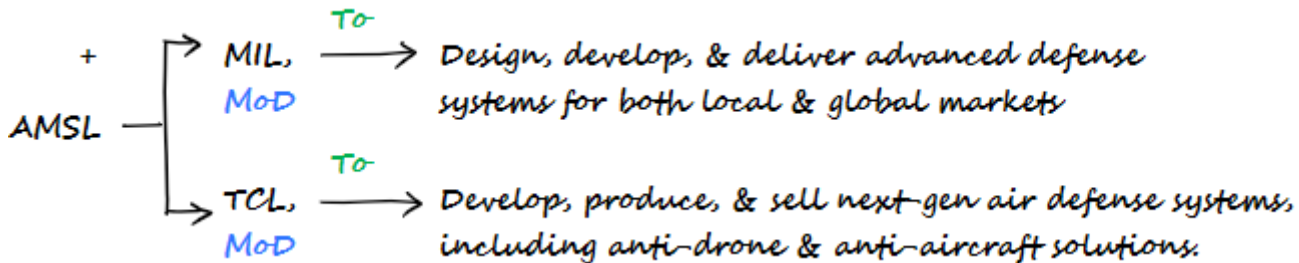
FD - Fixed Deposit

UPI - Unified Payments Interface

IB - Internet Banking

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1)



AMSL - Apollo Micro Systems Limited

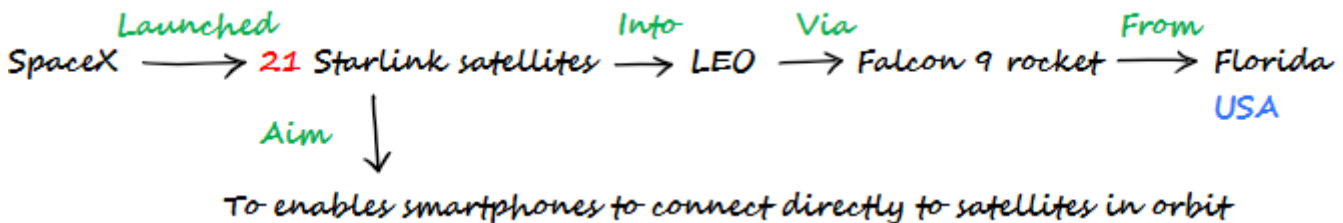
MIL - Munitions India Limited

TCL - Troop Comforts Limited

MoD - Ministry of Defence

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1)



LEO - Low-Earth Orbit

USA - United States of America

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

1)



2)



PM - Prime Minister

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

1)

Asia's Richest Families 2025 Index Released by Bloomberg's (USA)



Top 5 Asia's Richest Families

Rank	Family Name	Country	Company	Net Worth (in USD)
1	Ambani	India	RIL	90.5
2	Chearavanont	Thailand	CP Group	42.6
3	Hartono	Indonesia	PT Djarum, BCA	42.2
4	Mistry	India	Shapoorji Pallonji Group	37.5
5	Kwok	Hong Kong	SHKP Limited	35.6

Other Indian Richest Families in the Top 20

7	Jindal	India	Om Prakash Jindal Group	28.1
9	Birla	India	Aditya Birla Group	23.0
13	Bajaj	India	Bajaj Group	20.1
18	Hinduja	India	Hinduja Group	15.2

USA - United States of America

RIL - Reliance Industries Limited

CP Group - Charoen Pokphand Group

BCA - Bank Central Asia

SHKP - Sun Hung Kai Properties

IMPORTANT DAYS

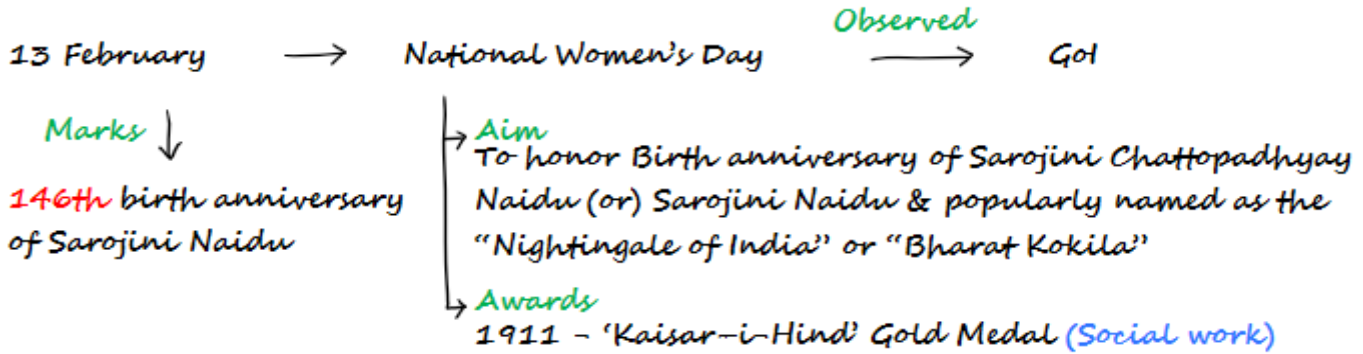
1)

13 February → 14th World Radio Day Observed → United Nations

- **Aim**
To honor radio's enduring influence as powerful & accessible medium for communication, education & entertainment
- **Theme**
"Radio and Climate Change"
- **1st** observed on Feb 13, 2012
- **Proposed by**
Julian Huxley (1st Director-General of UNESCO)

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

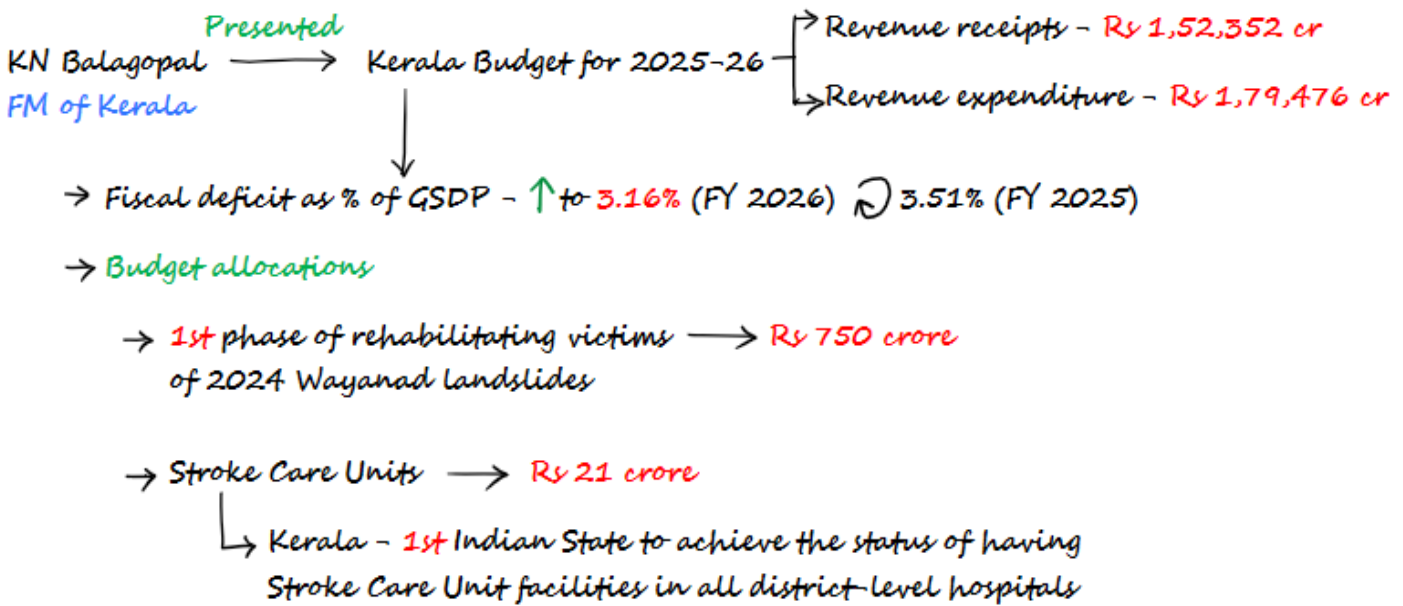
2)



Govt - Government of India

STATE NEWS

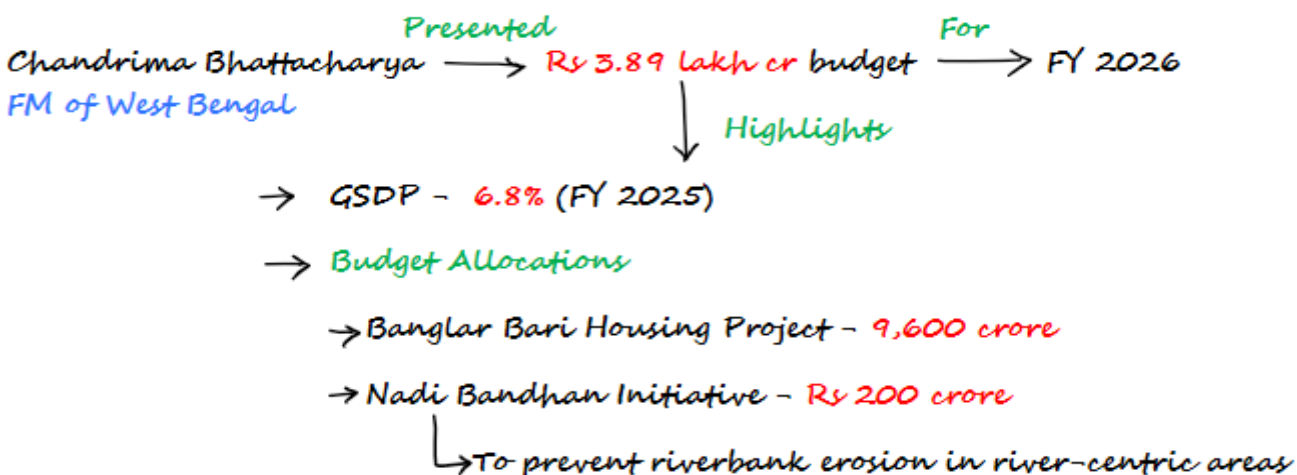
1)



FM - Finance Minister

GSDP - Gross State Domestic Product

2)



FM - Finance Minister

GSDP - Gross State Domestic Product

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- ▶ [England Hockey bans transgender women from female category](#)
- ▶ [Retired Justice B.N. Srikrishna to chair ID verification firm Equal's advisory board](#)
- ▶ [Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh Inaugurates 'The Art of India 2025', Showcasing the Brilliance of Indian Art](#)

Detailed Content

Current Affairs 14 February 2025 : Headlines

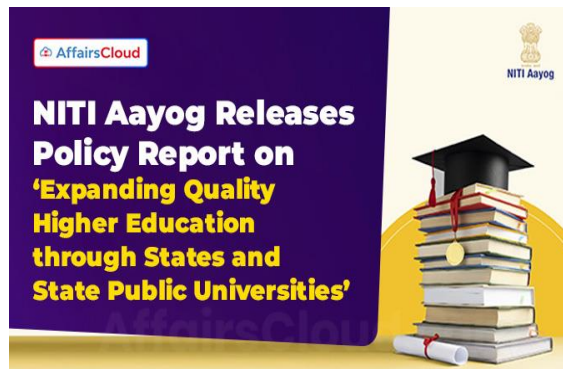


- NITI Aayog Released Policy Report on “Expanding Quality Higher Education through States & State Public Universities”
- PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana Completed One Year
- DPIIT Mandates QCOs for Stainless Steel Seamless Pipes & Tubes from August 2025
- Corruption Perceptions Index 2024: India ranks 96; Denmark Tops
- SEBI Launched MITRA platform to Help Investors Trace Inactive Mutual Fund Folios
- SIDBI & AFD Sign USD 100 million Agreement to Boost Green Finance for Indian MSMEs
- SFBs Received RBI Approval to Offer Credit Lines on UPI
- Axis Bank Launches New Mobile App Feature for Easy FD Booking
- AMSL Inks MoU with MIL & TCL for Advanced Defence Solutions
- Asia's 20 Richest Families 2025: Mukesh Ambani Tops, 6 Indians in the Ranks
- Ilie Bolojan Takes Over as Romania's Interim President
- Jotham Napat became New Prime Minister of Vanuatu
- SpaceX Launches 21 Starlink Satellites into Orbit aboard
- World Radio Day 2025 – February 13
- National Women's day 2025 – February 13
- Kerala Finance Minister KN Balagopal presents State Budget for 2025-26
- WB Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya Presents Rs 3.89 Lakh Crore Budget for FY26

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

NITI Aayog Released Policy Report on “Expanding Quality Higher Education through States & State Public Universities”

In February 2025, National Institution for Transforming India (**NITI Aayog**) released a policy report titled ‘[Expanding Quality Higher Education through States and State Public Universities](#)’, a first-of-its kind policy document in the higher education sector focused specifically on states and State Public Universities (**SPUs**).



- The report provides detailed quantitative examination on important indicators of **Quality, Funding & Financing, Governance** and **Employability** over the last 10 years across the themes.
- The report is in alignment with targets of the National Education Policy (**NEP**) 2020 and part of Government of India (GoI)’s ‘Viksit Bharat 2047’.

Key People: The report was formally launched by Suman Bery, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog; Dr. Vinod Kumar Paul, Member (Education); NITI Aayog; BVR Subramanyam, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), NITI Aayog; Vineet Joshi, Secretary, Department of Higher Education (DoHE), Ministry of Education (MoE) and Dr. Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities (AIU) in New Delhi, Delhi.

About the Report:

i. The report is prepared in consultations with state government officers of Higher and Technical Education departments from more than 20 states and Union Territories (UTs), Vice Chancellors (VCs), and senior academicians of 50 SPUs, and heads of State Higher Education Councils (SHECs).

ii. The report provides nearly **80 policy recommendations** across 4 main indicators, along with a detailed implementation roadmap that covers short-term, medium-term, and long-term strategies.

- It also features more than 125 performance success indicators used to measure the progress of the recommendations. It will help in monitoring the success of initiatives across 4 main indicators.

iii. These policy recommendations aimed to improve the quality of research, pedagogy, and curriculum, increasing institutional and systemic funding and financing capacity, enhancing and empowering institutional governance structures, and strengthening industry-academia interface to boost student employability.

iv. All the key findings of the reports are sourced from the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report 2021-22, prepared by the MoE.



Key Findings:

i. Top Performing States in Gross Enrolment (GER) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2021-22: Tamil Nadu (TN), Himachal Pradesh (HP), Uttarakhand, and Kerala. These states are grouped under the “achievers” category.

- Kerala, Chhattisgarh and HP have higher female enrolment rates than males, serving as models of success for greater access to higher education for women.

ii. Worst Performing States in GER in HEIs in 2021-22: Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh (AP), and Karnataka. These states are grouped under the ‘front-runners’ category.

iii. Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR): The report revealed that PTR was lowest in universities of states like: TN, Goa, and Karnataka.

- While, PTR was highest in universities of states: Jharkhand and Bihar.
- Top 3 Performing States in terms of decadal improvement in PTR (2011-12 compared to 2021-22): Arunachal Pradesh (AR), Uttarakhand, and West Bengal (WB).

iv. Higher Education budgets of States: Considering higher education expenditure as a percentage of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), Bihar ranks highest at 1.56%, followed by Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) at 1.53% and Manipur at 1.45%. Telangana has the lowest percentage at 0.18%, while Gujarat and Rajasthan allocate 0.23% each.

- Among all states and UTs, J&K spends the most for education as a percentage of GDP at 8.11%, followed by Manipur (7.25%), Meghalaya (6.64%), and Tripura (6.19%). While Delhi (1.67%), Telangana (2%), and Karnataka (2.01%) allocate significantly less towards higher education.
- Maharashtra leads in higher education funding with a budget of Rs.11,421 crore, followed by Bihar (Rs.9,666 crore) and TN (Rs.7,237 crore).
- States like Sikkim (Rs. 142 crore), Arunachal Pradesh (Rs.155 crore), and Nagaland (Rs.167 crore) have the lowest higher education budgets.
- The mean per youth expenditure on HE rose from Rs.2,174 to Rs.4,921 between 2005-06 and 2019-20.

v. College Density: It is defined as the total number of colleges per 1 lakh eligible population aged from 18 to 23 years, in a state.

- States with highest college densities: Karnataka with a college density of 66, which is more than double of the national average (30 in 2022), has the highest college density among all states, followed by Telangana (52), AP (49), HP (47), and Kerala (46).
- UT Puducherry has the highest college density of 53 among all UTs in the country.
- States with least college densities: Manipur (3), Bihar (7) and Jharkhand (8).

vi. University Density: It is defined as the total number of universities per 1 lakh eligible population aged from 18 to 23 years, in a state. As per the report, the national average university density is **0.8**.

- States with highest average university density: Sikkim (10.3), followed by AR (5.6), UT Ladakh (5.2), HP (4), Meghalaya (2.9), and Uttarakhand (2.8). All these states are sparsely populated.
- States with least average university density: Bihar (0.2), UP (0.3), WB (0.6) and Maharashtra (0.6). All these states are densely populated.

vii. SPUs: As per the report, India has **495 SPUs**, accounting 81% of the total student enrolment among Indian HEIs.

- States with highest number of SPUs are: Karnataka (43), followed by WB and UP with 38 each.

Points to Note:

- As per the AISHE report 2021-22, there were 1,168 universities; 45,473 colleges and 12,002 standalone institutions in India.
- The literacy rate was alarmingly low at 14%, and expenditure on education constituted less than 0.5% of the national income.

Key Policy Recommendations:

i. Quality:

- To frame National Research Policy (NRP) in alignment with the Anusadhan National Research Foundation (ANRF);
- Setting-up of research hubs within groups of SPUs to foster collaboration;
- Improve funding for post-doctoral fellowships: especially for women in SPUs; to create Centres of Excellence (CoE) in cluster of SPUs to address local challenges
- Formation of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) to fix gaps in Research and Development (R&D), among others.

ii. Funding and Financing:

- To increase the contribution central government as well as state governments towards higher education, aiming to achieve **6%** of Gross Domestic Product (**GDP**) as recommended by the NEP 2020;
- To setup a dedicated infrastructure finance agency specifically for SPUs;
- To foster collaborations with industry bodies and promote mobilization of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds towards R&D infrastructure in SPUs; among others.

iii. Governance:

- To implement policy changes at the State and Central government levels to grant tax exemptions on revenue from CSR grants and educational and research activities.
- Bolstering the role of State Councils for Higher Education (SCHEs) in fund distribution and policy execution;
- To frame State-level Higher Education Vision for 2047;
- Improving the autonomy of SPUs in administrative matters and introducing reforms in the faculty recruitment process, among others.

iv. Employability:

- Establishing Industry Relations Cell (IRC) in universities to foster collaborations;
- Launching of skill certification programs in collaboration with industry organisations like: Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), and National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM);
- Setting-up of incubation centres or co-working spaces to support student-led startups; among others.

About National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog:

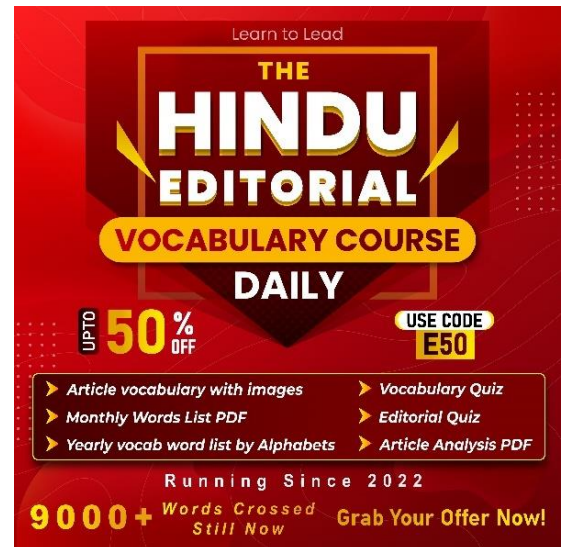
Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) – B.V.R. Subrahmanyam

Headquarters- New Delhi, Delhi

Established – 2015

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana Completed One Year

On February 13 2025, the Prime Minister Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (**PMSGMBY**), the world's largest domestic rooftop solar initiative marked its **1st anniversary**, celebrating the year of empowering households with affordable solar energy and boosting India's transition to a sustainable future.





- The scheme was launched by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi on February 13, 2024. It is being implemented by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

About PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana:

i. In February 2024, the Union Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi approved the scheme, with budgetary allocation of **Rs 75,021 crore** and is to be implemented till Financial Year 2026-27 (**FY27**).

ii. The scheme aims to provide free electricity of 300 units per month to **1 crore** households in India by **March 2027**.

- As of January 2025, the scheme has already benefited 8.46 lakh households through rooftop solar installations.
- The rooftop solar installations will be implemented in a phased manner, expected to cross 10 lakh by March 2025, 20 lakh by October 2025, and reach 40 lakh by March 2026.

iii. The scheme is being implemented by the National Programme Implementation Agency (**NPIA**) at the national level and by State Implementation Agencies (SIAs) at the state level, which also include power Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) or power/energy departments, depending on the State or Union Territory (UT).

iv. The scheme offers a subsidy of up to 40% which makes the Renewable Energy (RE) a viable option in terms of affordability and accessibility.

Key Features of Scheme:

i. **Subsidy based on Average Monthly Electricity Consumption:** The subsidy provided under the scheme differs based on the average monthly electricity consumption of household and the corresponding suitable rooftop solar plant capacity:

- For average monthly electricity consumption of households between **0-150 units**, with 1-2 kilowatt, (kW) rooftop solar plant capacity: the scheme will provide subsidy of **Rs 30,000 to Rs 60,000**.
- For average monthly electricity consumption of households between **150-300 units**, with 2-3 kW rooftop solar plant capacity: The scheme will provide subsidy of **Rs 60,000 to Rs 78,000**.
- For average monthly electricity consumption of households more than 300 units, above 3kW rooftop solar plant capacity: The scheme will provide subsidy of **Rs 78,000**.

ii. **Collateral-Free Loans:** It also facilitates access to collateral-free, low-interest loans at around 7% interest for the installation of Residential rooftop solar (**RTS**) systems up to 3 kW capacity.

- The scheme offers a Central Financial Assistance (CFA) in the form of subsidy i.e. 60% subsidy for solar rooftop systems up to 2kW capacity.
- While, it offers a CFA of 40% for solar rooftop systems between 2kW to 3kW capacity.
- The CFA is capped for systems with a maximum capacity of 3 kW.

iii. **Eligibility Criteria:** It is mandatory that household to be an Indian citizen; The household is required to have a valid electricity connection; the household must not have availed the benefits of any other subsidy scheme for solar panels.

Key Progress:

- i. Since the inception of scheme, the adoption of solar energy in India witnessed a ten-fold increase in monthly installation rates, which now stand at around **70,000 installations per month**.
- ii. So far, the Government of India (GoI) has disbursed **Rs 4,308.66 crore** as CFA to 5.54 lakh residential consumers, with average subsidy of Rs 77,800 per household.
- iii. Also, an estimated **45%** of the eligible beneficiaries are now receiving zero electricity bills, depending on their solar power generation and consumption.
- iv. As of January 2025, **Gujarat** topped among all states in terms of highest number households benefited from the scheme, accounted 41.47% of the total number of households, followed by Maharashtra (22.79%), Uttar Pradesh (UP) (8.69%), Kerala (7.73%), and Rajasthan (3.14%).

Key Benefits:

- i. **Free Electricity for Households:** The scheme provides subsidy on the installation of rooftop solar panels, thus benefiting households with free electricity and reducing their energy costs.
- ii. **Reduced Electricity Costs for the Government:** The scheme will help the government in saving Rs 75,000 crore annually in electricity costs.
- iii. **Increased use of RE:** The scheme promotes the adoption of RE sources, contributing to a more sustainable and eco-friendly energy mix in India.
- iv. **Reduced Carbon Emissions:** The transition from fossil-based energy sources to solar energy under this scheme will help to lower carbon emissions, reaffirming India's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.

Impact of the Scheme:

- i. **Expansion of Solar Capacity:** The scheme is estimated to add **30 Giga Watt (GW)** of solar capacity through rooftop installations in the residential sector.
- ii. **Environmental Benefits:** These rooftop solar systems have a lifetime of over 25 years, it is projected that the scheme will generate **1,000 Billion Units (BUs)** of electricity while reducing Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by **720 million tonnes**.
- iii. **Generation of Job Opportunities:** The scheme is estimated to generate **nearly 17 lakh direct jobs** across various sectors such as: manufacturing, logistics, supply chain, sales, among others.
- iv. **Households Savings and Income Generation:** Households will benefit from savings on their electricity bills and will also enable them to earn extra income by selling surplus power generated by their rooftop solar systems to DISCOMs.

Model Solar Village:

In August 2024, the **MNRE** issued the operational guidelines for implementing the Model Solar village under the PMSGMBY.

- Under the scheme component, emphasis has been laid on establishing one model solar village per district across India in order to promote solar energy adoption and enable village communities to become self-reliant in energy needs.

Key Components of Scheme:

- i. **Budget Allocation:** The MNRE has allocated Rs 800 crore for the implementation of the scheme, providing Rs 1 crore per selected Model Solar Village.

ii. Eligibility Criteria for Village: A village must be a revenue village with a population size above 5,000 (or 2,000 for special category states) in order to qualify as a 'candidate village'.

iii. Selection Process: The villages are selected by assessing their overall distributed renewable energy (RE) capacity installed in 6 months after being identified by District Level Committee (DLC).

- There will be one winning village in each district of the State which has the highest RE capacity and will receive a CFA grant of **Rs 1 crore**.

iv. Implementing Agency: The scheme will be implemented by State or Union Territory (UT) Renewable Energy Development Agency (REDA) under the supervision of the DLC.

About Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE):

Union Minister – Pralhad Joshi (Dharwad, Karnataka)

Minister of State (MoS) – Shripad Naik (Constituency – North Goa, Goa)

DPIIT Mandates QCOs for Stainless Steel Seamless Pipes & Tubes from August 2025

On February 10, 2025, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I) issued the 'Stainless Steel Pipes and Tubes (Quality Control) Order, 2025' mandating quality standards for stainless steel seamless pipes and tubes, effective from **August 1, 2025**.



- The order aims to prevent the import of sub-standard goods, promote domestic manufacturing, curb unfair trade practices, and ensure the safety of consumers.

About Stainless Steel Pipes and Tubes (Quality Control) Order, 2025:

i. Mandatory BIS mark: Stainless steel seamless pipes and tubes for general service cannot be produced, sold, traded, imported, or stocked unless they bear the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) mark.

- This order does not apply to goods or articles manufactured domestically for export.

ii. Exemption for R&D Imports: Manufacturers of stainless steel pipes and tubes are permitted to import up to 500 kilograms (kg) of goods per year for research and development (R&D) activities. This allowance is subject to the condition that the imported goods are not used for commercial sale and can only be disposed of as scrap.

iii. Penalty: Violation of the BIS Act 2016 can result in up to two years of imprisonment or a fine of at least **Rs 2 lakh** for the first offence. For second and subsequent offences, the fine increases to a minimum of **Rs 5 lakh**, or up to 10 times the value of the goods.

About Quality Control Order (QCO):

i. Under the BIS Act, 2016, the DPIIT has been issuing QCOs, making the specified products subject to mandatory BIS certification. These QCOs are issued in compliance with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

ii. After the QCO takes effect, no one can manufacture, import, distribute, sell, store, or display for sale any covered product without a valid BIS certification and standard mark.

iii.DPIIT providing QCO since 1987, covers 81 orders for over 330 products under the BIS Act, including items like cement, LPG gas stoves, pressure cookers, air conditioners, and refrigerators.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Corruption Perceptions Index 2024: India ranks 96; Denmark Tops

On February 11 2025, Berlin(Germany)-based International Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), **Transparency International**(TI) released its '[2024 Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI 2024\)](#)' which evaluated the perceived levels of public sector corruption across 180 countries.



- According to the 2024 CPI Report, India ranks **96th** out of 180 countries with a score of **38**, marking a decline from its 2023 position, where India ranked **93rd** with a score of **39**.
- **Denmark** tops the 2024 CPI, for the 7th consecutive time with a score of 90, followed by Finland(88) and Singapore(84).
- India's score and rank was shared by Gambia and Maldives.

About Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI):

i.The CPI, published annually assesses the perceived levels of public sector corruption in 180 countries, using a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), with no country achieving a perfect score.

ii.The first report was released in **1995** and since then every year the report has been released by Transparency International.

Corruption Perceptions Index 2024(CPI 2024):

Top 5 Countries:

Rank	Country	Score
1	Denmark	90
2	Finland	88
3	Singapore	84
4	New Zealand	83
5	Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland	81
96	India, Gambia, Maldives	38

Bottom 3 Countries:

Rank	Country	Score
180	South Sudan	8
179	Somalia	9
178	Venezuela	10

Highlights of the Report:

- i. The global average on the index has remained unchanged at **43**, highlighting the need for urgent action against corruption and warning of a critical global obstacle to implementing successful climate action.
- ii. The 2024 CPI highlights that about 85% of the world (about **6.8 billion people**) live in countries with high corruption.
 - The report highlights that over **two-thirds** of countries scored **below 50**, indicating challenges in combating corruption globally.
- iii. 7 countries have improved their corruption scores in the past five years: Côte d'Ivoire (score 45), the Dominican Republic (score 36), Kosovo (score 44), Kuwait (score 46), the Maldives (score 38), Moldova (score 43), and Zambia (score 39).
- iv. **Azerbaijan**, which hosted the 2024 United Nation (UN) Climate Change Conference, ranked 154th and scored 22, showing it still struggles with corruption.
- v. India's neighbors faced challenges with corruption, as Pakistan ranked 135th (score 27), Sri Lanka ranked 121st (score 32), Bangladesh ranked even lower at 149th (score 23) and China was placed at 76th (score 43).
- vi. **Lowest Rank: South Sudan** ranked 180th (score 8), Somalia at 179th (score 9), Venezuela at 178th (score 10) and Syria at 177th (score 12) are the most corrupt nations, ranking at the bottom.

About Transparency International (TI):

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)– Maíra Martini

Headquarters– Berlin, Germany

Established– 1993

BANKING & FINANCE

SEBI Launched MITRA platform to Help Investors Trace Inactive Mutual Fund Folios

On February 12 2025, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) launched a new digital platform, 'Mutual Fund Investment Tracing and Retrieval Assistant (MITRA)'. The new platform is designed to help investors in tracking and reclaiming inactive or unclaimed Mutual Fund (MF) folios.

- This platform was introduced through a circular issued by the SEBI in exercise of the powers given under Section 11(1) of the **SEBI Act 1992**, read with provision of Regulation 77 of SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulation, 1996, to protect the interest of the investors in securities and to promote the development of, and to regulate the securities market.
- The platform will get operationalised within **15 working days** of the circular's issuance, with a beta version available for 2 months.
- As per SEBI circular, the platform will assist with the investments that may have been forgotten, lost or left unclaimed due to outdated Know Your Customer (KYC) details or the demise of original investor.



Note: As per SEBI, an inactive MF folio is defined as where no investor-initiated transactions have occurred in the last 10 years, but unit balance still exists.

About Mutual Fund Investment Tracing and Retrieval Assistant (MITRA):

i. The platform will be jointly hosted by two Qualified Registrar and Transfer Agents (QRTAs) i.e. Chennai (Tamil Nadu, TN)-based Computer Age Management Services Limited (**CAMS**) and Hyderabad (Telangana)-based **KFin Technologies Limited**. Both these QRTAs will act as agents of Asset Management Companies (AMCs).

- QRTAs have been entrusted with the responsibility of conducting system audits, cyber security audits, and compliance with SEBI's Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and Disaster Recovery (DR) guidelines.

ii. Investors can access the platform through the websites of MF central, AMCs, the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), the two QRTAs, and SEBI.

iii. MITRA platform will comply with the cyber resilience framework of SEBI as set in the regulator's Master Circular on MFs dated on June 27, 2024.

Key Benefits:

MITRA platform aims to empower investors by: helping them to identify overlooked investments made by another person where the investor may be the legal claimant;

- Updating their KYC as per the latest norms/regulations;
- Reducing the number of unclaimed MF folios;
- Reducing fraud risks related to unclaimed or inactive MF folios.

Note: SEBI has revised the responsibilities of the Unit Holder Protection Committee (UHPC) under its Master Circular on MFs. SEBI has now empowered the UHPC to review inactive MF folios alongside unclaimed dividends and redemptions.

SEBI Mandated SBU for Brokers to Trade G-secs on NDS-OM Platform

In February 12 2025, SEBI has mandated SEBI-registered brokers to setup a separate business unit (**SBU**) to trade in Government Securities (G-secs) through the Negotiated Dealing System Order Matching (**NDS-OM**).

- This announcement came following Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s notification on February 7, 2025, allowed the SEBI-registered non-brokers to access the NDS-OM platform to facilitate retail participation.
- SEBI has directed such SBU will be exclusively engaged in activities of transacting on NDS-OM platform only.

Note: NDS-OM is an electronic order-matching platform, which is primarily used for secondary market trading in G-secs.

Recent Related News:

In December 2024, the SEBI notified a new asset class between Portfolio Management Services (PMS) and Mutual Funds (MFs) and referred it as "**Specialised Investment Fund (SIF)**".

- As per the SEBI directions, the new asset class will accept investments of Rs 10 lakh or above across all investment strategies. However, accredited investors are exempted from the requirement of minimum investment amount.
- The notification came following the amendment made to the SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996.

SIDBI & AFD Sign USD 100 million Agreement to Boost Green Finance for Indian MSMEs

On February 12 2025, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (UP) based Small Industries Development Bank of India (**SIDBI**) and Paris (France) based **French Development Agency** (Agence Française de Développement, AFD) signed a **USD 100 million** Credit Facility Agreement (CFA) to enhance green finance solutions for India's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (**MSMEs**).



- This collaboration aims to support sustainable growth and facilitate the transition towards a low-carbon economy by providing affordable financing.

Key Points:

- i. The AFD will provide a credit line of USD 100 million to SIDBI to deploy the funds to expand access to affordable financing for MSMEs investing in energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy solutions, and climate-friendly business practices.
- ii. **Green Finance:** This collaboration focuses on **green finance**, which refers to financing that supports projects or businesses working to reduce their environmental impact.
- iii. **Low-carbon Economy:** The aim is to help businesses shift to a **low-carbon economy** that produces fewer greenhouse gases and relies more on renewable energy.
- iv. MSMEs have a vital role to play in India's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2070 and this initiative also complements the work on the Greening Indian Financial System (GIFS) Platform.
- v. The GIFS Platform focuses on integrating sustainability and a climate perspective into the strategies of Indian financial stakeholders.
- vi. This partnership underscores the growing importance of sustainable finance in driving inclusive economic growth.

About Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI):

Chairman & Managing Director (**MD**) – Manoj Mittal

Headquarters– Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (UP)

Established– 1990

About French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement, AFD):

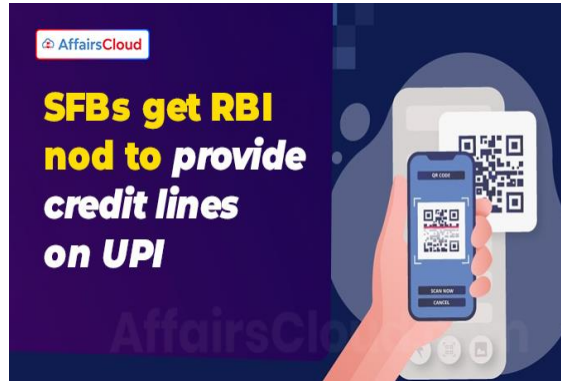
Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**)– Rémy Rioux

Headquarters– Paris, France

Established– 1941

SFBs Received RBI Approval to Offer Credit Lines on UPI

In February 2025, Small Finance Banks (SFBs) received the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approval) to provide pre-sanctioned credit lines through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). This move, effective from February 12, 2025, aligns with the RBI's December 2024 announcement during the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting.



- UPI, India's real-time payment system developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), previously allowed transactions via savings accounts, overdrafts, prepaid wallets, and credit cards.
- The RBI has now expanded this to include pre-sanctioned credit lines issued by SFBs, enabling instant access to credit for individuals and small businesses.
- The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is a digital payment tool that can help achieve the goals of the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** and promote equitable economic growth.

Background:

In September 2023, RBI expanded the scope of UPI by enabling pre-sanctioned credit lines to be linked through UPI. However, this feature was limited to commercial banks, excluding Payments Banks, Small Finance Banks (SFBs), and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs).

Transparent Credit Access

- i. Customers must provide explicit consent before availing credit lines, ensuring transparency. Terms such as credit limits, interest rates, and repayment tenure are determined by individual SFBs under their board-approved policies.
- ii. The facility aims to serve 'new-to-credit' (NTC) customers, including farmers, small entrepreneurs, and rural businesses, reducing reliance on informal lenders charging exorbitant rates.
- iii. It is required for customers to review the terms and conditions of the credit lines before opting-in.

About Small Finance Banks (SFBs):

- i. These are the financial institutions (FIs) that provide financial services to the unserved and unbanked regions of the country.
- ii. SFBs are established as a private limited company under the Companies Act, 2013 and regulated by the provisions of RBI Act, 1934 and Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- iii. Initially, there were 12 Small Finance Banks (SFBs) operating in India. In April 2024, RBI approved the merger of Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based Fincare SFB with Jaipur (Rajasthan)-based AU Small Finance Bank Limited. Now, there are 11 SFBs operating in India.

Axis Bank Launches New Mobile App Feature for Easy FD Booking

On February 11 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra) based **Axis Bank Limited**, one of the largest private sector banks in India, launched a first-of-its-kind feature allowing customers to open Fixed Deposits (FDs) with its mobile application (app).

- Axis Bank is the first private sector bank to introduce this new-age banking feature powered by the Account Aggregator (AA) system, allows users to seamlessly transfer funds from non-Axis bank accounts using Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Internet Banking (IB).
- It allows customers to digitally invest in FD with Axis Bank, offering attractive interest rates and better returns.

i. Axis Bank's Existing-to-Bank (ETB) customers with valid Know Your Customer (KYC) can open FD accounts, even if their primary funds are held in a different bank.

- It replaces the traditional process of transferring funds to an Axis Bank savings account before opening an FD.

ii. The FD will be processed once the payment is successfully completed and the funds are received from the payment gateway service provider.

Note: The Account Aggregator (AA) ecosystem is a digital system that lets individuals securely access and share their financial information from one institution to another within the AA network.

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

AMSL Inks MoU with MIL & TCL for Advanced Defence Solutions

In February 2025, Hyderabad (Telangana)- based Apollo Micro Systems Limited (AMSL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Pune (Maharashtra)- based Munitions India Limited (MIL) under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

- It aims to design, develop, and deploy advanced defence systems for domestic and international markets.

i. AMSL has also entered into a MoU with Kanpur (Maharashtra) based Troop Comforts Limited (TCL) under MoD to jointly develop, manufacture and market next-generation air defence systems, including anti-drone and anti-aircraft solutions.

ii. These partnership aims to address the current and future needs of the Indian Defence Forces, paramilitary forces, police organizations, central and state government agencies, the civil sector, and international export markets.

Note: AMSL, established in 1985, manufactures advanced electronic and electro-mechanical solutions for industries such as infrastructure, transportation, aerospace, and defence.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Asia's 20 Richest Families 2025: Mukesh Ambani Tops, 6 Indians in the Ranks

According to New York, United States of America (USA) based Bloomberg Limited Partnership (LP's) '[Asia's Richest Families-2025](#)' Index, the **Ambani family** of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) (India) has secured the **top position** as Asia's richest family, with a net worth of USD 90.5 billion.

- The **Chearavanont family (Thailand)** ranks **2nd** with a net worth of USD 42.6 billion, followed by the **Hartono family (Indonesia)** in **3rd** place with a net worth of USD 42.2 billion.
- Among the prominent **6 Indian families** featured in the top 20 rankings list, the **Mistry family** holds the 4th position, followed by the **Jindal family** in 7th place, the **Birla family** ranks 9th, the **Bajaj family** secures the 13th spot and **Hinduja family** ranks 18th position.



Top 5 Asia's Richest Families:

Rank	Family Name	Country	Company	Net Worth (in USD)
1	Ambani	India	Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)	90.5
2	Chearavanont	Thailand	Charoen Pokphand Group (CP Group)	42.6
3	Hartono	Indonesia	PT Djarum, Bank Central Asia (BCA)	42.2
4	Mistry	India	Shapoorji Pallonji Group	37.5
5	Kwok	Hong Kong	Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited (SHKP)	35.6

Highlights:

i.Ambani Family (India): With a combined net worth of USD 90.5 billion (approximately Rs.7.85 lakh crore), **Mukesh Ambani's** family leads the list. Their flagship company, RIL is a Indian Multinational Conglomerate with interests in petrochemicals, refining, oil, telecommunications, and retail.

ii.Chearavanont Family (Thailand): Holding a net worth of USD 42.6 billion (about Rs.3.70 lakh crore), the Chearavanont family ranks 2nd and operates the CP Group, a conglomerate with businesses in agribusiness, retail, and telecommunications.

iii.Hartono Family (Indonesia): With a combined wealth of USD 42.2 billion (approximately Rs.3.66 lakh crore), the Hartono family ranks 3rd which controls PT Djarum, a leading cigarette manufacturer and PT Bank Central Asia Tbk, commonly known as Bank Central Asia (BCA), a major financial institution.

iv.Mistry Family (India): Valued at USD 37.5 billion (about Rs.3.25 lakh crore), the Mistry family ranks 4th and the family's wealth is primarily derived from their substantial stake in Tata Sons Private Limited, the holding company of the Tata Group, and their own conglomerate, Shapoorji Pallonji Group, which operates in engineering and construction.

v.Kwok Family (Hong Kong): Ranks 5th with a net worth of USD 35.6 billion (approximately Rs.3.09 lakh crore), the Kwok family controls SHKP Limited, one of Hong Kong's largest real estate developers.

Other Indian Richest Families in the Top 20:

Rank	Family Name	Country	Company	Net Worth (in USD)
7	Jindal	India	Om Prakash (OP) Jindal Group	28.1
9	Birla	India	Aditya Birla Group	23.0
13	Bajaj	India	Bajaj Group	20.1
18	Hinduja	India	Hinduja Group	15.2

Indian Families 2025:

i. The **Jindal family** of OP Jindal Group ranks at **7th** place with USD 28.1 billion (approximately Rs.2.43 lakh crore).

ii. The **Birla family** of Aditya Birla Group occupies the **9th** spot with a net worth of USD 23.0 billion (approximately Rs.1.99 lakh crore).

iii. The **Bajaj Family** of Bajaj Group is ranked 13th with a net worth of USD 20.1 billion (approximately Rs.1.74 lakh crore).

iv. The **Hinduja Family** of Hinduja Group holds the 18th position with a net worth of USD 15.2 billion (approximately Rs.1.32 lakh crore).

v. These rankings underscore the significant economic influence of these families within Asia's business landscape.

About Bloomberg Limited Partnership (LP):

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Vlad Kliatchko

Headquarters – New York, United States of America (USA)

Established– 1981

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Ilie Bolojan Takes Over as Romania's Interim President

In a significant political development, **Ilie Bolojan** has been appointed as Romania's interim President following the resignation of **Klaus Iohannis** on February 12, 2025, ahead of a planned impeachment vote led by far-right parties, which controlled 35% of the parliamentary seats.



- Klaus Iohannis, who served as Romania's President since 2014, announced his resignation due to increasing political turmoil. His tenure was marked by both economic reforms and governance challenges.
- **Senate speaker Ilie Bolojan** will serve as interim president until May's rerun election.

- Ilie Bolojan is a respected Romanian politician known for his efficient administration and governance reforms. He has previously served as the Mayor of Oradea.

About Romania

Capital: Bucharest

Currency: Romanian Leu (RON)

Official Language: Romanian

Jotham Napat became New Prime Minister of Vanuatu

In February 2025, **Jotham Napat, 52**, was elected as Vanuatu's Prime Minister (PM), receiving 50 votes in Parliament. He becomes the country's fifth PM in four years. **Napat** leads a **five-party coalition government**, which includes his own Leaders Party (which secured nine seats in the January snap election), along with the Vanua'aku Party, Graon Mo Jastis Party, Reunification Movement for Change, and Iauko Group.

About Jotham Napat:

- He was Member of Parliament (MP) for Tanna since 2016; re-elected in 2020, 2022, and 2025.
- He was also the President of the Leaders Party.
- He Headed the National Disaster Committee Post-Cyclone Pam (2015).

About Vanuatu :

Capital: Port Vila

Currency: Vanuatu vatu (VUV)

Languages: Bislama, English, French

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

SpaceX Launches 21 Starlink Satellites into Orbit aboard

On February 11 2025, **SpaceX's Falcon 9** rocket successfully launched a new batch of **21 Starlink** satellites into Low-Earth Orbit (**LEO**) from Space Launch Complex 40 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, the United States of America (USA), marking another milestone in the expansion of its satellite internet constellation.



- This marks SpaceX's 19th Falcon 9 mission of 2025, with 13 of those missions dedicated to deploying Starlink payloads.

Note: With this launch, there are 6,994 Starlink satellites in orbit, with 6,957 of them fully operational.

About Direct-to-cell:

The launch took place after SpaceX's space-based internet service began offering direct-to-cell connectivity with T-Mobile Starlink.

i.Direct-to-cell is a satellite communication system that enables smartphones to connect directly to satellites in orbit, removing the need for traditional cell towers in remote or underserved areas.

ii. It features an eNodeB (evolved Node B) modem, which functions like a cell tower in space, enabling communication with existing Long Term Evolution (LTE) phones and Internet of Things (IoT) devices.

About Starlink:

i. Developed by Elon Musk's SpaceX, Starlink is the world's first and largest satellite constellation in Low-Earth Orbit (LEO), designed to provide affordable internet access to remote and underserved locations.

ii. The Starlink satellites orbit approximately 342 miles (550 kilometers, km) above Earth, with an expected lifespan of around five years.

iii. The current V2 Starlink satellites weigh approximately 1,760 lbs (800 kilograms, kg) at launch, nearly three times heavier than the previous generation satellites, which weighed around 573 lbs (260 kg).

About SpaceX:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Elon Musk

Headquarters – California, the United States of America (the USA)

Founded – 2002

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Radio Day 2025 – February 13

The United Nations (UN's) World Radio Day (WRD) is observed annually on **February 13** across the globe to honor radio's enduring influence as a powerful and accessible medium for communication, education, and entertainment.



- 13 February 2025 marks the observance of the **14th WRD**.
- The theme for WRD 2025 is "**Radio and Climate Change**", highlighting radio's vital role in disseminating information about climate change, amplifying environmental advocacy, and promoting sustainable practices.

Background:

i. In 2011, the Member States of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted a resolution during its **36th General Conference**, proclaiming February 13th as WRD to commemorate the establishment of UN Radio (UNR) in 1946.

- This resolution followed a proposal by the Spanish Radio Academy, Spain in 2010.

ii. In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution **A/RES/67/124** and endorsed UNESCO's resolution, formalizing WRD.

- The **first-ever** WRD was observed on **February 13, 2012**.

Note: UNESCO serves as the Chair of the informal International World Radio Day Committee.

Why February 13?

i. February 13 marks the anniversary of the establishment of the UNR Service in **1946**.

ii. The proposal to observe WRD on February 13 was made by **Julian Huxley**, the first Director-General (DG) of UNESCO (1946-1948).

About UN Radio (UNR):

- i. Initially, UNR's programs were broadcast in the 5 official languages of the UNs: English, French, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish. Arabic was later added to accommodate a broader audience.
 - ii. By 1950, UNR expanded its reach to **33 languages**, reflecting its commitment to global communication.
 - iv. In 1980, UN peacekeeping missions began launching their own radio stations to provide localized information and support peacebuilding efforts.
 - v. In 2017, UNR merged with the UN News Centre to form **UN News**, which continues to produce daily news and multimedia content in multiple languages, including Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Swahili, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Hindi.
- Note:** The UN Audiovisual Library presents UN Radio Classics which is an online archive of documentary and dramatic programmes.

About Radio:

- i. Radio, a medium for transmitting audio signals via electromagnetic (EM) waves, was first demonstrated by **Heinrich Hertz** in 1886.
- ii. Guglielmo Marconi later developed the first practical radio communication system, achieving transatlantic transmission in 1901.
 - The first voice and music signals were broadcast in December 1906 by **Reginald Fessenden**.
- iii. In 1920, the first commercial radio broadcast occurred in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the United States of America (**USA**).

2025 UNESCO Observances:

As part of the WRD 2025 celebrations, UNESCO organized a forum titled "Radio and Climate Change" to underscore radio's pivotal role in addressing climate-related issues.

- This forum featured a series of events and discussions aimed at enhancing the quality and diversity of information sources in climate reporting.

Key Facts:

- i. In the 1860s, Scottish scientist James Clerk Maxwell predicted the existence of radio waves.
- ii. India's first radio broadcast was conducted in **June 1923** by the Radio Club of Bombay (now The Bombay Presidency Radio Club Limited) in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- iii. The inaugural news bulletin of All India Radio (**AIR**) was aired on January 19, 1936. Initially known as Akashvani, India's first radio station was later renamed to All India Radio in 1957.
- iv. AIR is one of the largest radio broadcasters globally, operating over **415 stations** in around 23 languages and 146 dialects. It provides coverage to **99%** of the population and features 18 Frequency Modulation (FM) channels.

Note: The World Television Day is celebrated annually on November 21 across the globe.

National Women's day 2025 – February 13

National Women's Day is annually observed on **13th February** across India to honor the birth anniversary of **Sarojini Chattopadhyay Naidu** also known as Sarojini Naidu and popularly named as the "Nightingale of India" or "Bharat Kokila".

- 13 February 2025 marks the **146th birth anniversary** of Sarojini Naidu.

About Sarojini Naidu:

- i. Sarojini Naidu, born on February 13, 1879, in Hyderabad, Hyderabad State, British Raj (present-day Telangana), was a distinguished poet, freedom fighter, and political leader.
- ii. In 1917, alongside Annie Besant and other notable figures, she co-founded the Women's Indian Association (**WIA**) to advance women's rights and welfare.



iii. A prominent figure in India's freedom struggle, she played a crucial role in the Indian Nationalist Movement (INM) and became the **first woman** to serve as the President of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1925.

- She served as a Member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) (1923–29) and embarked on international lecture tours to South and East Africa (1924) and North America (NA) (1928–29)

iv. She also served as the President of the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) in 1930, advocating for women's education, political participation, and social reforms.

- In 1931, she was also appointed as the President of the All-Asian Women's Conference (AAWC).

v. She played an influential role in several pivotal movements, including the Salt Satyagraha (1930), the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) (1930), and the Quit India Movement (1942).

vi. She was the **first woman** to hold the position of Governor in Independent India, serving as the **Governor** of the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh, UP), post-independence, from August 15, 1947, until her death on March 2, 1949.

vii. She was an active participant in India's freedom struggle, working alongside prominent leaders like Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

viii. **Mahatma Gandhi** bestowed upon her the title "**The Nightingale of India**" or "**Bharat Kokila**" in recognition for her patriotic songs and poems that inspired millions during the independence movement.

ix. She became a symbol of India's cultural heritage, with her poetry, written in both English and Hindi, capturing themes of patriotism, love, and beauty, which earned her international acclaim.

x. She passed away at the age of 70 on 2 March, 1949, in Lucknow, UP.

Awards: She was awarded the '**Kaisar-i-Hind**' Gold Medal in **1911** by the British government for her social work during flood relief in Hyderabad, Telangana and in **1929** for her work during the plague epidemic in India

Notable Works:

i. **The Golden Threshold (1905):** Her first volume of poetry, published in London, United Kingdom (UK) which introduced her lyrical style.

ii. **The Bird of Time (1912):** A collection reflecting themes of life, mortality, and renewal.

iii. **The Broken Wing: Songs of Love, Death and Destiny (1917):** This volume delves into deeper emotional and philosophical themes.

iv. **The Sceptred Flute: Songs of India (1928):** A compilation of poems celebrating India's cultural heritage.

v. **The Feather of the Dawn (1961):** Published posthumously, this collection was edited by her daughter, Padmaja Naidu.



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STATE NEWS

Kerala Finance Minister KN Balagopal presents State Budget for 2025-26

Kalanjoor Narayana Panicker Balagopal, Minister for Finance, Government of Kerala, presented his 5th and last full budget of the Pinarayi Vijayan government's second term in the Kerala Legislative Assembly.



- The budget includes strategic tax revisions, infrastructure development, social security measures, education, and technological advancements.
- The budget for 2025-26 showcases revenue receipts of Rs 1,52,352 crore and revenue expenditure of Rs 1,79,476 crore.

Points to Note:

- i. The total revenue receipts are expected to rise by Rs 19,421.87 crore over the revised estimates for 2024-25, the State's Own-Tax Revenue (SOTR) is expected to go up by Rs 9888 crore and the non-tax revenue, by Rs 1,240 crore.
- ii. The fiscal deficit as percentage of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has been pegged at 3.16% in FY 2025-26, down from 3.51% the previous financial year. The deficit has grown from 2.5% in FY 2022-23 to 2.99% in FY 2023-24.
- iii. The Annual expenditure of the state went up by Rs 50,000 crore

Some Key points from the Budget Presentation:

1. Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation:

i. A major focus on disaster response, with a **Rs 750 crore** project for the 1st phase of **rehabilitating** victims of the **2024 Wayanad landslides**, which reportedly caused over 200 deaths and significant economic damage.

- The total loss was Rs 1202 crore, with a rehabilitation need of Rs 2201 crore.

ii. **Rs 51 crore** was allocated for the implementation of various development programs for the **rehabilitation** and **financial upliftment** of Scheduled Caste (SC) people belonging to economically and socially Disadvantaged Communities (DACs).

2. Social welfare initiatives:

i. An amount of **Rs. 20 crores** have been allocated for "**Margadeepam**", a scheme intended to provide **scholarships** to students belonging to minority communities and Scheduled Castes (SCs)/Scheduled Tribes (STs), replacing withdrawn central government scholarships.

ii. The **final installment** of the Service Pension (SP) **revision arrears**, amounting to **Rs. 600 crores** will be disbursed in February 2025.

iii. Social Security Pensions (SSPs), currently at Rs 1600 per month to around 60 lakh elderly beneficiaries, may see a minor hike.

- The **largest SSP in India** is in **Kerala**, spending over Rs 11,000 crore in a year to provide a pension of Rs 1600 per month.

iii. **Rs 50 crores** were allotted for the '*Aswasakiranam*' scheme, which provides **monthly assistance** of **Rs 600** to the family member who looks after the bed-ridden patients at home.

iv. **Rs 21 crores** were allocated for Stroke Care Units (SCU) in Ernakulam, Thrissur, etc.

- By this, **Kerala** will become the **1st Indian State** to achieve the status of having **SCU facilities** in **all district-level hospitals**.

3. Transport and Infrastructure:

i. The outlay of Roads and Bridges (R&B) is **Rs 1157.43 crores**; **Rs 198.84 crores** were provided for **Road Transport**; and **Rs 133.02 crores** were provided for the Inland Water Transport (IWT) sector.

ii. **Rs 100 crore** was earmarked for the Kerala State Transport Project (KSTP) **Phase II** for the activities of road safety and improvement of **363 kilometers (km)** of **roads**.

iii. **Rs 107 crore** was provided for the fleet modernisation of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) by purchasing modern diesel Bharat Stage Emission Standards 6 (BS-VI) **buses** in place of old buses.

iv. **Rs 5 crores** were allotted for the **K Homes project**, a new project to develop basic tourism infrastructure by using empty and unoccupied homes across KL, thereby maximising their utility.

Other Few Allocations:

i. An amount of **Rs 727.40 crore** was provided for the plan schemes in the agriculture sector in the financial year 2025-26.

ii. **Rs 2391.13 crore** was allocated for the **Education Sector** in the Financial Year 2025-26, and **Rs 1083.82 crore** was set apart for the **School Education Sector**.

- **Rs 84.28 crore** was provided for the basic infrastructural development of Government schools.

iv. The government has decided to **increase** the **road tax** on **old two-wheelers, private three-wheelers, and private motor cars beyond 15 years** by **50%**, expected to generate **Rs 55 crore**.

v. The **wages of daily wage** and **contract employees** will be hiked by **5%**.

Recent related News:

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

About Kerala:

Chief Minister (CM)- Pinarayi Vijayan

Governor- Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar

Wildlife Sanctuaries- Karimpuzha Wildlife Sanctuary and Kurinjimala Sanctuary

Sea Port- Kochi Port or Cochin Port

WB Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya Presents Rs 3.89 Lakh Crore Budget for FY26

On 12 February 2025, Finance Minister of West Bengal (WB), **Chandrima Bhattacharya**, presented a **Rs 3.89 lakh crore** (3,89,194 crore) [budget for the financial year 2025-26 \(FY 26\)](#) in the assembly.

- In the FY25 budget, the state saw an allocation of **Rs 3.67 lakh crore**, marking an **8%** increase from the FY24.
- The outstanding debt for FY25 (revised) was **Rs.7,06,531 crore**, the amount in the FY26 budget has been pegged at **Rs.7,71,670 crore**. The revised fiscal deficit for the year FY25 was **Rs.73,017 crore**, while in this budget the amount has been estimated to be **Rs.73,177 crore**.
- While the revised grant-in-aid from the Government of India (GoI) for FY25 was **Rs.28,431 crore**, the grant-in-aid for the FY26 budget has been pegged at **Rs.37,157 crore**.



Key Highlights:

- i. The state budget highlights a strong focus on rural development, infrastructure, and social welfare.
- ii. The state's Gross State Domestic Product (**GSDP**) recorded a **6.8%** growth in 2024-25 (FY 25), exceeding India's overall growth rate of 6.37%.
 - In FY25, the industry sector registered a growth of 7.3%, the agriculture and allied sector grew at a rate of 4.2%, and services sector witnessed a growth rate of 7.8%.
- iii. There is an announcement of a **4% increase in Dearness Allowance (DA)** for state government employees and pensioners, bringing the total DA to **18%** effective from 1 April 2025.
- iv. For capital expenditure, the government has proposed Rs 72,818.72 crore for 2025-26, an increase of Rs 11,826.62 crore from the current fiscal. Of this, Rs 19,724.72 crore falls under the Social Services category

Key Allocations:

- i. Among the allocations, **Rs 44,000 crore** is earmarked for **rural development and Panchayats**.
 - The state government has allocated Rs.38,762 crore to the Women and Child Development and Social Welfare Department, WB.
- ii. An allocation of **Rs 1,500 crore** has been made for upgrading **rural roads** under various development schemes. The '**Pathshree**' project for road and infrastructure development continues, with an additional Rs 1,500 crore allocated.
- iii. The state government has set aside **Rs 200 crore** to tackle erosion in vulnerable riverine areas.
 - Furthermore, **Rs 500 crore** has been allocated for a **4.75 kilometres (km)** bridge over the Ganga at **Gangasagar**, aimed at improving accessibility for pilgrims and supporting the local economy.
- iv. The '**Ghatat Master Plan**', focusing on dredging rivers and strengthening embankments, has received **Rs 500 crore this year**, with the overall project costing Rs 1,500 crore.
- v. '**Nadi Bandhan**' Initiative :The newly introduced 'Nadi Bandhan' project, aimed at preventing riverbank erosion in river-centric areas, has been allocated **Rs 200 crore**.
- vi. '**Banglar Bari**' Housing Project: Under the Banglar Bari' Housing Project State plans to construct 16 lakh new houses in 2025-26, with a budget of Rs 9,600 crore.
- vii. The budget's Rs 1,229 crore allocation for Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is anticipated to further support small businesses

Key Welfare Measures:

- i. It was announced that 70,000 Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) workers would receive smartphones as part of the welfare initiatives.
- ii. Although **no fresh allocations** under the **Lakshmi Bhandar Scheme** were announced, the scheme continues to benefit 2.21 crore women, with a total state expenditure of Rs 50,000 crore.

About West Bengal (WB):

Chief Minister (**CM**)– Mamata Banerjee

Governor– C. V. Ananda Bose

Capital– Kolkata

National Park (NP)– Sundarban NP, Neora Valley NP

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GENERAL AWARENESS

OCTOBER 13 2024

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Current Affairs	42	37	29	16
Current Static Banking	1	—	—	—
Current Static GK	2	1	—	—
Static Banking	—	—	—	—
Static GK	—	—	—	—
Total	45	38	29	16

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