THE HINDU
REVIEW

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National News

UNION BUDGET 2025-26

Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt Nirmala Sitharaman presented Union Budget 2025-26 in the Parliament today. The highlights of the budget are as follows:

Budget Estimates 2025-26

- The total receipts other than borrowings and the total expenditure are estimated at ₹ 34.96 lakh crore and ₹ 50.65 lakh crore respectively.
- The net tax receipts are estimated at ₹ 28.37 lakh crore.
- The fiscal deficit is estimated to be 4.4 per cent of GDP.
- The gross market borrowings are estimated at ₹ 14.82 lakh crore.
- Capex Expenditure of ₹11.21 lakh crore (3.1% of GDP) earmarked in FY2025-26.

Agriculture as the 1st Engine of Development

- **Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana – Developing Agri Districts Programme:** The programme to be launched in partnership with the states, covering 100 districts with low productivity, moderate crop intensity and below-average credit parameters, to benefit 1.7 crore farmers.
- **Building Rural Prosperity and Resilience:** A comprehensive multi-sectoral programme to be launched in partnership with states to address under-employment in agriculture through skilling, investment, technology, and invigorating the rural economy. Phase-1 to cover 100 developing agri-districts.
- **Aatmanirbharta in Pulses:** Government to launch a 6-year "Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses" with focus on Tur, Urad and Masoor. NAFED and NCCF to procure these pulses from farmers during the next 4 years.
- **Comprehensive Programme for Vegetables & Fruits:** A comprehensive programme to promote production, efficient supplies, processing, and remunerative prices for farmers to be launched in partnership with states.
- **Makhana Board in Bihar:** A Makhana Board to be established to improve production, processing, value addition, and marketing of makhana.
- **National Mission on High-Yielding Seeds:** A National Mission on High Yielding Seeds to be launched aiming at strengthening the research ecosystem, targeted development and propagation of seeds with high yield, and commercial availability of more than 100 seed varieties.
- **Fisheries:** Government to bring a framework for sustainable harnessing of fisheries from Indian Exclusive Economic Zone and High Seas, with a special focus on the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands.
- **Mission for Cotton Productivity:** A 5-year mission announced to facilitate significant improvements in productivity and sustainability of cotton farming, and promote extra-long staple cotton varieties.
- **Enhanced Credit through KCC:** The loan limit under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme to be enhanced from ₹ 3 lakh to ₹ 5 lakh for loans taken through the KCC.
- **Urea Plant in Assam:** A plant with annual capacity of 12.7 lakh metric tons to be set up at Namrup, Assam.

MSME's as the 2nd Engine of Development

- **Revision in classification criteria for MSMEs:** The investment and turnover limits for classification of all MSMEs to be enhanced to 2.5 and 2 times respectively.
- **Credit Cards for Micro Enterprises:** Customized Credit Cards with ₹ 5 lakh limit for micro enterprises registered on Udyam portal, 10 lakh cards to be issued in the first year.
- **Fund of Funds for Startups:** A new Fund of Funds, with expanded scope and a fresh contribution of ₹ 10,000 crore to be set up.
- **Scheme for First-time Entrepreneurs:** A new scheme for 5 lakh women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes first-time entrepreneurs to provide term-loans upto ₹ 2 crore in the next 5 years announced.
- **Focus Product Scheme for Footwear & Leather Sectors:** To enhance the productivity, quality and competitiveness of India's footwear and leather sector, a focus product scheme announced to facilitate employment for 22 lakh persons, generate turnover of ₹ 4 lakh crore and exports of over ₹ 1.1 lakh crore.
- **Measures for the Toy Sector:** A scheme to create high-quality, unique, innovative, and sustainable toys, making India a global hub for toys announced.
- **Support for Food Processing:** A National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management to be set up in Bihar.
- **Manufacturing Mission – Furthering "Make in India":** A National Manufacturing Mission covering small, medium and large industries for furthering "Make in India" announced.

Investment as the 3rd Engine of Development

Investing in People

- **Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0:** The cost norms for the nutritional support to be enhanced appropriately.
- **Atal Tinkering Labs:** 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs to be set up in Government schools in next 5 years.
- **Broadband Connectivity to Government Secondary Schools and PHCs:** Broadband connectivity to be provided to all Government secondary schools and primary health centres in rural areas under the Bharatnet project.
- **Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Scheme:** Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Scheme announced to provide digital-form Indian language books for school and higher education.
- **National Centres of Excellence for Skilling:** 5 National Centres of Excellence for skilling to be set up with global expertise and partnerships to equip our youth with the skills required for "Make for India, Make for the World" manufacturing.
- **Expansion of Capacity in IITs:** Additional infrastructure to be created in the 5 IITs started after 2014 to facilitate education for 6,500 more students.
- **Centre of Excellence in AI for Education:** A Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence for education to be set up with a total outlay of ₹ 500 crore.
- **Expansion of medical education:** 10,000 additional seats to be added in medical colleges and hospitals next year, adding to 75000 seats in the next 5 years.
- **Day Care Cancer Centres in all District Hospitals:** Government to set up Day Care Cancer Centres in all district hospitals in the next 3 years, 200 Centres in 2025-26.
- **Strengthening urban livelihoods:** A scheme for socio-economic upliftment of urban workers to help them improve their incomes and have sustainable livelihoods announced.
- **PM SVANidhi:** Scheme to be revamped with enhanced loans from banks, UPI linked credit cards with ₹ 30,000 limit, and capacity building support.
- **Social Security Scheme for Welfare of Online Platform Workers:** Government to arrange for identity cards, registration on e-Shram portal and healthcare under PM Jan Arogya Yojna, for gig-workers.

Investing in the Economy

- **Public Private Partnership in Infrastructure:** Infrastructure-related ministries to come up with a 3-year pipeline of projects in PPP mode, States also encouraged.
- **Support to States for Infrastructure:** An outlay of ₹1.5 lakh crore proposed for the 50-year interest free loans to states for capital expenditure and incentives for reforms.
- **Asset Monetization Plan 2025-30:** Second Plan for 2025-30 to plough back capital of ₹ 10 lakh crore in new projects announced.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission:** Mission to be extended until 2028 with an enhanced total outlay.
- **Urban Challenge Fund:** An Urban Challenge Fund of ₹ 1 lakh crore announced to implement the proposals for 'Cities as Growth Hubs', 'Creative Redevelopment of Cities' and 'Water and Sanitation', allocation of ₹ 10,000 crore proposed for 2025-26.
- **Nuclear Energy Mission for Viksit Bharat:** Amendments to the Atomic Energy Act and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act to be taken up. Nuclear Energy Mission for research & development of Small Modular Reactors (SMR) with an outlay of ₹20,000 crore to be set up, 5 indigenously developed SMRs to be operational by 2033.
- **Shipbuilding:** The Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy to be revamped. Large ships above a specified size to be included in the infrastructure harmonized master list (HML).
- **Maritime Development Fund:** A Maritime Development Fund with a corpus of ₹ 25,000 crore to be set up, with up to 49 per cent contribution by the Government, and the balance from ports and private sector.
- **UDAN – Regional Connectivity Scheme:** A modified UDAN scheme announced to enhance regional connectivity to 120 new destinations and carry 4 crore passengers in the next 10 years. Also to support helipads and smaller airports in hilly, aspirational, and North East region districts.
- **Greenfield Airport in Bihar:** Greenfield airports announced in Bihar, in addition to the expansion of the capacity of Patna airport and a brownfield airport at Bihta.
- **Western Koshi Canal Project in Mithilanchal:** Financial support for the Western Koshi Canal ERM Project in Bihar.
- **Mining Sector Reforms:** A policy for recovery of critical minerals from tailings to be brought out.
- **SWAMIH Fund 2:** A fund of ₹ 15,000 crore aimed at expeditious completion of another 1 lakh dwelling units, with contribution from the Government, banks and private investors announced.
- **Tourism for employment-led growth:** Top 50 tourist destination sites in the country to be developed in partnership with states through a challenge mode.

Investing in Innovation

- **Research, Development and Innovation:** ₹20,000 crore to be allocated to implement private sector driven Research, Development and Innovation initiative announced in the July Budget.
- **Deep Tech Fund of Funds:** Deep Tech Fund of Funds to be explored to catalyze the next generation startups.
- **PM Research Fellowship:** 10,000 fellowships for technological research in IITs and IISc with enhanced financial support.
- **Gene Bank for Crops Germplasm:** 2nd Gene Bank with 10 lakh germplasm lines to be set up for future food and nutritional security.
- **National Geospatial Mission:** A National Geospatial Mission announced to develop foundational geospatial infrastructure and data.
- **Gyan Bharatam Mission:** A Gyan Bharatam Mission for survey, documentation and conservation of our manuscript heritage with academic institutions, museums, libraries and private collectors to be undertaken to cover more than 1 crore manuscripts announced.

Exports as the 4th Engine of Development

- **Export Promotion Mission:** An Export Promotion Mission, with sectoral and ministerial targets, driven jointly by the Ministries of Commerce, MSME, and Finance to be set up.
- **BharatTradeNet:** 'BharatTradeNet' (BTN) for international trade to be set-up as a unified platform for trade documentation and financing solutions.
- **National Framework for GCC:** A national framework to be formulated as guidance to states for promoting Global Capability Centres in emerging tier 2 cities.

Reforms as Fuel: Financial sector reforms and Development

- **FDI in Insurance Sector:** The FDI limit for the insurance sector to be raised from 74 to 100 per cent, for those companies which invest the entire premium in India.
- **Credit Enhancement Facility by NaBFID:** NaBFID to set up a 'Partial Credit Enhancement Facility' for corporate bonds for infrastructure.
- **Grameen Credit Score:** Public Sector Banks to develop 'Grameen Credit Score' framework to serve the credit needs of SHG members and people in rural areas.
- **Pension Sector:** A forum for regulatory coordination and development of pension products to be set up.
- **High Level Committee for Regulatory Reforms:** A High-Level Committee for Regulatory Reforms to be set up for a review of all non-financial sector regulations, certifications, licenses, and permissions.
- **Investment Friendliness Index of States:** An Investment Friendliness Index of States to be launched in 2025 to further the spirit of competitive cooperative federalism anounced.
- **Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0:** The Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 to decriminalize more than 100 provisions in various laws.

PART B

Direct Tax

- No personal income tax payable upto income of Rs 12 lakh (i.e. average income of Rs 1 lakh per month other than special rate income such as capital gains) under the new regime.
- This limit will be Rs 12.75 lakh for salaried tax payers, due to standard deduction of Rs 75,000.
- The new structure will substantially reduce the taxes of the middle class and leave more money in their hands, boosting household consumption, savings and investment.
- The new Income-Tax Bill to be clear and direct in text so as to make it simple to understand for taxpayers and tax administration, leading to tax certainty and reduced litigation.
- Revenue of about ₹ 1 lakh crore in direct taxes will be forgone.

Revised tax rate structure

In the new tax regime, the revised tax rate structure will stand as follows:

Income Range	Tax Rate
0 – 4 lakh rupees	Nil
4 – 8 lakh rupees	5%
8 – 12 lakh rupees	10%
12 – 16 lakh rupees	15%
16 – 20 lakh rupees	20%
20 – 24 lakh rupees	25%
Above 24 lakh rupees	30%

TDS/TCS rationalization for easing difficulties
- Rationalization of Tax Deduction at Source (TDS) by reducing number of rates and thresholds above which TDS is deducted.
- The limit for tax deduction on interest for senior citizens doubled from the present Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh.
- The annual limit of Rs 2.40 lakh for TDS on rent increased to Rs 6 lakh.
- The threshold to collect tax at source (TCS) on remittances under RBI's Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS) increased from Rs 7 lakh to Rs 10 lakh.
- The provisions of the higher TDS deduction will apply only in non-PAN cases.
- Decriminalization for the cases of delay of payment of TCS up to the due date of filing statement.

Reducing Compliance Burden
- Reduction of compliance burden for small charitable trusts/institutions by increasing their period of registration from 5 years to 10 years.
- The benefit of claiming the annual value of self-occupied properties as nil will be extended for two such self-occupied properties without any condition.

Ease of Doing Business
- Introduction of a scheme for determining arm's length price of international transaction for a block period of three years.
- Expansion of the scope of safe harbour rules to reduce litigation and provide certainty in international taxation.
- Exemption of withdrawals made from National Savings Scheme (NSS) by individuals on or after the 29th of August, 2024.
- Similar treatment to NPS Vatsalya accounts as is available to normal NPS accounts, subject to overall limits.

Employment and Investment

Tax certainty for electronics manufacturing Schemes
- Presumptive taxation regime for non-residents who provide services to a resident company that is establishing or operating an electronics manufacturing facility.
- Introduction of a safe harbour for tax certainty for non-residents who store components for supply to specified electronics manufacturing units.

Tonnage Tax Scheme for Inland Vessels
The benefits of existing tonnage tax scheme to be extended to inland vessels registered under the Indian Vessels Act, 2021 to promote inland water transport in the country.
Extension for incorporation of Start-Ups
Extension of the period of incorporation by 5 years to allow the benefit available to start-ups incorporated before 1.4.2030.

Alternate Investment Funds (AIFs)
Certainty of taxation on the gains from securities to Category I and Category II AIFs which are undertaking investments in infrastructure and other such sectors.
Extension of investment date for Sovereign and Pension Funds
Extension of the date of making investments in Sovereign Wealth Funds and Pension Funds by five more years, to 31st March, 2030, to promote funding from them to the infrastructure sector.

Indirect Tax

Rationalisation of Customs Tariff Structure for Industrial Goods
Union Budget 2025-26 proposes to:
- Remove seven tariff rates. This is over and above the seven tariff rates removed in 2023-24 budget. After this, there will be only eight remaining tariff rates including 'zero' rate.
- Apply appropriate cess to broadly maintain effective duty incidence except on a few items, where such incidence will reduce marginally.
- Levy not more than one cess or surcharge. Therefore Social Welfare Surcharge on 82 tariff lines that are subject to a cess, exempted.

Revenue of about ₹ 2600 crore in indirect taxes will be forgone.

Relief on import of Drugs/Medicines
- 36 lifesaving drugs and medicines fully exempted from Basic Customs Duty (BCD).
- 6 lifesaving medicines to attract concessional customs duty of 5%.
- Specified drugs and medicines under Patient Assistance Programmes run by pharmaceutical companies fully exempted from BCD; 37 more medicines added along with 13 new patient assistance programmes.

Support to Domestic Manufacturing and Value addition

- **Critical Minerals**: Cobalt powder and waste, the scrap of lithium-ion battery, Lead, Zinc and 12 more critical minerals fully exempted from BCD.
- **Textiles:** Two more types of shuttle-less looms fully exempted textile machinery; BCD rate on knitted fabrics revised from "10% or 20%" to "20% or ` 115 per kg, whichever is higher.
- **Electronic Goods**:
  1. BCD on Interactive Flat Panel Display (IFPD) increased from 10% to 20% .
  2. BCD reduced to 5% on Open Cell and other components.
  3. BCD on parts of Open Cells exempted.
- **Lithium Ion Battery**: 35 additional capital goods for EV battery manufacturing, and 28 additional capital goods for mobile phone battery manufacturing exempted.
- **Shipping Sector**: Exemption of BCD on raw materials, components, consumables or parts for the manufacture of ships extended for another ten years. The same dispensation to continue for ship breaking.
- **Telecommunication**: BCD reduced from 20% to 10% on Carrier Grade ethernet switches.

Export Promotion

- **Handicraft Goods**: Time period for export extended from six months to one year, further extendable by another three months, if required. Nine items added to list of duty-free inputs.
- **Leather sector:** BCD on Wet Blue leather fully exempted.Crust leather exempted from 20% export duty.
- **Marine products**:
  1. BCD reduced from 30% to 5% on Frozen Fish Paste (Surimi) for manufacture and export of its analogue products.
  2. BCD reduced from 15% to 5% on fish hydrolysate for manufacture of fish and shrimp feeds.
- **Domestic MROs for Railway Goods**:
  1. Railways MROs to benefit similar to the aircraft and ships MROs in terms of import of repair items.
  2. Time limit extended for export of such items from 6 months to one year and made further extendable by one year.

Trade facilitation

- **Time limit for Provisional Assessment**: For finalising the provisional assessment, time-limit of two years fixed, extendable by a year.
- **Voluntary Compliance:**A new provision introduced to enable importers or exporters, after clearance of goods, to voluntarily declare material facts and pay duty with interest but without penalty.
- **Extended Time for End Use**:
  1. Time limit for the end-use of imported inputs in the relevant rules extended from six months to one year.
  2. Such importers to file only quarterly statements instead of a monthly statement.

Rupee Comes From (Budget 2025-26)

The government's total revenue comes from various sources, categorized as follows:

- **Corporation Tax** – 17%
- **Income Tax (includes Securities Transaction Tax)** – 22%
- **Customs Duty** – 4%
- **Union Excise Duties** – 5%
- **Goods & Services Tax (GST) & Other Taxes** – 18%
- **Non-Tax Receipts** – 9%
- **Non-Debt Capital Receipts** – 1%
- **Borrowings & Other Liabilities** – 24%

Rupee Goes To (Budget 2025-26)

The government's expenditure is divided into multiple categories:

- **Central Sector Schemes (excluding Defence & Major Subsidies)** – 16%
- **Interest Payments** – 20%
- **Defence** – 8%
- **Major Subsidies (Food, Fertilizer, Petroleum, etc.)** – 6%
- **Finance Commission & Other Transfers** – 8%

- **State Share of Taxes & Duties** – 22%
- **Pensions** – 4%
- **Other Expenditure** – 8%
- **Centrally Sponsored Schemes** – 8%

Total Revenue and Expenditure

Revenue Estimates
- Total Revenue Receipts: **₹34,20,409 crore**
- Tax Revenue (Net to Centre): **₹28,37,409 crore**
- Non-Tax Revenue: **₹583,000 crore**
- Capital Receipts (including borrowings): **₹16,44,936 crore**

Expenditure Estimates
- Total Expenditure: **₹50,65,345 crore**
- Revenue Expenditure: **₹39,44,255 crore**
- Capital Expenditure: **₹11,21,090 crore**
- Effective Capital Expenditure: **₹15,48,282 crore**
- Deficit Indicators

Key Deficit Figures
- **Fiscal Deficit**: ₹1,56,89,36 crore (4.4% of GDP)
- **Revenue Deficit**: ₹5,23,846 crore (1.5% of GDP)
- **Effective Revenue Deficit**: ₹96,654 crore (0.3% of GDP)
- **Primary Deficit**: ₹2,92,598 crore (0.8% of GDP)

Deficit Financing
- Market Borrowings: **₹11,53,834 crore**
- Securities against Small Savings: **₹343,382 crore**
- External Debt: **₹23,490 crore**
- Sector-Wise Allocation

Major Expenditures
- **Interest Payments**: ₹12,76,338 crore
- **Defence**: ₹4,91,732 crore
- **Pension**: ₹2,76,618 crore

Subsidies:
- Food: **₹203,420 crore**
- Fertilizer: **₹167,887 crore**
- Petroleum: **₹12,100 crore**

Key Infrastructure and Development Allocations
- **Rural Development**: ₹2,66,817 crore
- **Education**: ₹1,28,650 crore
- **Healthcare**: ₹98,311 crore
- **Urban Development**: ₹96,777 crore
- **Transport Infrastructure**: ₹5,48,649 crore
- Transfer to States & UTs

Total Transfer to States & UTs: ₹25,01,284 crore
- State Devolution: **₹14,22,444 crore**
- Finance Commission Grants: **₹1,32,767 crore**
- Centrally Sponsored Schemes: **₹541,850 crore**
- Other Grants & Loans: **₹3,74,725 crore**
- Key Government Schemes and Allocations

Agriculture & Rural Development
- **PM-KISAN**: ₹63,500 crore
- **Mahatma Gandhi NREGA**: ₹86,000 crore
- **PM Awas Yojana (Grameen & Urban)**: ₵74,626 crore

Education & Employment
- **PM Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI)**: ₹7,500 crore
- **Samagra Shiksha**: ₹41,250 crore
- **Skill Development & Apprenticeships**: ₹13,560 crore

Health & Social Welfare
- **Ayushman Bharat – PMJAY**: ₹9,406 crore
- **POSHAN 2.0 (Nutrition Mission)**: ₹21,960 crore
- **Social Assistance Programs**: ₹9,652 crore

Infrastructure & Industrial Development
- **Jal Jeevan Mission**: ₹67,000 crore
- **PM Gram Sadak Yojana**: ₹19,000 crore
- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes**: ₹2,445 crore

Budget Allocations for All Ministries (2025-26):

Top Ministries by Budget Allocation
1. **Ministry of Finance** – ₹19,39,001.26 crore
2. **Ministry of Defence** – ₹6,81,210.27 crore
3. **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution** – ₹2,15,767.09 crore
4. **Ministry of Railways** – ₹2,55,445.18 crore
5. **Ministry of Road Transport & Highways** – ₹2,87,333.16 crore

Key Ministry Allocations

Infrastructure & Development
- **Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs** – ₹96,777.00 crore
- **Ministry of Power** – ₹21,847.00 crore
- **Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways** – ₹3,470.58 crore

Social Sectors
- **Ministry of Education** – ₹1,28,650.05 crore
- **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** – ₹99,858.56 crore
- **Ministry of Women & Child Development** – ₹26,889.69 crore
- **Ministry of Rural Development** – ₹1,90,405.53 crore

Scientific Research & Technology
- **Department of Space** – ₹13,416.20 crore
- **Ministry of Science & Technology** – ₹38,613.32 crore
- **Ministry of Electronics & IT** – ₹26,026.25 crore

Agriculture & Industry
- **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare** – ₹1,37,756.55 crore
- **Ministry of Commerce & Industry** – ₹18,446.05 crore
- **Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers** – ₹1,61,965.21 crore

Law & Governance
- **Ministry of Home Affairs** – ₹2,33,210.68 crore
- **Ministry of Law & Justice** – ₹5,850.37 crore
- **Ministry of External Affairs** – ₹20,516.61 crore

Economic Survey 2025: Key Highlights, Summary, and Important Points

The **Economic Survey of India 2025** provides a comprehensive overview of India's economic performance, highlighting key trends, challenges, and policy recommendations for sustainable growth. As a precursor to the Union Budget, the survey underscores the resilience of the Indian economy amidst global uncertainties, emphasizing robust GDP growth, declining inflation, and significant strides in sectors such as manufacturing, services, and digital infrastructure. It also addresses critical areas like employment generation, fiscal consolidation, and green energy transition, offering insights into the government's vision for achieving long-term economic stability and inclusivity. **CEA V Anantha Nageswaran** gives an Economic Survey presentation

Economic Survey 2025: Key Highlights, Summary, and Important Points

Chapter 1: State of the Economy: Getting Back into the Fast Lane
- India's real GDP growth is **estimated at 6.4 per cent in FY25** (as per first advance estimates of national income), which equates nearly to its decadal average.
- Real gross value added (GVA) is also estimated to grow by 6.4 per cent FY25.
- The global economy on an average grew by 3.3 per cent in 2023 against the IMF projection of 3.2 per cent growth in the next five years.
- The real GDP growth in **FY26 is expected to grow between 6.3 and 6.8 per cent**, keeping in mind the upsides and downsides to growth.
- Thrust on **grassroots-level structural reforms** and **deregulation** to reinforce the medium-term growth potential and boost global competitiveness of Indian economy.
- Geopolitical tensions, ongoing conflicts and global trade policy risks continue to pose significant challenges to the global economic outlook.
- **Retail headline inflation** has softened from 5.4 per cent in FY24 to **4.9 per cent in April –December 2024**.
- Capital expenditure (CAPEX) improved continuously from FY21 to FY24. Post general elections, CAPEX grew YOY by 8.2 per cent during July –November 2024.
- India accounts for seventh-largest share in global services exports, underscoring India's global competitiveness in the sector.
- During April to December 2024, non-Petroleum and non-Gems & Jewellery exports went up by 9.1 per cent reflecting resilience of India's merchandise exports amid volatile global conditions.

Chapter 2: Monetary and Financial Sector Developments: The Card and the Horse
- Bank credit has grown at a steady rate with credit growth converging towards deposit growth.
- **Profitability of Scheduled Commercial Banks improved**, reflected in a fall in gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) and rise in capital to risk weighted asset ratio (CRAR).
- Credit growth outpaced nominal GDP growth for two successive years. The **credit-GDP gap narrowed to (-) 0.3 per cent in Q1 of FY25** from (-) 10.3 per cent in Q1 of FY23, indicating sustainable bank credit growth.
- **Banking sector** exhibits **improvement in asset quality**, robust capital buffers, and strong operational performance.
- The **gross non-performing assets (GNPAs)** of Scheduled Commercial Banks declined to a 12-year low of **2.6 per cent of gross loans and advances** at the end of September 2024.
- Under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, **₹3.6 lakh crore realized in resolution of 1,068 plans** till September 2024. It amounts to 161 per cent against the liquidation value and 86.1 per cent of the fair value of the assets involved.
- Indian stock markets outperformed its emerging market peers despite election-driven market volatility challenges.
- The total resource mobilisation from primary markets (equity and debt) stands at ₹11.1 lakh crore from April to December 2024, five per cent more than the amount mobilised during FY24.
- BSE stock market capitalisation to GDP ratio stood at 136 per cent at the end of December 2024, far higher than other Emerging Market Economies like China (65 per cent) and Brazil (37 per cent).
- India's **insurance** market continued its upward trajectory, with total insurance premiums growing by **7.7 per cent in FY24**, reaching ₹11.2 lakh crore.
- India's **pension** sector experienced significant growth, with the **total number of pension subscribers growing by 16 per cent** (YoY) as of September 2024.

Chapter 3: External Sector: Getting FDI Right
- India's external sector continues to display resilience amidst global uncertainties and headwinds.
- **Overall exports** (merchandise + services) **grew by 6 per cent** (YOY) in the first nine months of FY25. Services sector by 11.6 per cent during the same time.
- India commands **10.2 per cent** of the **global export market** in '**Telecommunications, Computer, & Information Services**', ranking 2nd largest exporter in the world, as per UNCTAD.

- India's current account deficit (**CAD**) stood at **1.2 per cent of GDP** in Q2 of FY25, supported by rising net services receipts and an increase in private transfer receipts.
- Gross Foreign Direct Investment (**FDI**) inflows recorded a revival in FY25, increasing from USD 47.2 billion in the first eight months of FY24 to USD 55.6 billion in the same period of FY25, a YoY **growth of 17.9 per cent**.
- India's FOREX reserves stood at USD 640.3 billion as of the end of December 2024, **sufficient to cover 10.9 months of imports** and approximately 90 per cent of the country's external debt.
- India's **external debt** remained stable over the past few years, with the external debt to GDP ratio standing at **19.4 per cent at the end of September 2024.**

Chapter 4: Prices and Inflation: Understanding the Dynamics

- As per the IMF, the global inflation rate moderated to 5.7 per cent by 2024 from its peak of 8.7 per cent in 2022.
- **Retail inflation** in India saw a reduction from 5.4 per cent in FY24 to **4.9 per cent in FY25 (April-December 2024).**
- **RBI** and the **IMF** project India's consumer price inflation will gradually align with the target of around **4 per cent in FY26.**
- Development of climate-resilient crop varieties and enhanced farming practices are essential to mitigate the effects of extreme weather events and achieve long-term price stability.

Chapter 5: Medium-Term Outlook: Deregulation Drives Growth

- Indian economy is in the middle of a change that represents an unprecedented economic challenge and opportunity. **Geo-Economic Fragmentation (GEF) is replacing globalization** leading to imminent economic realignments and readjustments.
- To realize the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 India will need to achieve a growth rate of around 8 per cent at constant prices, on average, for about a decade or two.
- The Medium-term growth outlook for India must consider the new global realities – GEF, China's manufacturing prowess, and dependency of efforts for energy transition on China.
- India to focus on **systematic deregulation** to reinvigorate the domestic levers of growth and empower individuals and organisations to pursue legitimate economic activity with ease.
- Systemic deregulation or enhancing economic freedom for individuals and small businesses is arguably the **most important policy priority** to bolster India's medium-term growth prospects.
- Focus of reforms and economic policy must now be on systematic deregulation under Ease of Doing Business 2.0 and **creation of a viable Mittelstand**, i.e. India's SME sector.
- In the next step, States must work on liberalising standards and controls, setting legal safeguards for enforcement, reducing tariffs and fees, and applying risk-based regulation.

Chapter 6: Investment and Infrastructure: Keeping it Going

- The central focus of the Government in the last five years was on increasing public spending on infrastructure, and speeding up approvals and resource mobilization.
- The Union Government's **capital expenditure on key infrastructure sectors** has **grown at a rate of 38.8 per cent** from FY20 to FY24.
- Under railway connectivity, **2031 km of railway network** was commissioned between April and November, 2024, and **17 new pairs of Vande Bharat** trains were introduced between April and October 2024.
- Under road network, **5853 km of National Highways** was constructed in FY25 (April-Dec).
- Under National Industrial Corridor Development Programme, a total of 383 plots covering **3788 acres have been allotted for industrial use** for various sectors in phase 1.
- Operational efficiency improved reduction in average container turnaround time in major ports from **48.1 hours in FY24 to 30.4 hours during FY25** (Apr-Nov), significantly improving **port connectivity**.
- A 15.8 per cent year-on-year increase in renewable energy capacity of solar and wind power by December 2024.
- The share of renewable energy in India's total installed capacity now stands at 47 per cent.
- Government's schemes like the DDUGJY and the SAUBHAGYA improved electricity access in rural areas, electrifying 18,374 villages and providing electricity to 2.9 crore households.
- The government's digital connectivity initiatives have gained traction, particularly with the rollout of 5G services across all states and union territories by October 2024.
- Efforts to provide 4G mobile services to remote areas under the Universal Service Obligation Fund (now Digital Bharat Nidhi) have made significant strides, with over 10,700 villages covered by December 2024.
- Under the **Jal Jeevan Mission**, over 12 **crore families** have gained access of piped drinking water since its launch.
- Under Phase II of the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen, during April to November 2024, 1.92 lakh villages were incrementally declared ODF Plus under the model category, taking the total number of **ODF Plus villages to 3.64 lakh**.

- In urban areas, the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana has completed over 89 lakh houses.**
- City transportation network is expanding rapidly, with metro and rapid rail systems operational or under construction in 29 cities, covering over 1,000 kilometers.
- Real Estate (Regulation & Development) Act, 2016, ensured regulation and transparency of Real Estate sector. By January 2025, **over 1.38 lakh real estate projects registered**, and 1.38 lakh complaints were resolved.
- India currently operates 56 active space assets. The government's Space Vision 2047 includes ambitious projects like the **Gaganyaan** mission and the **Chandrayaan-4** Lunar Sample Return Mission.
- Public sector investment alone cannot meet the requirements of infrastructure, and **private sector participation will be crucial** to bridge the gap.
- The government has created mechanisms such as the National Infrastructure Pipeline and National Monetisation Pipeline to facilitate private sector involvement in infrastructure.

Chapter 7: Industry: All about Business Reforms

- The industrial sector expected to grow by 6.2 per cent in FY-25 (first advance estimates), driven by robust growth in electricity and construction.
- The government has been actively promoting Smart Manufacturing and Industry 4.0, supporting the establishment of **SAMARTH Udyog centres**.
- In FY24, the **Indian automobile domestic sales grew by 12.5 per cent**.
- The domestic production of electronic goods has grown at a CAGR of 17.5 per cent from FY15 to FY24.
- **99 per cent smartphones now manufactured domestically,** drastically reducing India's dependence on imports.
- The total **annual turnover of pharmaceuticals in FY24 was ₹4.17 lakh crore**, growing at an average rate of 10.1 per cent in the last five years.
- As per the WIPO Report 2022, **India ranks sixth among the top 10 patent filing offices** globally.
- Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector has emerged as a highly vibrant sector of the Indian economy.
- To provide equity funding to MSMEs with the potential to scale up, the government launched the **Self-Reliant India Fund** with a corpus of ₹50,000 crore.
- The government is implementing the Micro and Small Enterprises-Cluster Development Programme to develop clusters across the country.

Chapter 8: Services -New Challenges for the Old War Horse

- The service sector's contribution to total GVA has risen from **50.6 per cent in FY14 to 55.3 per cent in FY25 (First Advance Estimates).**
- The average growth rate of the services sector was **8 per cent in the pre-pandemic years (FY13 -FY20). It stood at 8.3 per cent in the post-pandemic period (FY23–FY25).**
- India held a 4.3 per cent share in global services exports in 2023, ranking seventh worldwide.
- India's services export growth surged to **12.8 per cent during April–November FY25, up from 5.7 per cent in FY24.**
- Information and computer-related services grew at a trend rate of 12.8 per cent over the last decade (FY13–FY23), increasing their share of overall GVA from 6.3 per cent to 10.9 per cent.
- Indian Railways recorded an 8 per cent growth in passenger traffic originating in FY24. Revenue-earning freight in FY24 grew by 5.2 per cent.
- The tourism sector's contribution to GDP returned to its pre-pandemic level of 5 per cent in FY23.

Chapter 9: Agriculture and Food Management: Sector of the Future

- The 'Agriculture and Allied Activities' sector contributes approximately 16 per cent of the country's GDP for FY24 (PE) at current prices.
- High-value sectors like horticulture, livestock, and fisheries have become key drivers of overall agricultural growth.
- Kharif foodgrain production for **2024 is expected to reach 1647.05 Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT), an increase of 89.37 LMT from the previous year.**
- For the fiscal year 2024-25, the MSP for Arhar and Bajra has been increased by **59 per cent and 77 per cent** over the weighted average cost of production, respectively.
- The fisheries sector has shown the highest compound annual growth rate **(CAGR) of 8.7 per cent, followed by livestock with a CAGR of 8 per cent.**
- National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013 and the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) marked a fundamental shift in the approach to food security.

- The provision of free food grains under PMGKAY for another five years, reflects the long-term commitment of Govt towards food and nutrition security.
- As of 31st October, over 11 crore farmers have benefitted under PM-KISAN, while 23.61 lakh farmers are enrolled under PM Kisan Mandhan.

Chapter 10: Climate & Environment: Adaptation Matters

- India's ambition to achieve developed nation status by 2047 is fundamentally anchored in the vision of inclusive and sustainable development.
- India has installed electricity generation capacity of **2,13,701 megawatts** from non-fossil fuel sources, which accounts for 46.8 per cent of the total capacity as of 30 November 2024.
- As per the Forest Survey of India 2024 an additional carbon sink of 2.29 billion tonnes CO2 equivalent has been created between **2005 and 2024.**
- The India-led global movement, Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE), aims to enhance the country's sustainability efforts.
- By 2030, it is estimated that LiFE measures could save consumers around **USD 440 billion globally** through reduced consumption and lower prices.

Chapter 11: Social Sector -Extending the reach and driving empowerment

- The social services expenditure of the government (combined for Centre and States) increased at a compound annual growth rate of 15 per cent from FY21 to FY 25.
- Gini coefficient, a measure of inequality in consumption expenditure, is declining. For rural areas it declined to **0.237 in 2023-24 from 0.266 in 2022-23, and for urban areas, it fell to 0.284 in 2023-24 from 0.314 in 2022-23.**
- Various fiscal policies of the government are aiding in reshaping the income distribution.
- Government health expenditure increases from 29.0 per cent to 48.0 per cent; share of out-of-pocket expenditure in total health expenditure declines from **62.6 per cent to 39.4 per cent, reducing financial hardship endured by households.**
- The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) has played a decisive role in the significant reductions in expenditure with over ₹1.25 lakh crore in savings being recorded.
- The strategy of —Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been adopted to ensure that budgets at the Gram Panchayat levels align with the SDG objectives.

Chapter 12: Employment and Skill Development: Existential priorities

- Indian labour market indicators have improved with unemployment rate declining to **3.2 per cent in 2023-24 (July-June) from 6.0 per cent in 2017-18 (July-June).**
- With around 26 per cent of the population in the age group of 10-24 years, India stands at the cusp of a unique demographic opportunity, as one of the youngest nations globally.
- To give a fillip to women's entrepreneurship, the government has launched several initiatives in terms of easier access to credit, marketing support, skill development, and support to women start-ups, etc.
- The growing digital economy and renewable energy sectors are providing enhanced opportunities for job creation, essential for achieving the Viksit Bharat's vision.
- The government is establishing a resilient and responsive skilled ecosystem to keep pace with emerging global trends such as automation, generative AI, digitalisation, and the effects of climate change.
- The Government has implemented measures to boost employment, foster self-employment, and promote worker welfare.
- The recently launched PM-Internship Scheme is emerging as a transformative catalyst for employment generation.
- The net payroll additions under EPFO have more than doubled in the past six years, signalling healthy growth in formal employment.

Chapter 13: Labour in the AI Era: Crisis or Catalyst?

- **Developers of Artificial Intelligence (AI) promise** to usher in a new age, where a bulk of the economically valuable work is automated.
- AI is anticipated to surpass human performance in critical decision-making across various fields, including healthcare, research, criminal justice, education, business, and financial services.
- Barriers to large-scale AI adoption persist in the present, which include concerns over reliability, resource inefficiencies, and infrastructure deficits. These challenges, along with AI's experimental nature, create a window for policymakers to act.
- Fortunately, due to AI presently being in its infancy, India is afforded the time necessary to strengthen its foundations and mobilise a nation-wide institutional response.
- Leveraging its young, dynamic, and tech-savvy population, India has the potential to create a workforce that can utilise AI to augment their work and productivity.

- The future revolves around 'Augmented Intelligence', where the workforce integrates both human and machine capabilities. This approach aims to enhance human potential and improve overall efficiency in job performance, ultimately benefiting society as a whole.
- Collaborative effort between government, private sector, and academia essential to minimise adverse societal effects of AI-driven transformation.

Best Marching Contingents and Tableaux of Republic Day Parade 2025 Announced

The Republic Day Parade at **Kartavya Path, Delhi**, is a grand celebration that showcases India's military strength, cultural diversity, and historical legacy. The **2025 Republic Day Parade** witnessed a magnificent display of discipline, tradition, and artistry, with Marching Contingents and Tableaux competing for top honors. The results were announced by the three expert panels of judges, and an online public poll conducted on the **MyGov portal** also determined the 'Popular Choice' winners.

Best Marching Contingents: A Display of Discipline and Excellence
The Marching Contingents, comprising **defense personnel, paramilitary forces, and police**, demonstrated impeccable coordination, precision, and patriotism. The winners in this category were as follows:

Judges' Choice:
- **Best Marching Contingent among Services:** Jammu & Kashmir Rifles Contingent
- **Best Marching Contingent among CAPFs/Other Auxiliary Forces:** Delhi Police Marching Contingent

Popular Choice (MyGov Poll):
- **Best Marching Contingent among Services:** Signals Contingent
- **Best Marching Contingent among CAPFs/Other Auxiliary Forces:** CRPF Marching Contingent

The **Jammu & Kashmir Rifles Contingent** impressed the jury with their disciplined and synchronized marching, while the **Delhi Police Contingent** showcased an exceptional parade drill. The public, however, voted for the **Signals Contingent** and **CRPF Marching Contingent** as their favorites in the online poll.

Top Tableaux Showcasing India's Cultural and Historical Legacy
One of the most anticipated segments of the **Republic Day Parade** is the **Tableaux Presentation**, where states, union territories, and central ministries present visually stunning floats depicting their unique heritage, achievements, and traditions.

Judges' Choice for Best Tableaux (States/UTs):
- **Uttar Pradesh:** Mahakumbh 2025 – Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas
  The tableau highlighted the **grandeur of Mahakumbh 2025**, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world. It emphasized the spiritual, historical, and economic significance of the Kumbh Mela in shaping India's heritage.
- **Tripura:** Eternal Reverence: The Worship of 14 Deities in Tripura – Kharchi Puja
  This tableau depicted the **Kharchi Puja**, a traditional festival of Tripura that honors 14 deities. It showcased the unique **blending of tribal and Hindu traditions** that define the state's religious identity.
- **Andhra Pradesh:** Etikoppaka Bommalu – Eco-Friendly Wooden Toys
  The tableau presented the intricate craftsmanship of **Etikoppaka wooden toys**, a GI-tagged art form known for its **eco-friendly lacquered designs** and deep cultural significance.

Best Tableau from Central Ministries/Departments (Judges' Choice):
- **Ministry of Tribal Affairs:** Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh
  This tableau paid tribute to **India's tribal communities**, showcasing their contributions to the nation's development and the government's initiatives for their welfare.

Special Prizes:
- **Central Public Works Department:** 75 Years of the Constitution of India
  This tableau celebrated India's constitutional journey, highlighting the **vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** and the milestones achieved under the Constitution.
- **'Jayati Jai Mamah Bharatam' Dance Group**
  This performance was recognized for its **energetic and patriotic depiction** of India's cultural vibrancy through dance.

Popular Choice Award (MyGov Poll) for Tableaux
In addition to the judges' evaluation, the government conducted an **online poll on the MyGov portal** from **January 26 to 28, 2025**, where citizens voted for their favorite tableaux. The results were as follows:

- **Gujarat:** Swarnim Bharat: Virasat Aur Vikas
Gujarat's tableau portrayed India's **rich heritage and rapid development**, reflecting the country's journey toward becoming a global powerhouse.
- **Uttar Pradesh:** Mahakumbh 2025 – Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas
The state's tableau found immense appreciation among the public as well, securing the second position in the poll.
- **Uttarakhand:** Uttarakhand: Cultural Heritage and Adventure Sports
This tableau highlighted the **spiritual, cultural, and adventure tourism** aspects of Uttarakhand, emphasizing its significance as a religious and adventure destination.

Best Tableau from Central Ministries/Departments (Popular Choice):

- **Ministry of Women & Child Development:** Multifaceted Journey of Women and Children
This tableau celebrated the **transformational journey of women and children** in India under the Ministry's various **welfare schemes**, showcasing achievements in health, education, and empowerment

First 'Mann Ki Baat' of 2025 by PM Modi

The **first 'Mann Ki Baat' of 2025** was conducted by the **Prime Minister on January 20**, a week earlier than usual, to accommodate the Republic Day celebrations on January 26. This special broadcast marked the 75th anniversary of the Indian Republic and included discussions on the Constitution, democracy, cultural traditions, advancements in space technology, and human-animal harmony.

Key Takeaways From Mann Ki Baat

1. Special Date for Mann Ki Baat
- This episode aired a week earlier than usual due to Republic Day falling on the last Sunday of January.
- Highlighted the significance of Republic Day celebrations in India's democratic journey.

2. 75th Republic Day
- Marks 75 years of the Indian Constitution coming into force.
- Tribute paid to the visionaries of the Constituent Assembly who framed the Constitution.
- Prime Minister shared excerpts from the speeches of prominent leaders during the Constituent Assembly debates,

B.R. Ambedkar
- Emphasized unity and cooperation among members of the Constituent Assembly.
- Highlighted the challenge of beginning a unified journey despite a diverse populace.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
- Spoke about India's commitment to peace, truth, and non-violence.
- Emphasized cultural heritage and India's role in promoting global harmony.

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee
- Advocated for equality of opportunity regardless of caste, creed, or community.
- Highlighted the vision of an inclusive India for all citizens.

3. National Voters' Day – January 25
- Celebrates the establishment of the Election Commission of India in 1950.
- Acknowledges the foundational role of voting in India's democracy.
- Commends the Election Commission for modernizing the electoral process through technology.
- Encourages citizens to actively participate in elections to strengthen democracy.

4. Strength of Indian Democracy
- Highlighted skepticism during India's first elections in 1951-52 about democracy's survival.
- **Celebrates India's growth as the "Mother of Democracy."**
- Praised the success of democratic principles in strengthening governance.

5. Call to Action
- Urged citizens to honor the makers of the Constitution by building a better India.
- Encouraged voters to exercise their right to vote in maximum numbers.

6. Kumbh Mela and Indian Traditions
- **Commencement of Maha Kumbh:** Began in Prayagraj, showcasing a massive gathering of humanity and unity in diversity.
- **Inclusivity:** Represents a confluence of equality and harmony, with people from all parts of India and across the world participating.

Cultural Unity
- Rich and poor come together as equals, sharing meals and participating in rituals.
- Similar festivals like Pushkaram in the south connect cultural beliefs with holy rivers.
- **Youth Participation:** Extensive youth involvement strengthens the connection with Indian civilization.
- **Global Recognition:** Enhanced digital footprint signifies the global popularity of the Kumbh.

7. Ganga Sagar Mela and Cultural Heritage
- **Grand Celebration**: Organized on Makar Sankranti, drawing lakhs of devotees for holy dips.
- **Purpose:** Festivals like Kumbh, Pushkaram, and Ganga Sagar Mela enhance social harmony and unity.
- **Holistic Empowerment:** These traditions emphasize spiritual, social, cultural, and economic values.

8. Ram Lalla Pran Pratishtha Anniversary
- **Event Details:** Marked the first anniversary of Ram Lalla's Pran Pratishtha on Paush Shukla Dwadashi.
- **Significance:** Symbolizes the re-establishment of India's cultural consciousness.
- **Message:** Emphasizes preserving heritage while advancing on the path of development.

9. Milestones n Indian Space Achievements

Private Satellite Constellation
- Bengaluru-based start-up Pixxel launched India's first private satellite constellation, Firefly.
- World's top high-resolution hyperspectral satellite constellation.
- A major step towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat and leadership in space technology.

Space Docking
- India became the fourth country to achieve space docking.
- Critical for sending supplies to space stations and enabling crew missions.

Agriculture in Space
- Cowpea seeds germinated in space, paving the way for future cultivation of vegetables in space.

ExTeM Centre at IIT Madras
- Working on space manufacturing technologies like 3D-printed buildings, metal foams, and optical fibers.
- Developing waterless concrete construction for advanced applications in space.
- Contributing to India's Gaganyaan Mission and future space station projects.

10. Bonding Between Humans and Animals
- **Emotional connection:** Animals and humans share a unique bond of love and understanding despite the language barrier.

Example from Assam
- **Location:** Naugaon, birthplace of Srimanta Shankardev Ji, and home to many elephants.
- **Problem**: Elephants strayed into fields, destroying crops and causing distress to farmers in 100 villages.
- **Solution**: Villagers initiated the **'Haathi Bandhu' program.**
- **Effort**: Transformed 800 bighas of barren land into fields of Napier grass, a favorite of elephants.
- **Result**: Elephants stopped straying into fields, reducing human-animal conflict and benefiting both villagers and wildlife.

11. Conservation Efforts

New Tiger Reserves
- **Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla** Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh.
- **Ratapani Tiger Reserve** in Madhya Pradesh.
- **Significance:** Highlights India's commitment to wildlife preservation and ecological balance.

11. Growth of Startup India
- **Start-Up India initiative**: Celebrated its 9th anniversary recently.

Expansion to smaller cities

- More than half of India's startups are emerging from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- **Examples:** Ambala, Hisar, Kangra, Chengalpattu, Bilaspur, Gwalior, Washim.
- **Women-led startups:** Over half of the startups in smaller cities are led by women.
- **Rise in Nagaland:** Startup registration increased by over 200% last year.

Sectors of growth

- Waste management.
- Non-renewable energy.
- Biotechnology.
- Logistics.

12. Economic Empowerment Through GI Tag

Virgin Coconut Oil (Andaman and Nicobar Islands)

- Received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag recently.
- Women's self-help groups are being organized for production, branding, and marketing.
- Aims to economically empower tribal communities.
- Expected to gain global recognition due to quality and local expertise.

13. Honoring Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose

Escape Story

- Escaped British surveillance during World War II and reached Europe via Afghanistan.
- Symbolizes immense bravery and strategic genius.

Achievements and Contributions

- Visionary leader and efficient administrator; became CEO of Kolkata Corporation at 27.
- Initiatives included schools for children, milk distribution for the poor, and sanitation efforts.
- Established Azad Hind Radio, broadcasting in multiple languages to inspire freedom fighters.

Parakram Diwas

- **Celebrated on January 23,** marking his birth anniversary.
- Encouragement for youth to learn from Netaji's life and principles.

Cabinet Approvals

Cabinet Approves Seven Major Schemes to Enhance Farmers' Lives and Livelihoods

Union Cabinet Approves ₹13,966 Crore for Seven Key Agricultural Schemes (Sept 2, 2024)
The Union Cabinet, led by PM Narendra Modi, approved **seven major schemes** to enhance farmers' incomes and improve agricultural sustainability.

1. Digital Agriculture Mission (₹2,817 crore)

- Establishment of **Agri Stack** (Farmers Registry, Land Maps, Crop Sown Registry).
- **Krishi Decision Support System**: Uses AI, Big Data, satellite imagery for yield modeling, weather tracking, and insurance assessments.

2. Crop Science for Food & Nutritional Security (₹3,979 crore)

- Focuses on **climate-resilient crops** and **food security by 2047**.
- Key areas: Plant genetic resource management, genetic improvement, pulse & oilseed development, and insect & pollinator research.

3. Strengthening Agricultural Education & Research (₹2,291 crore)

- Modernizes **agriculture education** under **NEP 2020**.
- Emphasizes **AI, Big Data, natural farming, and climate resilience**.

4. Sustainable Livestock Health & Production (₹1,702 crore)
- Enhances **veterinary services, dairy production, livestock genetics, and animal nutrition**.
- Aims to boost farmers' **income from livestock**.

5. Sustainable Horticulture Development (₹860 crore)
- Expands **horticulture-based income** through diverse crops like **vegetables, spices, medicinal plants, and floriculture**.

6. Strengthening Krishi Vigyan Kendra (₹1,202 crore)
- Enhances **agricultural extension centers** to improve farmer training and knowledge sharing.

7. Natural Resource Management (₹1,115 crore)
- Focuses on **sustainable resource use** to ensure **long-term agricultural viability** and **environmental conservation**.

Cabinet Approves Extension of One-Time Special Package on DAP Fertilizer (Jan 1, 2025)
The Union Cabinet, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, has approved the **extension** of the **One-Time Special Package on Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP)** beyond the **Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS)** at **₹3,500 per MT** from **January 1, 2025, till further orders**, ensuring affordable DAP for farmers.

Key Highlights:
- **Budgetary Allocation:** ₹3,850 crore.
- **Previous Approval (July 2024):** ₹2,625 crore (April 1, 2024 – Dec 31, 2024).
- **Total Special Package since April 2024:** **₹6,475 crore**.
- **Objective:** Sustainable availability of **DAP at subsidized rates** despite global market fluctuations.

Background:
- **28 grades of P&K fertilizers** are subsidized under the **NBS scheme (since April 2010)**.
- Despite **geo-political constraints**, the **government has ensured stable DAP prices** for **Kharif and Rabi 2024-25**.

Implementation:
- **₹3,500 per MT subsidy** will continue **over and above NBS subsidy** from **Jan 1, 2025, onwards**.
- Ensures **smooth and affordable supply** of **DAP fertilizer** to farmers.

Cabinet Approves Modifications in PMFBY & RWBCIS for 2025-26

The Union Cabinet, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, has approved the **continuation** of the **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)** and **Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS)** till **2025-26**, with a total **outlay of ₹69,515.71 crore (2021-22 to 2025-26)**.

Key Highlights:
- **Objective:** Risk coverage for crops from non-preventable natural calamities.
- **Fund for Innovation and Technology (FIAT) created:** ₹824.77 crore for **technology-driven implementation**.
  Technology-Based Initiatives:
  1. **YES-TECH (Yield Estimation System using Technology)**
     - Uses **Remote Sensing Technology** for **yield estimation**.
     - **30% weightage** given to technology-based estimates.
     - **Madhya Pradesh** has fully adopted **100% tech-based yield estimation**.
     - **9 major states** (AP, Assam, Haryana, UP, MP, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu & Karnataka) are implementing it.
  2. **WINDS (Weather Information and Network Data Systems)**
     - **Automatic Weather Stations (AWS)** at **block level** & **Automatic Rain Gauges (ARGs)** at **panchayat level**.
     - **5x increase** in weather data density for **hyper-local weather monitoring**.
     - **9 states** (Kerala, UP, HP, Puducherry, Assam, Odisha, Karnataka, Uttarakhand & Rajasthan) are implementing it.
     - **First year of implementation shifted to 2024-25** to ensure proper planning & state benefits.

Focus on North-East States:
- **90% premium subsidy** shared by the **Centre** for NE states.
- **Flexibility** provided for **fund reallocation** in case of underutilization due to voluntary participation.

Union Cabinet Approves Key Decisions for Farmers' Welfare (Jan 1, 2025)

Union Minister **Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan** announced that the **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, has approved **three major decisions** to benefit farmers and strengthen India's agricultural sector.

1. Extension of PMFBY & RWBCIS Till 2025-26
- **Total Budget:** ₹69,515.71 crore (2021-22 to 2025-26).
- **Objective:** Provide **risk coverage** for farmers against **natural calamities**.
- **Technology Infusion:**
  o **Fund for Innovation and Technology (FIAT)**: ₹824.77 crore allocated for tech-based improvements.
  o **YES-TECH:** Remote sensing-based **yield estimation system**.
  o **WINDS:** Expansion of **automatic weather stations** for improved weather data collection.
  o **WINDS Implementation:** Begins in **2024-25** to assist **state governments**.

2. Extension of One-Time Special Package on DAP Till Dec 31, 2025
- **Objective:** Ensure **affordable DAP fertilizer** for farmers.
- **Subsidy Mechanism:** Under **Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme**, fertilizer companies set prices with **fixed subsidy support**.
- **Budgetary Requirement:** ₹3,850 crore for **2025 extension** (over ₹**2,625 crore earlier approved for 2024**).
- **Payment Mechanism:** Based on **actual PoS sales** of **DAP fertilizer** from **Jan 1, 2025, to Dec 31, 2025**.

3. MoU for Trade of Non-Basmati White Rice (NBWR) with Indonesia
- **Parties Involved:** Ministry of **Cooperation (India)** & Ministry of **Trade (Indonesia)**.
- **Trade Agreement: 1 million metric tonnes of NBWR annually**, based on **production & international prices**.
- **Duration: 4 years**, auto-renewable for another **4 years**.
- **Implementing Body: National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL)**, a **multi-state cooperative society**.
- **Market Stability:** NBWR will be procured via **transparent tenders** & **cooperative societies** to **prevent price distortions**.
- **Strategic Importance:** Strengthens **India-Indonesia trade relations** & addresses trade imbalance.

Government's Commitment to Farmers
- The **New Year 2025** has been dedicated to **farmers' welfare**.
- The **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare** has set **targets for the next month** to ensure smooth implementation of these decisions.

Cabinet Approves Extension of One-Time Special Package on DAP (Jan 1, 2025)

The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, has approved the **extension of the One-Time Special Package on Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP)** beyond the **Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS)** at ₹**3,500 per MT** from **January 1, 2025, till further orders**, ensuring **affordable DAP** for farmers.

Key Highlights:
- **Budgetary Requirement:** ₹3,850 crore for **2025 extension**.
- **Total Special Package Since April 2024:** ₹**6,475 crore** (₹2,625 crore for **April-Dec 2024** + ₹3,850 crore from **Jan 2025 onwards**).
- **Objective:** Ensure **stable and affordable supply of DAP** despite **global price volatility**.

Background:
- **28 grades of P&K fertilizers** are subsidized under the **NBS scheme (since April 2010)**.
- **July 2024 Approval:** ₹**3,500 per MT subsidy** on DAP for **April 1, 2024 – Dec 31, 2024**.
- Despite **geo-political constraints**, the **government ensured price stability** for **Kharif & Rabi 2024-25**.

Implementation Strategy:
- ₹**3,500 per MT subsidy** to continue **over and above the NBS subsidy**.
- **Availability of DAP at affordable prices** will be **ensured** for **farmers**.

Cabinet Approves Establishment of Third Launch Pad (TLP) at Sriharikota

The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, has approved the establishment of the **Third Launch Pad (TLP)** at the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh**, to support **Next Generation Launch Vehicles (NGLV)** and enhance India's space capabilities.

Key Highlights:

- **Objective:**
  - Establish a **new launch pad** for **NGLV**.
  - Serve as a **standby** for the **Second Launch Pad (SLP)**.
  - Enhance **human spaceflight and space exploration capacity**.
- **Implementation Timeline: 48 months (4 years).**
- **Total Cost: ₹3,984.86 crore.**

Strategic Importance:

- **Universal & adaptable design** to support:
  - **NGLV with Semicryogenic stages**.
  - **LVM3 and future scaled-up configurations.**
- **Maximizes industry participation** while utilizing ISRO's expertise.

Background & Need for TLP:

- **Current Dependence:** India **relies on two launch pads**—First Launch Pad (FLP) for **PSLV & SSLV** and **Second Launch Pad (SLP) for GSLV & LVM3**.
- **SLP's Role:** Key to **commercial, national, and human spaceflight missions**, including **Chandrayaan-3** & upcoming **Gaganyaan missions**.
- **Future Requirements:**
  - **Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) by 2035**.
  - **Indian Crewed Lunar Landing by 2040**.
  - **Heavier launch vehicles with advanced propulsion systems.**
- **TLP will ensure sustainable growth of India's space ecosystem** for the next **25-30 years**.

Cabinet Approves ₹11,440 Crore Revival Plan for Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL)

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, has approved a **revival plan** for **Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL)** at a **total cost of ₹11,440 crore**, ensuring the continued operation of the **Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP)**.

Key Highlights:

- **Equity Infusion: ₹10,300 crore** to revive operations.
- **Debt Restructuring: ₹1,140 crore** working capital loan **converted into 7% Non-Cumulative Preference Shares**, redeemable after **10 years**.
- **Objective:** Ensure **financial stability** & **restore full production capacity** at RINL.

Current Financial Status of RINL (As of March 31, 2024):

- **Net Worth:** ₹(-)4,538 crore (Negative).
- **Current Assets:** ₹7,686.24 crore.
- **Current Liabilities:** ₹26,114.92 crore.
- **Defaults:** Capex loan & interest repayments missed in **June 2024**.

Revival Plan & Implementation:

- **Two Blast Furnaces operational by January 2025**.
- **All Three Blast Furnaces operational by August 2025**.
- **Ensures stability in India's steel market** & **protects livelihoods** of RINL employees.

Strategic Importance:

- **Steel industry is a core sector & indicator of economic growth**.
- **Supports objectives of National Steel Policy, 2017**.
- **Aligns with Atmanirbhar Bharat, boosting domestic steel production**.

Cabinet Approves Achievements Under National Health Mission (2021-24)

The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, was apprised of significant progress under the **National Health Mission (NHM)** between **FY 2021-24**, highlighting major achievements in **maternal health**, **disease control**, and **healthcare infrastructure**.

Key Achievements Under NHM:

1. Healthcare Workforce Expansion:

- **12 Lakh+ additional healthcare workers** engaged between FY 2021-24.
- **4.21 lakh** additional healthcare professionals in FY 2022-23 and **5.23 lakh** in FY 2023-24.
- Included **1.38 lakh Community Health Officers (CHOs)** in FY 2023-24.

2. COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign:

- **220 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses** administered nationwide under NHM.

3. Maternal & Child Health Progress:

- **83% decline in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** since 1990, exceeding the global reduction of 45%.
- **75% reduction in Under-5 Mortality Rate** since 1990, compared to the global 60%.
- **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)** decreased from **39 to 28** per 1,000 live births (2014-2020).
- **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** reduced from **2.3 to 2.0** (2015-2020).

4. Disease Control & Elimination Efforts:

- **TB Incidence** reduced from **237 per 1,00,000 in 2015** to **195 in 2023**.
- **TB Mortality Rate** decreased from **28 to 22** in the same period.
- **1.56 lakh Ni-kshay Mitra volunteers** supporting **9.4 lakh TB patients** under **Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan**.
- **Malaria Control Efforts** led to **reduced mortality and cases**.
- **Kala Azar Elimination targets** successfully met.

5. Specialized Health Initiatives:

- **Ayushman Arogya Mandir Centers** reached **1.72 lakh** by FY 2023-24.
- **Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission** screened over **2.61 crore individuals**.
- **97.98% coverage in Measles-Rubella Vaccination Campaign**.

6. National Health Programs:

- **U-WIN platform** launched for tracking vaccinations nationwide.
- **Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme** benefited **4.53 lakh dialysis patients** in FY 2023-24.

**7. Infrastructure & Emergency Services:**

- **12,348 Primary Health Centres (PHCs)** converted to **24x7 services**.
- **3,133 First Referral Units (FRUs)** operational.
- **1,424 Mobile Medical Units (MMUs)** providing services in remote areas.

Strategic Initiatives & Results:

- **Strengthened healthcare system** through enhanced **health infrastructure** and **health worker capacity**.
- **Expanded health coverage** for vulnerable populations, especially in **rural and tribal areas**.
- **Digital health platforms** like **U-WIN** ensured **real-time vaccination tracking**.
- **Tobacco use reduction by 17.3%** over the past decade through **public awareness campaigns**.

Background:

- **NHM** launched in **2005** to provide accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare, focusing on **vulnerable populations**.
- Rechristened in **2012** as **National Health Mission** with **two sub-missions**: NRHM and **NUHM**.
- **Continuation approved till 31st March 2026**, with a focus on **health accessibility** across India, especially in **rural and underserved regions**.
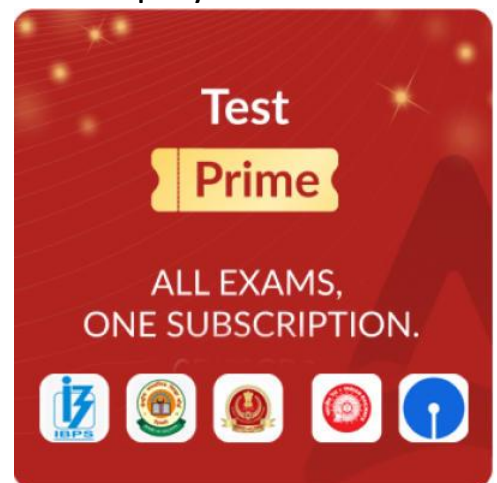
Implementation Strategy:
- **Financial & technical support** to **States and UTs** to improve health infrastructure.
- **Decentralized approach** for **district-level interventions** to improve healthcare services.
- **Focus on vulnerable groups** with improved service delivery in **rural areas**.

Cabinet Approves Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for Raw Jute for 2025-26 Season

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, has approved the **Minimum Support Prices (MSP)** for **Raw Jute** for the **2025-26 Marketing season**.

Key Highlights:
- **MSP of Raw Jute (TD-3 grade):** ₹5,650 per quintal for the **2025-26 season**.
- **Return on Cost of Production:** Ensures a return of **66.8%** over the all-India weighted average cost of production.
- **Increase in MSP:** A rise of **₹315** per quintal from the **2024-25 season**.
- **Historical Increase:** From **₹2,400 per quintal** in **2014-15** to **₹5,650 per quintal** in **2025-26**—an increase of **₹3,250** (2.35 times).

Impact on Jute Farmers:
- **Government expenditure on MSP (2014-15 to 2024-25):** ₹1,300 crore paid to jute farmers.
- **Previous MSP expenditure (2004-05 to 2013-14):** ₹441 crore.
- **Livelihood Impact:** Directly or indirectly impacts **40 lakh farm families** involved in the jute industry.
- **Employment Impact:** About **4 lakh workers** are employed in **jute mills** and **trade**.
- **Farmers Benefited:** Last year, jute was procured from **1.7 lakh farmers**, with **82%** of jute farmers from **West Bengal**. **Assam** and **Bihar** account for **9%** each of jute production.

Implementation Strategy:
- **Jute Corporation of India (JCI):** Continues as the **Central Government Nodal Agency** for **Price Support Operations**.
- **Loss Reimbursement:** Any losses incurred during these operations will be **fully reimbursed by the Central Government**.

Cabinet Approves National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)

The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, has approved the launch of the **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)** with an outlay of **₹34,300 crore** over **seven years**, including **₹16,300 crore** for the mission and an expected **₹18,000 crore** investment from **PSUs** and others.

Key Objectives of NCMM:
- **Focus on Critical Minerals:** Vital for **high-tech industries, clean energy**, and **defense**.
- **Value Chain Coverage:** Encompasses all stages from **exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing**, to **recovery from end-of-life products**.
- **Exploration & Mining:** Intensify **domestic exploration** and expand **offshore exploration**.
- **Fast-Track Regulatory Approvals:** Create a streamlined process for critical mineral mining projects.
- **Incentives for Exploration:** Offer **financial incentives** for critical mineral exploration and **recovery from overburden and tailings**.

Strategic Initiatives Under NCMM:
- **International Expansion:** Encourage **Indian PSUs and private companies** to acquire critical mineral assets abroad and strengthen trade with **resource-rich countries**.
- **Mineral Processing Parks:** Development of parks to support **critical mineral processing** and **recycling**.
- **Research & Innovation:** Establish a **Centre of Excellence** for critical mineral research and **support start-ups and MSMEs** in innovation.

Recent Developments & Achievements:
- **Amendment to Mines and Minerals Act (1957):** Increased exploration and mining of critical minerals.
- **GSI Exploration Projects:** 368 critical mineral exploration projects, with 195 ongoing and 227 more planned for FY 2025-26.
- **KABIL JV:** Acquisition of **15,703 Ha** in Argentina for **Lithium mining**.
- **Custom Duty Elimination: Customs duties** on most critical minerals were eliminated in **Union Budget 2024-25** to promote mineral availability and processing within India.

Impact of NCMM:
- **Self-Reliance in Critical Minerals:** Strengthens India's **indigenous capabilities** in **critical mineral sectors**.
- **Support for Green Technologies:** Ensures supply of minerals vital for **green energy** and **technological advancements**.

Cabinet Approves Revision of Ethanol Procurement Price for 2024-25 under Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, has approved the **revision of ethanol procurement prices** for **Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs)** under the **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme** for the **Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2024-25**.

Key Highlights:
- **Ethanol Price Revision:**
  - The **administered ex-mill price** of ethanol from **C Heavy Molasses (CHM)** has been fixed at **₹57.97 per litre** for the period **1st November 2024 to 31st October 2025**, up from **₹56.58 per litre** in the previous year.
- **Objectives of the Revision:**
  - **Price Stability & Remunerative Prices:** Ensures fair prices for ethanol suppliers and boosts the **ethanol supply chain**.
  - **Reduces Crude Oil Dependency:** Helps reduce **imports of crude oil**, saving **foreign exchange** and contributing to **environmental benefits**.
- **Separate Payments for GST & Transport Charges:** As in the past, **GST and transportation charges** will be paid separately to benefit **sugarcane farmers**.

Impact on Ethanol Blending Programme:
- **Ethanol Blending Growth:**
  - The ethanol blending in petrol has grown from **38 crore litres** in **2013-14** to **707 crore litres** in **2023-24**, achieving an average blending rate of **14.6%**.
- **Target for 2025-26:**
  - The government has **advanced the target** of **20% ethanol blending** in petrol from **2030** to **2025-26**.
  - **18% ethanol blending** is targeted for **ESY 2024-25**.

Strategic Developments:
- **Ethanol Infrastructure Expansion:**
  - **Ethanol distillation capacity** increased to **1,713 crore litres per annum**.
  - **Dedicated Ethanol Plants (DEPs)** are being set up in **ethanol-deficit states** through **Long Term Off-take Agreements (LTOAs)**.
  - **Conversion of distilleries** to multi-feed and introduction of **E-100 and E-20 fuel**.
- **Government Initiatives for Atmanirbhar Bharat:**
  - Investments in **greenfield and brownfield distilleries, storage**, and **logistics facilities**.
  - **Employment generation** and **value-sharing** among stakeholders across the country.

Economic and Environmental Benefits:
- **Foreign Exchange Savings:** Over the past ten years, ethanol blending has resulted in **₹1,13,007 crore** savings in foreign exchange.
- **Crude Oil Substitution: 193 lakh metric tonnes** of crude oil substituted.
- **Support for Sugarcane Farmers:** Ensures **early payment** to sugarcane farmers and provides **additional livelihood support**.

State-wise October Month Important Events

Andhra Pradesh
- **PM Modi** laid the foundation for the **NTPC Green Energy Limited (NGEL) Green Hydrogen Hub** in **Pudimadaka**, near **Visakhapatnam**. A collaboration between **NGEL** and **NREDCAP**, it is the first hub under India's **National Green Hydrogen Mission**, boosting the country's commitment to **sustainable energy** and the **green hydrogen economy**.
- The **three-day Flamingo Festival 2025** in **Andhra Pradesh** concluded on **January 20, 2025**, with calls to protect the rich **biodiversity** of the region, specifically in **Pulicat Lake** and **Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary**. The event, which attracted numerous visitors, particularly **bird watchers** and **photographers**, was hailed as a major success. The closing ceremony saw the participation of **Ministers Anam Ramanarayana Reddy** and **Anagani Satya Prasad**, who expressed their gratitude to **Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu** for the revival of the festival, which had been dormant for some time.
- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has approved the construction of a **third launchpad** at **ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre** in **Sriharikota**, Andhra Pradesh, with an investment of **₹3,985 crore**. This project aims to enhance **India's space transportation capabilities**, supporting **Next Generation Launch Vehicles (NGLVs)** and future **human spaceflight missions**, including an **Indian crewed lunar landing by 2040**.

Assam
- Assam's **Elephant Population Estimate 2024** reveals an estimated **5,828 elephants**, marking a rise of **109** from 2017. The estimation, conducted from **February 20-27, 2024**, involved **5,743 personnel** across **1,536 survey blocks** in **43 forest divisions**. Despite challenges like **habitat fragmentation** and **human-elephant conflicts**, the findings highlight the role of **Elephant Reserves** and emphasize the need for improved **conservation efforts**.
- The Assam government launched **Gunotsav 2025**, an education evaluation program aimed at improving **learning outcomes** for **14.11 lakh students** in **16,056 schools**. The program, themed "Ensuring Quality Education," will be conducted in **three phases**: Phase 1 (January 6-9, 2025) covers **11 districts**, including **Barpeta**, **Kamrup**, and **Nagaon**. The initiative involves **external evaluators** and aims to assess and enhance **education quality** across the state.

Bihar
- **Arif Mohammad Khan** was sworn in as the **42nd Governor of Bihar** on January 2, 2025, succeeding **Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar**, now Governor of **Kerala**. The oath was administered by **Patna High Court Chief Justice K. Vinod Chandran**, with **Chief Minister Nitish Kumar** and **Tejashwi Yadav** in attendance.

Chhattisgarh
- **Chhattisgarh** has become the first Indian state to adopt the **Green GDP** model, integrating **ecological services** of forests into its economic framework. This initiative links **environmental contributions** like **clean air**, **water conservation**, and **biodiversity** to **economic growth**, ensuring sustainable development. The **Green GDP** model considers environmental costs, offering a more holistic view of economic health. The initiative aims to enhance **budget planning**, support **sustainable policies**, and recognize the **economic value of forests**.
- The **Adani Group** will invest ₹75,000 crore in **Chhattisgarh**, with ₹60,000 crore dedicated to expanding **energy** operations, including a 6,120 MW increase in power generation across **Raipur**, **Korba**, and **Raigarh**. This move strengthens the state's energy role.
- **Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Dev Sai** has launched a scheme to provide **Rs 10,000 annually** to landless labourers in the state, continuing his commitment to support vulnerable sections. This initiative is part of a larger series of welfare measures promised during the pre-poll campaign. The scheme aims to benefit approximately **7.5 lakh landless** agricultural labourers in Chhattisgarh, reflecting the government's focus on improving their financial stability. The CM's announcement builds on past promises made during elections and further strengthens the state's social welfare framework.

Gujarat
- On **Good Governance Day**, **Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel** launched the **SWAR (Speech and Written Analysis Resource)** platform to enhance **communication** and **accessibility** for citizens, overcoming **language barriers**. Developed with the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's Bhashini Team**, the platform uses **AI** for inclusive government services. Key features include **speech-to-text** integration for easier communication and an **indigenous AI system** (Bhashini) for effective **speech recognition**.
- The **Union Ministry of Culture** and **Gujarat State Government** inaugurated a state-of-the-art **Archaeological Experiential Museum** in **Vadnagar**, a town with over 2,500 years of history. The event, presided over by **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** and attended by **Gujarat CM Bhupendrabhai Patel** and **Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan**, highlights Vadnagar's rich **cultural and historical heritage**.

Haryana
- The **Haryana government**, led by **Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini**, announced key decisions to improve employee benefits and governance. Highlights include a **25% increase in Death-cum-Retirement Gratuity** to **₹25 lakh**, effective January 1, 2025, and reforms in **External Development Charges (EDC)** with a **10% annual increase**. **Aadhaar authentication** will now be mandatory for candidates in **HPSC exams**. Additionally, **crop damage reports** due to **heavy rains** can be submitted on the **e-reimbursement portal** for affected regions.

Himachal Pradesh
- Himachal Pradesh (H.P.) celebrates its **Statehood Day** on **25th January** every year, marking the day when it officially became the **18th state of the Indian Union in 1971**. On this occasion, the **Prime Minister of India extended greetings** to the people of H.P., acknowledging its unique cultural and historical heritage.

Kerala
- **Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar** took oath as the **23rd Governor of Kerala** on January 2, 2025, at **Raj Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram**. He succeeds **Arif Mohammed Khan**, now Governor of **Bihar**. The oath was administered by **Chief Justice Nitin Madhukar Jamdar**, with **Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan** and other dignitaries present.

- Kerala's renowned **Kappad beach in Kozhikode and Chal beach in Kannur** have been awarded the prestigious Blue Flag certification by the **Denmark-based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE).** This certification recognizes beaches that meet high standards in environmental protection, safety, and sustainability. The Blue Flag status enhances Kerala's appeal as a sustainable tourism destination and serves as a global benchmark for eco-friendly tourism practices. This achievement marks a significant milestone in the state's efforts to preserve its natural beauty while promoting responsible tourism.
- **Kottayam, Kerala**, India unveiled the **Indian Sustainable Natural Rubber (iSNR) initiative,** aiming to establish new global benchmarks in sustainable rubber production. The launch event was graced by **George Kurian, Minister of State for Fisheries,** Animal Husbandry, Dairying, and Minority Affairs, and presided over by Thiruvanchur Radhakrishnan, Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Maharashtra
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **Sri Sri Radha Madanmohanji Temple** in **Kharghar, Navi Mumbai** on January 15, 2025. Built over 12 years at a cost of ₹170 crore, it is **Asia's second-largest ISKCON temple**. The temple embodies **spirituality and knowledge**, featuring various facilities aligned with **ISKCON's mission**. The event was attended by **Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis**, **Deputy CM Eknath Shinde**, **Governor CP Radhakrishnan**, and **MP Hema Malini**.
- **Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS)**, a rare neurological disorder where the **immune system** attacks the **peripheral nervous system**, has seen a rise in cases in **Pune, Maharashtra**. Symptoms include **muscle weakness**, **numbness**, and **paralysis** in severe cases. Authorities are investigating the causes and implementing measures, while GBS typically affects **adults** and **males**.

Manipur
- Every year on January 21, the northeastern states of **Manipur**, **Meghalaya**, and **Tripura** celebrate their **Statehood Day**, marking the historic moment they attained full statehood under the **North Eastern Region (Reorganization) Act of 1971**. This day holds significant importance for the region, not only as a commemoration of their **statehood** but also as a celebration of their rich cultural heritage, vibrant history, and significant contributions to India's identity. The northeastern states, often referred to as the "Seven Sisters," are renowned for their unique culture, history, and natural beauty, and this day serves as a reflection of their growth into integral and empowered states within the **Union of India**.

Mizoram
- **Mizoram** has become the **first state in Northeast India** to distribute **property cards** under the Survey of Villages Abadi and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas **(SVAMITVA) scheme.** On January 18, 2025, **Governor Gen (Dr) VK Singh** virtually participated in the distribution event from **Raj Bhavan, Aizawl.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi also attended, distributing over **65 lakh property cards** to beneficiaries across **10 states and two Union Territories.** Among these, **1,754 property** cardholders from **18 villages in Mizoram received their cards.**

Odisha
- The **Odisha government** has announced a ₹15 crore sponsorship deal for the **Indian national kho kho team**, running from **January 2025 to December 2027**. The **₹5 crore annually** will be funded through the **Odisha Mining Corporation**. The sponsorship aims to **enhance team development**, improve **training infrastructure**, and support participation in **national and international competitions**, reflecting Odisha's continued commitment to **sports development**.
- On **January 13, 2025**, **Odisha** became the **34th state** to implement **Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY**, formalized through an **MoU** with the **National Health Authority**. The scheme will converge with Odisha's **Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana (GJAY)**, offering ₹5 lakh health coverage per family, plus an additional ₹5 lakh for women. Around **1.03 crore families** will benefit, with **67.8 lakh** families supported by the **Union Government**.
- The **Odisha government** has announced a **monthly pension of ₹20,000** for surviving detainees of the **1975-1977 Emergency** under the **Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA)**. This welfare measure, effective from **January 1, 2025**, also includes **medical coverage** and other benefits, honoring those imprisoned during the Emergency period.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **'Utkarsh Odisha – Make in Odisha Conclave 2025'** in **Bhubaneswar** on January 28. The event, Odisha's largest business summit, was attended by **Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi**, **Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Ashwini Vaishnaw**, and global business leaders. The two-day conclave aimed to promote **investment**, boost **industrial growth**, and position Odisha as an economic hub, with delegates from **16 countries**.

Rajasthan
- The **Sambhar Festival** began on **January 24, 2025**, at **Sambhar Lake** in **Rajasthan**. Organized by the **Rajasthan Tourism Department**, the 5-day event celebrates the region's **culture, heritage, and natural beauty**. The festival highlights **Rajasthani cuisine, folk arts**, and the rich traditions of the area, with a special focus on the picturesque Sambhar Lake.

Sikkim

- **India's first organic fisheries cluster** was launched in **Soreng District, Sikkim**, by **Union Animal Husbandry Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh**. This initiative promotes **sustainable, antibiotic-free, chemical-free, and pesticide-free** fish farming practices, aligning with **Sikkim's reputation for organic agriculture**. The cluster aims to cater to **eco-conscious global markets**.

Telangana

- On **January 26, 2025**, **Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy** launched four welfare schemes for farmers, landless laborers, and marginalized communities. Key initiatives include **Rythu Bharosa**, offering ₹12,000 per acre to farmers; **Indiramma Aathmeeya Bharosa**, providing ₹12,000 annually to landless labor families; and **Indiramma Indlu**, a housing scheme offering ₹5 lakh for constructing homes for homeless Dalits, Tribals, and backward classes, with a target of 4,50,000 houses and a ₹22,500 crore budget.

Tripura

- On **January 28, 2025**, **Tripura** became the first northeastern state to sign an **MoU** with the **Digital India Bhashini Division (DIBD)** of **MeitY**. The agreement aims to enhance the use of **regional languages** in governance, making **public services** more accessible and inclusive. This partnership reflects Tripura's commitment to bridging the **digital divide** and strengthening **governance** through **language technology**.

Tamil Nadu

- The first **Jallikattu** event of **2025** took place on **January 4** at **Thatchankurichi village**, **Pudukkottai district**. Over **600 bulls** and **350 bull-tamers** participated, marking the start of **Pongal** celebrations. The event is a significant part of **Tamil Nadu's cultural heritage**, showcasing bravery and strength. The **rituals** included an **oath-taking ceremony** with District Collector M. Aruna, and the term "**Jallikattu**" refers to rewards given to tamers in the form of silver and gold coins.
- **Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin** announced a **$1 million prize** for deciphering the **Indus Valley script**, marking the **centenary** of the **Indus Valley Civilization** discovery. Speaking at an **International Conference in Chennai**, he emphasized the significance of decoding this ancient script and affirmed the state's support for **research and archaeological efforts**.

Uttarakhand

- **Uttarakhand** become the **first state in India to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC)**, as the **state government has approved the UCC rules manual.** The state's Cabinet, headed by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, cleared the manual and decided on key provisions related to registration services, the facilitation of live-in relationships, and the introduction of Tatkal services. The government is also implementing advanced digital platforms to ensure efficient and widespread access to these services. Training of officials is underway, with a statewide mock drill planned to prepare the stakeholders for smooth implementation.
- **Uttarakhand** became the first state in independent India to implement the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)**, effective **January 27, 2025**. A key **BJP election promise**, the UCC aims to ensure **uniformity in personal laws**, offering **equal rights and responsibilities** for all citizens, regardless of religion or community. **Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami** emphasized the law's focus on **fairness**, **equality**, and **social harmony**, not targeting any individual or group.

Uttar Pradesh

- On **January 10, 2025**, **UP CM Yogi Adityanath** launched **'Kumbhvani'** (103.5 MHz), an FM channel by **All India Radio**, to enhance the **Maha Kumbh 2025** experience. The channel broadcasts from **5:55 AM to 10:05 PM** daily, from **January 10 to February 26, 2025**. **Dr. L. Murugan** attended online.
- **Uttar Pradesh** is considering the **privatization** of two power distribution companies, **Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam** and **Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam**, to tackle challenges like **power losses** and poor infrastructure. The **UP Power Corporation Ltd (UPPCL)** has issued a **tender** for consultants and advisers to explore privatization or **PPP** to improve **efficiency** and **service quality**.
- **Uttar Pradesh,** India's most populous state, commemorates its **Foundation Day** every year on **January 24**. This occasion reflects the state's rich cultural heritage, remarkable contributions to India's development, and its historical journey. In 2025, Uttar Pradesh celebrates its **76th Foundation Day**, with grand events scheduled from **January 24 to January 26** at **Awadh Shilp Gram** in **Lucknow**. Let us delve into the historical significance, achievements, and contributions of Uttar Pradesh on this momentous occasion.
- The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** granted the **Banke Bihari Temple** in **Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh**, a license under the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA)**, allowing it to receive **foreign funds**. This approval follows a court intervention and the formation of a management committee, which applied for the license to manage the temple's **international donations** and **foreign currency receipts**.

West Bengal

- The **Tribal Students' Federation (TSF)** in **Tripura** has renewed its protest, demanding the adoption of the **Roman script** for the **Kokborok language**. This long-standing demand seeks to have exam papers prepared in both **Bengali** and **Roman scripts** to address challenges faced by students. **Kokborok**, a **Sino-Tibetan** language spoken by **24%** of Tripura's population, has been **officially recognized** since **1979**. Despite its recognition, students face difficulties as exams are currently conducted only in the **Bengali script**.

Union Territories

- On January 13, 2025, **PM Modi** inaugurated the **Z-Morh Tunnel** in **Jammu and Kashmir**, enhancing **connectivity** between **Srinagar** and **Ladakh**. The 6.5 km, bi-directional tunnel, at 8,652 feet, bypasses avalanche-prone areas, reducing travel time from 2+ hours to 15 minutes. The ₹2,400 crore project, started in 2015, was led by **NHAI**.
- **Dr. Jitendra Singh** announced the establishment of a **Regional Meteorological Centre** in **Jammu** during the **150th anniversary** of the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**. This initiative aims to enhance **weather forecasting**, **disaster preparedness**, and **climate resilience** in **Jammu & Kashmir**. The event highlighted IMD's journey and India's leadership in **climate action** under **PM Modi**.
- In the **118th "Mann Ki Baat" episode** on **January 19, 2025**, **PM Narendra Modi** highlighted the **empowerment of women** in the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** through **SHGs** producing **Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO)**. The recent **GI tag** for **VCO from Nicobar district** marks a significant step in promoting **local products globally** and boosting the economic empowerment of **tribal communities** via specialized training in **marketing and branding**.
- The **Jammu & Kashmir Forest Research Institute (JKFRI)** launched the **'Digital Tree Aadhar'** initiative to protect and monitor **Kashmir's chinar trees**, threatened by **urbanization** and infrastructure projects. Modeled after India's **Aadhaar system**, each tree receives a unique **digital identity** with **geo-tagging**, **QR codes**, and **metal cards** for public scanning, aiming to preserve **biodiversity** and raise awareness about these iconic trees.

January Month Launches & Inaugurations:

- The **Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation (MBMC)**, in partnership with **NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)**, launched the **'Faral Sakhi'** initiative to empower **women entrepreneurs** in **traditional snack production**. It provides **training**, a **central kitchen**, and **sales support** for **SHGs**. During **Diwali**, the initiative sold **over 3 tons of snacks**, highlighting its **success** through **quality and promotion**.
- The **National Commission for Women (NCW)**, in partnership with the **Lok Sabha Secretariat** and **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, launched **'Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0'** at **Samvidhan Sadan** to mark **Bhagwan Birsa Munda's 150th birth anniversary**. The event gathered **502 elected women representatives from STs** across **22 states/UTs**. It aims to **empower women leaders** by enhancing their knowledge of **constitutional provisions**, **parliamentary procedures**, and **governance** through **workshops, sessions**, and **guided tours** of key government sites.
- In a landmark development for India's electronics manufacturing sector, **Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurated Syrma SGS Technology's advanced laptop assembly line in Chennai.** This new facility symbolizes **India's growing dominance in IT hardware production, expanding its success in mobile manufacturing to high-value electronics like laptops**. With initiatives under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) 2.0 scheme, India is taking significant steps towards becoming a global IT hardware hub.
- **Piyush Goyal** launched the **Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform** at the **Bharat Climate Forum 2025** in **New Delhi**, aiming to strengthen India's **cleantech** sectors like **solar**, **wind**, **hydrogen**, and **battery storage**. The platform fosters **collaboration**, **innovation**, and **financing** to make India a global sustainability leader. Goyal emphasized **self-sustaining growth** and the need for innovation and scaling in the sector.
- **South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL)** has launched a **Post-Retirement Benefit (PRB) Cell** to enhance the welfare of its retired employees. This **single-window solution** consolidates post-retirement services, improving the experience for retirees. The initiative aligns with **Mission Sambandh**, SECL's program to foster better **communication** and **stakeholder engagement**.
- On **January 14, 2025**, **Piyush Goyal**, Union Minister of Commerce, inaugurated the **National Turmeric Board** in **New Delhi** and appointed **Shri Palle Ganga Reddy** as its first **Chairperson**. Headquartered in **Nizamabad, Telangana**, the Board will support **turmeric farmers** across **20 states**, focusing on **farmer welfare**, **production enhancement**, and **research** on new varieties. It will also promote **value addition** for global markets and highlight turmeric's **health benefits**, with a focus on **Andhra Pradesh** and **Telangana**.

- Union Minister Shri Piyush Goyal launched the **Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform** on January 11, 2025, at the **Bharat Climate Forum**. The initiative aims to strengthen India's **cleantech value chains** in **solar**, **wind**, **hydrogen**, and **battery storage** sectors. Goyal emphasized the importance of **innovation**, **self-reliance**, and reducing dependence on **government support**, encouraging long-term **growth** in the **clean energy** industry.

- On **January 17, 2025**, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025** at **Bharat Mandapam**, New Delhi. India's largest **mobility expo**, running from **January 17-22, 2025**, spans three venues: **Bharat Mandapam**, **Yashobhoomi**, and **India Expo Centre & Mart**. The event features **9+ shows**, **20+ conferences**, and **state sessions** on regional mobility policies, promoting industry-government collaboration.

- On **January 15, 2025**, coinciding with **Army Day**, the government launched the **"Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan"** app and website in **Pune, Maharashtra**. Developed by the **Ministries of Defence, Tourism**, and the **Indian Army**, the app allows civilians to visit key **battlefield locations** from the **1962, 1971, and 1999 wars**, as well as significant conflict zones like **Siachen base camp** and **Galwan valley**. This initiative aims to transform border regions into **tourist hubs**, fostering a deeper connection to India's **military history** and the sacrifices of its soldiers.

- The Department of Science and Technology, under the Union Ministry of Science and Technology, has inaugurated the first **astronomical observatory** in **Eastern India** atop **Panchet Hill** in the **Garpanchkot area** of **Purulia district**, **West Bengal**. This marks an important milestone in the advancement of **astronomical research** in India. It is the **sixth astronomical observatory** in the country, following observatories in locations such as **Ladakh**, **Nainital (Uttarakhand)**, **Mount Abu (Rajasthan)**, **Girbani Hills (Pune)**, and **Kavalur (Tamil Nadu)**.

- **Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh** inaugurated **India's first-of-its-kind CSIR Mega Innovation Complex in Mumbai,** marking a significant milestone in the nation's innovation landscape. This state-of-the-art facility is designed to bolster start-ups, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and industry stakeholders by providing high-end scientific infrastructure and expertise.

- The **"Hamara Samvidhan – Hamara Swabhiman" campaign,** launched on **January 24, 2024,** by the **Hon'ble Vice President of India** at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi, commemorates the **75th anniversary** of India's Constitution and its establishment as a Republic. This year-long initiative aims to deepen citizens' understanding of the Constitution and promote legal empowerment across the nation.

Important Festival

- On **January 4, 2025**, PM **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025** at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**, organized by **DFS** and **NABARD**. Themed **"Building a Resilient Rural India for a Viksit Bharat 2047,"** with the motto "**गांव बढ़े, तो देश बढ़े,**" the event aims to enhance **rural infrastructure**, promote **self-reliance**, and foster **innovation**. Key focus areas include **women's entrepreneurship**, **financial inclusion**, and **sustainable agriculture** in **North-East India**. The festival runs from **January 4 to 9, 2025**.

- The **18th Elephant and Tourism Festival** in **Sauraha, Chitwan**, Nepal, draws both local and international visitors. Held near **Chitwan National Park**, it coincides with **New Year** and **Christmas** celebrations, running for five days and concluding on **December 30**. The event serves as a key driver for **tourism** in the region, offering diverse and unique attractions.

- The **International Pashmina Festival** in Nepal, organized by the **Nepal Pashmina Industries Association** and **Confederation of Nepalese Industries**, showcased Nepal's expertise in producing **authentic Pashmina** from the **Chyangra goat**. The event celebrated traditional **weaving methods** and highlighted the global recognition of **Chyangra Pashmina** as a premium product.

- The **Nagoba Jatara** festival in **Keslapur**, Telangana, drew nearly **one lakh devotees** from across **India** to celebrate the **Nagoba temple**. This seven-day event is a key religious and cultural gathering for the **Mesram clan** and other **aboriginal tribes**. Devotees from **Telangana**, **Maharashtra**, **Chhattisgarh**, **Jharkhand**, **Madhya Pradesh**, and **Odisha** participated in the vibrant celebrations.

- The **Pangsau Pass International Festival (PPIF) 2025**, held in **Nampong, Arunachal Pradesh**, is a vibrant celebration of the region's rich cultural heritage and its historical significance during **World War II**. This year's festival is particularly special as it coincides with the **80th anniversary of the war's conclusion**. Chief Minister **Pema Khandu** emphasized plans to bolster tourism by restoring World War II remnants in the region, underscoring the festival's role in promoting economic growth, cultural exchange, and historical remembrance.

- The **Sci-Fi Science Film Festival of India** was inaugurated by **Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant** on **January 30, 2025**, in **Panaji**. Organized by **Vidnyan Parishad Goa**, the festival celebrates **science**, **innovation**, and **curiosity**. This year's theme, **"Green Revolution,"** honors **Dr. M. Swaminathan** and aims to inspire youth toward a **sustainable future**. The 4-day event promotes **scientific engagement** for India's progress.

- The **International Saraswati Mahotsav 2025** will be celebrated in **Haryana** from **January 29 to February 4, 2025**, at **Pehowa Saraswati Tirtha Sthal**. Inaugurated by **Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini**, the event will showcase **Haryana's culture**, **craftsmanship**, and **traditional heritage**, with programs at both state and national levels. The festival aims to boost **tourism** and provide a platform for local **artisans** and **craftsmen**.
- The **Boda Tyohar**, or **Magho ko Tyohar**, is the largest annual festival of the **Hatti tribes** in **Himachal Pradesh's Trans-Giri region**. Celebrated by over **three lakh** community members, this **month-long festival** marks the end of the **Magha** month, featuring unique **cultural practices**, **rituals**, and promoting **community unity**. It holds significant cultural importance, showcasing **Hatti traditions** and beliefs.
- The **Gaan-Ngai festival**, the largest post-harvest celebration of the **Zeliangrong community**, began on **January 12, 2025** in **Manipur**. Celebrated for five days, it features **vibrant cultural performances** and traditional rituals, symbolizing the transition from the old year to the new. The festival emphasizes **peace**, **prosperity**, and **community healing**.
- The **Kagyed Chaam Dance Festival** in **Gangtok**, Sikkim, is a significant **Buddhist celebration** held annually at **Tsuklakhang Palace**. Featuring **masked dances** by monks and lamas, it symbolizes the destruction of negative forces and the arrival of **peace and prosperity** for the new year. Held on the 28th and 29th day of the **10th month** of the **Tibetan Lunar Calendar**, the festival attracts both **locals** and **tourists**. It concludes with the ritualistic **burning of effigies**, symbolizing the **victory of good over evil**.
- The **Avaniyapuram Jallikattu** began on **January 14, 2025**, in **Madurai**, celebrating Tamil Nadu's cultural heritage during the **Pongal** festival. The event featured **1,100 bulls** and **900 bull-tamers**, with the best bull winning a **₹11 lakh tractor** and the top bull-tamer receiving an **₹8 lakh car**.

Miscellaneous National News

- The **PM CARES Fund**, created in March 2020 for the **COVID-19 crisis**, saw a sharp decline in contributions, dropping from **₹7,184 crore** in 2020-21 to **₹912 crore** in 2022-23. **Voluntary donations** fell to **₹909.64 crore**, and **foreign donations** dropped drastically from **₹495 crore** to **₹2.57 crore**. The fund's contributions peaked during the pandemic, with support waning as the crisis subsided.
- The **813th Urs** of **Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti** has begun, marking a major religious event in **Ajmer**. The **flag ceremony** is scheduled for **December 28, 2024**, at the **Dargah Khwaja Saheb**. The annual **Urs**, commemorating the saint's death anniversary, attracts millions of devotees for **prayers** and **blessings**. This event holds immense significance for followers of **Sufi** traditions.
- **Kaamya Karthikeyan**, a **17-year-old** student from **Mumbai**, became the **youngest female** to conquer the **Seven Summits**, scaling the highest peaks across all seven continents. Her achievement includes summiting **Mount Vinson** in **Antarctica** on **December 24, 2024**. Kaamya's climbs include **Mount Kilimanjaro** (Africa), **Mount Elbrus** (Europe), **Mount Kosciuszko** (Australia), **Mount Aconcagua** (South America), **Mount Denali** (North America), and **Mount Everest** (Asia). She was accompanied by her father, **Cdr S. Karthikeyan**, during the final climb.
- **Blinkit** CEO **Albinder Dhindsa** announced the launch of an **instant ambulance service** in **Gurgaon**, allowing residents to book **Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances** via the **Blinkit app**, with arrival within **10 minutes**. The service aims to provide **quick emergency medical transport** in urban areas.
- The Indian government is considering the introduction of **honorary senior ranks** for retiring **Central Armed Police Force (CAPF)** personnel who haven't been promoted due to **organizational constraints**. Proposed by **Anish Dayal Singh**, the initiative would allow eligible personnel to wear the insignia of their next higher rank in their final month of service and receive the corresponding pay. **Home Minister Amit Shah** has approved the proposal, which is expected to be implemented across all CAPFs soon.
- **Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin** inaugurated **India's first-ever glass bridge** in **Kanniyakumari**, connecting the **Vivekananda Rock Memorial** and the **Thiruvalluvar Statue**. Built under a **₹37-crore** initiative, the bridge aims to enhance the **tourist experience** and boost **local tourism**. The project coincides with the **silver jubilee** of the Thiruvalluvar Statue's unveiling and is expected to attract **domestic** and **international tourists**.
- **Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah,** launch the **BHARATPOL portal developed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** on January 7, 2025, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The portal aims to facilitate real-time international police assistance and enhance India's efforts to combat transnational crimes. Developed by the CBI, which acts as the National Central Bureau (NCB) for INTERPOL in India, the portal will improve communication between law enforcement agencies (LEAs) across India and INTERPOL.
- From January 3 to 5, 2025, **Gujarat's Jamnagar district** hosted **India's inaugural census of coastal and wader birds.** This significant event aimed to enhance understanding of bird populations and their habitats along the state's coastline.
- On January 6, 2025, **Nadi Tarangini,** an AI-powered pulse diagnostic device developed by **Atreya Innovations,** received approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), making it India's first ayurvedic medical device to be officially recognized. The device, which combines modern technology with ancient Ayurvedic practices, was created after over six years of research, and aims to revolutionize traditional Ayurvedic diagnostic methods by offering precise health insights through pulse examination.

- **NITI Aayog, established on January 1, 2015,** emerged as a visionary reform in India's governance structure, replacing the Planning Commission to better address the needs of a growing, market-driven economy. In his first Independence Day speech in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced NITI Aayog as an institution with a new design and structure, emphasizing a shift towards decentralization and competitive federalism. Over the past decade, NITI Aayog has evolved into a platform for policy innovation, addressing the country's development challenges and promoting inclusive growth through collaborative governance. **This article examines NITI Aayog's evolution over the last 10 years, its key principles, major initiatives, and future challenges.**

- On January 9, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the **Pravasi Bharatiya Express**, a special **state-of-the-art tourist train for the Indian diaspora,** from Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The launch coincides with the 110th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's return to India from South Africa on this date in 1915. The train, designed under the Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY), aims to connect Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) with India's rich cultural and religious heritage by offering a fully sponsored tour across the country.

- On January 5, 2025, **PM Narendra Modi** inaugurated a **13-km section** of the **Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)**, connecting **Sahibabad** (Uttar Pradesh) to **New Ashok Nagar** (Delhi). This forms part of the **82-km Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Namo Bharat corridor**, aiming to reduce travel time. The section includes a **6 km underground stretch**, with **Anand Vihar** station serving as a major transit hub.

- The **DGFT** has amended the **Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023** to promote **inclusivity** and **transparency** in trade policy. The amendment mandates **consultations with stakeholders** like **importers**, **exporters**, and **industry experts** during the policy formulation or amendment process. A structured mechanism will provide **feedback** on why certain suggestions aren't accepted, fostering **trust** and **clarity** between the government and trade participants.

- Recent reports highlight a significant **decline in rural-to-urban migration** in India, with **migration dropping by 53.7 million** in 2023, reflecting a **11.8% decrease** from 2011. This has led to increased **ruralization** and associated economic challenges. The **migration rate** fell from 37.6% in 2011 to 28.9% in 2023, with a decrease in **economic migration**. The **workforce** has become more reliant on **agriculture**, with 46.1% of people employed in the sector in 2023-24, up from 42.5% in 2017-18. This has led to **food inflation**, **disguised unemployment**, and **stagnant wages**, especially among **women**, whose **real wages** fell by 2.3% annually over the past five years.

- On **January 6, 2025**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the **Jammu Railway Division**, the **69th division** under the **Northern Railway Zone**. The division, headquartered in Jammu, covers **742.1 route kilometers**, including key sections like **Pathankot-Jammu-Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla** and others, aimed at boosting **connectivity** and **socio-economic development** in northern India.

- As of **January 2025**, India's **metro rail network** has surpassed **1,000 kilometers**, making it the **third-largest** in the world, after **China** and the **United States**. India's metro journey began with **Kolkata Metro** in 1984, followed by the **Delhi Metro** in 2002, which is now the country's largest with a network of **395 km**.

- **Aero India 2025**, Asia's premier aerospace exhibition, will be held from **February 10-14, 2025**, in **Bengaluru** under the theme **"The Runway to a Billion Opportunities."** The event aims to enhance **India's aerospace sector** and foster global partnerships. Key highlights include the **Defence Ministers' Conclave** for strategic partnerships and the **CEOs' Round-Table** for global leaders and Indian defence manufacturing executives to explore **OEM** opportunities in India.

- The **Central Government** has approved a **memorial** for former President **Pranab Mukherjee** at **Rashtriya Smriti Sthal** in **Rajghat, Delhi**. This tribute, honoring his contributions to Indian politics, was announced on **January 1, 2025**, and was appreciated by his daughter, **Sharmistha Mukherjee**.

- **Frankie Remruatdika Zadeng**, born on **January 1, 2025**, in **Aizawl, Mizoram**, is **India's first Generation Beta** baby. Weighing **3.12 kg**, Frankie symbolizes the beginning of a new chapter in India's progress. **Generation Beta**, a term coined by Australian futurist **Mark McCrindle**, refers to those born from the mid-2020s, marked by rapid **technological advancements** and a focus on **sustainability**. Frankie's birth reflects the hope and progress of this generation, which will thrive in a **digitally connected** and **AI-driven** world.

- **Justice B.N. Srikrishna** has been appointed as the Chairman of the **Advisory Board** for **Equal** and its investee **OneMoney**, focused on **identity verification** and **data-sharing**. The board includes notable figures such as **Jagdish Capoor**, **Rakesh Mohan**, **Anand Sinha**, **J. Satyanarayana**, **Ajay Prakash Sawhney**, **P.H. Ravikumar**, **Anitha Ramachandran**, and **Sunil Kulkarni**. This appointment comes amid the government's push for stronger data security with the release of the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act** draft rules.

- The Indian government has announced a ₹50,000 crore investment over five years to enhance inland water transport, focusing on **new national waterways**, **green shipping**, and the introduction of **1,000 green vessels**. The plan includes expanding **Water Metro projects** to 15 cities, including **Guwahati**, and developing infrastructure like **floating steel jetties** on the **Godavari River**, boosting urban connectivity and trade.

- **Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI)** has been selected by **ICMR** to establish **South India's first Infectious Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (IRDL)**. The lab will focus on **bacterial**, **fungal**, and **parasitic diseases**, aiming for faster diagnosis and improved healthcare outcomes. It will enhance **research** on **antibiotic resistance**, **fungal infections**, and **tropical diseases**, reducing the need for out-of-state sample testing.

- The appointment process for **India's Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs)** has been reformed under the **2023 Act to enhance transparency and accountability.** A three-member Selection Committee, including the Prime Minister, a nominated Cabinet Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition, will oversee appointments, supported by a Search Committee. The Act also allows external candidates to bring diverse perspectives. Influenced by a Supreme Court ruling advocating balanced appointments, the exclusion of the Chief Justice of India and concerns over potential partisan nominations have drawn criticism. The upcoming selection of the next CEC, **post-Rajiv Kumar's tenure** ending February 18, 2025, will test these reforms' impact on the Election Commission's independence and effectiveness.

- **The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi,** has approved the **constitution of the 8th Central Pay Commission,** which will evaluate and recommend revised salary structures and allowances for central government employees and pensioners. This early initiative ensures readiness for implementing the recommendations by January 1, 2026. The commission's scope encompasses over one crore employees and pensioners, aiming to address compensation, pensions, and welfare enhancements.

- Dr. S. Jaishankar, India's External Affairs Minister, represent India at **Donald Trump's swearing-in** on January 20, 2025, marking his second term as the **47th President of the U.S.** This visit highlights the **strengthening** of **India-U.S. relations**.

- India added a record **30 GW** of **renewable energy** capacity in 2024, a **113% increase** from 2023. This milestone supports India's goal of reaching **500 GW** by 2030, emphasizing its commitment to **clean energy** and reducing **carbon footprint**.

- The **INROAD** project, backed by ₹100 crore, aims to improve **natural rubber** quality in India's **North-East**. It focuses on **skill development** for rubber growers and building **model infrastructure**, with support from the **tyre industry**, highlighting collaboration between **agriculture** and **manufacturing**.

- India's **Railway Minister**, **Ashwini Vaishnaw**, announced the development of the **world's most powerful hydrogen fuel-run train engine** by **Indian Railways** during the **18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas**. Built with **indigenous technology**, this achievement sets a new benchmark in **green energy** and **sustainable development** in the railway sector.

- Justice **Krishnan Vinod Chandran** was sworn in as the newest judge of the Supreme Court of India on January 16, 2025. Chief Justice of India **Sanjiv Khanna** administered the oath of office. With this appointment, the Supreme Court's judicial strength has risen to 33, just one short of its full sanctioned capacity.

- The 9th Foundation Day of Startup India celebrated India's progress as a global innovation hub. Union Minister **Piyush Goyal** launched the **PRABHAAV Factbook** and **Bharat Startup Challenge**, highlighting the country's startup growth, with **1.59 lakh startups**, **76 IPOs** in 2024, and **₹13 trillion** in government funding.

- The world's first **Mahamrityunjaya Yantra**, measuring 52 feet, has been installed at **Tapovan Ashram** in **Prayagraj**, a sacred site of the **Maha Kumbh**. This **spiritual marvel**, known as the **Victory over Death Yantra**, helps devotees overcome **fear of death**, **disease**, and **danger**, while enhancing **courage**, **positivity**, and connecting them to **Lord Shiva's higher energy**.

- **India's textile industry** has long been a cornerstone of its economy, renowned for its **rich heritage** and diverse products. In recent years, the sector has experienced significant growth, positioning India as a **formidable player in the global textile market.**

- On **January 16, 2025**, **Startup India** celebrated its **9th anniversary** as **National Startup Day**, marking India's emergence as the **3rd largest startup ecosystem** globally with over **1.59 lakh startups**. Launched in **2016**, the initiative has fostered growth in **fintech**, **edtech**, **health-tech**, and **e-commerce**, driving India's transformation into a global **hub for innovation and entrepreneurship**.

- **Kalagram**, located in **Prayagraj** during **Mahakumbh 2025**, is a cultural hub created by the **Ministry of Culture** to showcase India's rich heritage. It offers an immersive experience with **crafts**, **cuisine**, and **cultural performances**, reflecting India's **diverse cultural legacy** and spiritual significance. Kalagram serves as a **cultural jewel** that celebrates the essence of **Bharat**.

- On January 16, 2025, the Lokpal of India celebrated its inaugural **Foundation Day** at the **Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi,** marking 11 years since its establishment on January 16, 2014, under the **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.**

- On **January 17, 2025**, the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** launched **National Broadband Mission 2.0 (NBM 2.0)** and the **Sanchar Saathi mobile app**. Building on **NBM 1.0**, NBM 2.0 aims to connect **1.7 lakh villages**, ensuring **60%** of rural households have access to **100 Mbps** broadband. This initiative is designed to bridge the **digital divide** and promote **inclusive growth** across India.

- The **Prime Ministers' Museum & Library (PMML)** has restructured its leadership, expanding its executive council from **29 to 34 members** to bring in diverse expertise. **Nripendra Mishra** has been reappointed as chairperson for another **five-year term**, while new members include **Smriti Irani** (former Union Minister), **Shekhar Kapur** (filmmaker), **Rajiv Kumar** (former NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman), **Syed Ata Hasnain** (retired Army General), and **Vasudev Kamath** (cultural representative). The reshuffle sees the exclusion of **Anurag Thakur** and **Rajat Sharma**, indicating a strategic shift in governance. Originally the **Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML)**, PMML was **renamed in 2023** to represent the legacies of all Indian Prime Ministers, aligning with the government's vision of a comprehensive political repository.

- The **Musi River Historic Buildings** in **Hyderabad** have been added to the prestigious **2025 World Monuments Watch** list by the **World Monuments Fund (WMF)**. This inclusion underscores the urgent need to preserve these structures amid **environmental challenges**, such as the **degradation of the Musi River** and **urban development**. The recognition aligns with the **Telangana government's efforts** to rejuvenate the river and its heritage, promoting both **heritage conservation** and **environmental sustainability**.

- The sacred city of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh is resonating with devotion and festivity as it marks the **first anniversary of the 'Pran Pratishtha' of Ram Lalla** at the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir. The milestone event, celebrated on **Wednesday, January 22, 2025**, reflects the city's spiritual legacy and the culmination of centuries of devotion and struggle.

- The **Centre** has made a significant decision to increase the **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** for **raw jute** by Rs 315, setting it at **Rs 5,650 per quintal** for the **2025-26 marketing season**. This move, approved by the **Union Cabinet**, aims to provide farmers with a return of **66.8 per cent** over the all-India weighted average cost of production, thus encouraging farmers to invest in jute cultivation.

- The recent decision by the **Neutral Expert**, appointed by the **World Bank** under the terms of the **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)**, marks a significant diplomatic win for India. The Expert deemed himself "competent" to adjudicate the technical differences raised between India and Pakistan regarding the design of two hydroelectric projects in Jammu and Kashmir. This outcome vindicates India's long-standing position and opens a new chapter in the resolution of disputes under the IWT framework.

- **Union Minister Piyush Goyal** set an ambitious target of achieving **10,000 Geographical Indication (GI) Tags** by **2030** during the **GI Samagam** in New Delhi. With **605 GI tags** issued so far, Goyal emphasized a **whole-of-government approach** and the formation of a dedicated committee for implementation. He highlighted initiatives like **One District One Product (ODOP)** and the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation Fund** to strengthen India's **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)** ecosystem, focusing on the dual goal of **development** and **heritage preservation**.

- India has been a leader in the global fight against **tuberculosis (TB)**, starting with the **National Tuberculosis Program (NTP)** in 1962 and evolving to the **National Tuberculosis Elimination Program (NTEP)** in 2020, aiming to eliminate TB by **2025**. Despite significant progress, India still accounts for **27% of the global TB burden** with an incidence rate of **210 per 100,000** in 2021, and faces challenges such as **drug-resistant TB**, including **MDR** and **XDR TB**.

- **Indore** and **Udaipur** have become the first **Indian cities** to join the global list of accredited **Wetland Cities** under the **Ramsar Convention**. This recognition underscores India's commitment to **sustainable urban development** and **ecological conservation**. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** congratulated the cities, emphasizing the importance of balancing **urban growth** with **environmental sustainability**, and recognizing the vital role of **wetlands** in providing **ecological, social, and economic benefits**.

- Under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu**, **Prayagraj Airport** has been transformed into a modern hub for the **Maha Kumbh Mahotsav 2025**. The airport now boasts **expanded terminals**, enhanced **passenger amenities**, and improved **connectivity**, accommodating millions of devotees from **January 13 to February 26, 2025**. The project was closely overseen through regular inspections and efficient planning.

- The **Union Cabinet** approved the **National Critical Mineral Mission (CMM)** with an outlay of **Rs 16,300 crore** to boost the domestic production of essential minerals for **technology** and **defense manufacturing**. The mission focuses on critical minerals like **lithium**, **cobalt**, **copper**, **nickel**, and **rare earth elements**, aiming to reduce import dependence, enhance **resource security**, and streamline regulatory processes. It will cover the entire value chain, from **exploration** to **recovery**, promoting **public** and **private sector participation**.

- The **MSME Trade Enablement and Marketing (TEAM) Initiative** has been launched by the **Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME)** with a ₹277.35 crore budget over three years. The initiative aims to onboard **5 lakh micro and small enterprises**, focusing on **women-led businesses**, and enhance their digital presence. In partnership with the **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)**, it aims to empower MSMEs, reduce operational barriers, and create growth opportunities in India's digital economy.

- On **January 31, 2025**, the **Ministry of Railways** launched the **'SwaRail' SuperApp** to integrate multiple railway services into one platform. Currently in **beta**, the app offers **ticket bookings, platform and parcel bookings, train and PNR inquiries, food ordering**, and **Rail Madad** for complaints and assistance. This app aims to enhance the **user experience** and reduce the need for multiple apps.

- India has added **four new sites** to the **Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance**, bringing the total to 89. The new additions include **Udhwa Lake** in **Jharkhand** (the state's first Ramsar site), **Sikkim's inaugural Ramsar site**, a **wetland in Gujarat**, and a site from **Northeast India**. This highlights India's dedication to **wetland conservation** and preserving its **biodiversity** across diverse regions.

- A **High-Level Committee (HLC)**, led by **Amit Shah**, has approved **Rs 3,027.86 crore** for **disaster mitigation projects** across India. The funding will support initiatives in **lightning safety**, **drought-prone regions**, and **forest fire management**. Key members, including **Nirmala Sitharaman**, **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, and the **Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog**, aim to enhance **disaster preparedness** and reduce the impact of natural disasters.

GOVT SCHEMES

CENTRAL GOVT SCHEMES

Name of Initiative	Ministry	Year	Purpose
One Nation One Subscription (ONOS)	Ministry of Education	2025	To provide comprehensive digital access to international scholarly journals for students, faculty, researchers, and scientists across government-managed higher education institutions and R&D centers. **Key Features of the ONOS Scheme** • **Extensive Access to Scholarly Journals**: ONOS offers access to over 13,000 scholarly journals from 30 major international publishers, covering a wide array of disciplines including Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), Medicine, Social Sciences, Finance, and Accounts. • **Beneficiaries**: The scheme benefits approximately 1.8 crore (18 million) students, faculty, and researchers across more than 6,300 government-managed HEIs and central government-managed R&D institutions. • **Inclusive Access**: ONOS ensures equitable access to research resources, particularly for institutions in tier 2 and tier 3 cities, thereby promoting knowledge dissemination across diverse regions. **Implementation and Funding** • **Centralized Management**: The subscription process is centrally coordinated by the Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET), an autonomous inter-university centre under the University Grants Commission (UGC). INFLIBNET manages the distribution of digital access to these journals, ensuring a seamless experience for users. • **Digital Access**: Journals are accessible entirely through a digital platform, minimizing administrative complexities and providing on-demand access to users. • **Government Allocation**: A total of ₹6,000 crore has been allocated for the ONOS initiative, covering three years—2025, 2026, and 2027. This funding covers the subscription charges for all participating institutions across the three-year period.
UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All) scheme			The UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All) scheme, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 5th January 2015, has **completed a decade of impactful service to the nation**. This initiative, originally launched as the Domestic Efficient Lighting Programme (DELP), revolutionized India's domestic lighting sector by providing affordable, energy-efficient LED bulbs, tube lights, and fans to households across the country. It has contributed to not only lowering energy consumption but also reducing carbon emissions, making India a global leader in energy-efficient lighting. The UJALA scheme, along with the **Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP), has significantly impacted the country's energy efficiency,** economic savings, and environmental sustainability. **Key Highlights of UJALA Scheme** • **Launch Date:** 5th January 2015. • **Vision:** To promote affordable energy-efficient lighting in Indian homes, reduce electricity consumption, and contribute to environmental sustainability. • **Partnerships:** The scheme is jointly executed by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) and DISCOMs under the Ministry of Power.

Name of Initiative	Ministry	Year	Purpose
			• **Scope:** Distribution of LED bulbs, tube lights, and fans at affordable prices across India. • **Objective:** To reduce energy consumption, lower household electricity bills, and decrease carbon emissions. • **Impact:** As of 6th January 2025, the UJALA scheme has distributed 36.87 crore LED bulbs, leading to savings of ₹19,153 crore annually.
cashless treatment scheme			• **Nitin Gadkari**, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, announced a **cashless treatment scheme** for road accident survivors, covering up to **₹1.5 lakh** for seven days. • The pilot, active in states like **Assam**, **Chandigarh**, and others, has benefitted **6,840 people** and will be expanded nationwide by **March 2025**. • The scheme aims to save **50,000 lives** by ensuring timely treatment. Gadkari also discussed **tech interventions** for heavy vehicle safety, **skilled driver shortages**, and updates on **emission norms** and **vehicle safety standards**.
Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)			• The **Ministry of Rural Development** has approved **56 new Watershed Development Projects** under the **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)**, totaling **₹700 crore**. • The projects aim to boost **agricultural productivity**, combat **land degradation**, and enhance **climate resilience** in **10 states**, including **Rajasthan**, **Madhya Pradesh**, **Karnataka**, and others.
Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana			• ₹3.39 lakh crore disbursed in **Q3 FY25**, the highest quarterly disbursement since PMMY's inception in 2015. • Strong demand among **micro and small enterprises**, supporting **entrepreneurship** and **self-employment**. • **Disbursement amount** of ₹3.39 lakh crore in **Q3 FY25**, showing a substantial increase from previous quarters. • **Strong economic activity** and confidence in financial support for **small businesses**. • **Loan limits increased** in **October 2024**, raising the maximum loan limit from ₹10 lakh to ₹20 lakh. • Introduction of the **'Tarun Plus' category** for higher credit limits for successful borrowers. • **Credit Guarantee Scheme** launched in **July 2024** to assist **medium and small enterprises** in **manufacturing**. • Scheme allows businesses to procure **machinery and equipment** without collateral, reducing financial barriers. • **First half of FY25** saw disbursement of ₹1.86 lakh crore, slightly down from ₹1.91 lakh crore in FY24. • Despite a **marginal dip**, the outlook remains optimistic due to policy interventions. • **Disbursements in FY23-24** reached ₹5.20 lakh crore, surpassing ₹4.40 lakh crore in FY23. • Growth driven by **lower delinquency rates** and **proactive monitoring**. • **Q3 FY25 disbursement** expected to positively influence full-year financial results. • **Enhanced loan limits** and **supportive schemes** likely to continue **driving growth** in disbursements. • **Financial inclusion** efforts and support for marginalized entrepreneurs expected to sustain the upward trend.

Name of Initiative	Ministry	Year	Purpose
SVAMITVA scheme			• **PM Modi emphasized** the importance of providing **property ownership records** to rural populations as essential for addressing poverty and distress in villages. • **SVAMITVA scheme** launched in **2020**, uses **drone-based surveys** to provide **property cards** as legal documents, improving property rights in villages. • **6.5 million property cards** distributed across **12 states and Union territories**, benefiting over **65 lakh families** (approximately **2.25 crore individuals**). • Villagers are using property cards to secure **bank loans**, enabling them to start small businesses, with a significant impact on **Dalit**, **backward**, and **tribal families**. • **SVAMITVA scheme** aims to unlock over **₹100 lakh crore** in **economic activities**, contributing to India's overall economic growth. • PM Modi referenced a **United Nations study** linking **lack of legal property documents** to poverty, highlighting the **global relevance** of the SVAMITVA scheme. • The initiative uses **advanced drone technology** to map residential land, addressing global challenges like **climate change**, **water scarcity**, and **pandemics**.
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme			**10th anniversary** of the **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)** scheme commemorated by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, launched by **PM Modi** on **January 22, 2015** in **Panipat, Haryana**. • **Inaugural Event** held on **January 22, 2025**, at **Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi**, attended by **Union Ministers J.P. Nadda**, **Annapurna Devi**, **Savitri Thakur**, **women officers** from armed forces, **Anganwadi workers**, **student volunteers**, and **representatives** from international organizations like **UNICEF**, **UN Women**, **UNDP**, **UNFPA**, **World Bank**, and **GIZ**. • **Anniversary celebrations** from **January 22 to March 8, 2025**, concluding on **International Women's Day** with **rallies, cultural performances**, and **felicitation ceremonies** for women achievers. **Key Achievements of BBBP:** • **Improved sex ratio at birth**: From **918 (2014-15)** to **930 (2023-24)**. • **Girls' enrollment in secondary education**: Increased from **75.51%** to **78%**. • **Institutional deliveries**: Increased from **61%** to **97.3%**. • **Antenatal care registrations**: Increased from **61%** to **80.5%**. **Notable Initiatives:** • **Yashaswini Bike Expedition**: Empowering women through adventurous activities. • **Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav**: Re-enrolled **100,000+ out-of-school girls** into education. • **Collaboration with TV Shows**: Raised awareness on **girl child abandonment**. **Sustainable Practices:** • Nationwide **plantation drive** as part of the anniversary celebrations. • **Awareness campaigns** through **print, digital, and social media** to promote **gender equality** and **women's empowerment**.

Name of Initiative	Ministry	Year	Purpose
Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana			• **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY)**, launched on **January 22, 2015** by **PM Narendra Modi**, has completed **10 years** of fostering **financial security** for India's girl children, with over **4.2 crore accounts** opened by **November 2024**. • **Investment Details:** Guardians can invest a minimum of ₹250 and up to **₹1.5 lakh annually** in the name of a girl child, offering **attractive interest rates** and **tax benefits**. **Interest Rate Trajectory:** • **Initial Rates (2015-2016):** Started at **9.1%**, rising to **9.2%** for FY 2015-16. • **Subsequent Adjustments (2016-2020):** Rates decreased from **8.6% (April 2016)** to **8.1% (January 2018)**, with a brief rise to **8.5% (October 2018)** and stabilized at **8.4%** through 2019-2020. • **Stability and Recent Rates (2020-2025):** Rate remained at **7.6%** from April 2020 to September 2022, then increased to **8%** in April 2023 and **8.2%** in January 2024. **Subscriber Growth:** • **2015:** 4,20,420 accounts with ₹**123 crore** in deposits. • **2016:** 69,98,870 accounts with ₹**6,773 crore**. • **2017:** 1,00,84,152 accounts with ₹**17,156 crore**. • **2018:** 1,24,28,910 accounts with ₹**31,958 crore**. • **2019:** 1,55,34,417 accounts with ₹**50,224 crore**. • **2020:** 1,92,49,624 accounts with ₹**72,880 crore**. • **2021:** 2,32,67,968 accounts with ₹**1,01,258 crore**. • **2022:** 2,93,74,765 accounts with ₹**1,39,296 crore**. • **Dec 2022:** 3,25,12,095 accounts with ₹**1,62,154 crore**. **Eligibility and Account Management:** • **Account Opening:** Opened for a **girl child** from birth until she turns **10 years old**. • **Family Limits:** Up to **two accounts** per family, with exceptions for **twins or triplets**. • **Deposit Period:** Can invest for up to **15 years** from account opening. • **Maturity:** Account matures **21 years** after opening or upon the girl's **marriage** (after 18 years), whichever comes first. **Interest Calculation and Tax Benefits:** • **Interest Calculation:** Calculated monthly based on the lowest balance between the **5th day** and **end of the month**, credited **annually** at the end of the financial year. • **Tax Benefits:** Investments qualify for **tax deductions under Section 80C** of the **Income Tax Act**, and the interest earned is **tax-free**. • **Withdrawals:** Up to **50% of the balance** can be withdrawn once the girl turns **18** to support her **higher education**. This scheme plays a vital role in **promoting financial inclusion** and **empowering young girls** for a brighter future.

STATE GOVT SCHEMES

Name of Initiative	Ministry	Year	Purpose
Rythu Bharosa scheme	Telangana government		• **Rythu Bharosa scheme** in **Telangana** has been **expanded** to provide **financial assistance** to all farmers cultivating crops in the state. • **Financial Assistance: ₹7,500** per acre for each crop season to approximately **70 lakh farmers**. • **Implementation Timeline:** Scheme will begin around the **Sankranti festival**, with **Gram Sabhas** scheduled from **January 5 to 7** to collect applications. • **Financial Implications:** Telangana government plans to raise **₹30,000 crore** in market borrowings during the last quarter of **FY 2024-25**. **Background and Evolution:** • Replaces the previous **Rythu Bandhu scheme**, which offered **₹5,000 per acre**. • **Congress party claims** misuse of funds in the old scheme, with ineligible beneficiaries receiving excessive funds. • **Rythu Bharosa** aims to focus on **actively cultivated lands** to prevent misuse. **Implementation Strategy:** • A **Cabinet sub-committee** led by **Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka** has finalized the process to ensure the benefits reach only **genuine farmers**. **Financial Management:** • Telangana government plans to raise **₹30,000 crore** in **market borrowings** in **three tranches of ₹10,000 crore** each in the last quarter of **2024-25**. • The **Reserve Bank of India** will conduct **securities auctions** every Tuesday during this period. **Government Borrowing Restrictions:** • **Union Finance Ministry** has set limits on state borrowing. • **Original borrowing projections** exceeded ₹61,000 crore but were reduced to **₹49,255 crore**. • **₹37,850 crore** borrowed by the end of November, with additional borrowings in December.
Shahid Madho Singh Haath Kharcha Scheme	Odisha		• **Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi** inaugurated the **Shahid Madho Singh Haath Kharcha Scheme** on **January 7, 2025** at **Adivasi Mela**, Bhubaneswar. • The scheme provides **₹5,000 financial assistance** to **Scheduled Tribe students** enrolling in **Class IX and XI**, aiming to reduce dropout rates. • **Eligibility**: ST students with a family income of **≤ ₹2,50,000**. • **Incentive disbursed** directly to the student's **bank account**. • **Application process** through **recommendations** from school principals and headmasters via the **Odisha State Scholarship Portal**. • **Madho Singh**, born around **1786**, was a **zamindar** and **tribal leader** who led resistance against British rule.

Name of Initiative	Ministry	Year	Purpose
			• He was a prominent figure during the **First War of Indian Independence (1857)**, uniting tribal groups in **guerrilla warfare** against the British. • **Captured and executed** in **1858**, Madho Singh remains a **symbol of courage** and **resilience** for Odisha's tribal communities. • The scheme helps **empower tribal youth**, alleviating **socio-economic challenges** and promoting **educational opportunities** for future generations.
Jharkhand Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana	Jharkhand		• **Jharkhand Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana** launched by **CM Hemant Soren** in **August 2024** to **empower women** through **financial assistance**. • **Initial Benefit:** ₹1,000/month per beneficiary, revised to ₹2,500/month from **December 2024**. • **Total Transfer (Dec 2024 & Jan 2025): ₹5,000** credited in **January 2025** due to delays. • **January 2025: ₹1,415.44 crore** transferred to **56.61 lakh beneficiaries**, with ₹2,500 disbursed for **December 2024**. • **Target Beneficiaries:** Women aged **21 to 49 years**. • Payments made directly to **bank accounts**, improving **household income** and **financial security**, particularly in rural areas. • **Economic Impact:** Boosts low-income family finances, with women reinvesting income in **health**, **education**, and **family welfare**. • Encourages **financial inclusion** by promoting **bank account openings**. • **Eligibility:** Female, permanent resident of Jharkhand, age **21-49**, excluding those employed in **Govt. sectors**, **PSUs**, **MP/MLA family members**, **income tax-paying families**, and recipients of other **social security pensions**.
Bima Sakhi Yojana	Goa		• **Goa CM Dr. Pramod Sawant** launched **'Bima Sakhi Yojana'** on **January 7, 2025**, under **Swayampurna Goa 2.0** to empower women by providing **training** and opportunities to become **LIC agents**. • **Eligibility:** Women aged **18-70 years** with at least **Class X education**. • **Training & Stipend:** Participants receive training to become LIC agents, with a stipend of **₹7,000/month (1st year)**, **₹6,000/month (2nd year)**, and **₹5,000/month (3rd year)**, totaling **₹2.16 lakh** over three years. • **Career Advancement:** After training, **Bima Sakhis** can work as **LIC agents** and may qualify for **development officer roles** within LIC. • **Government's Empowerment Commitment:** Goal to create **1,000 Bima Sakhis** by the **Prime Minister's next visit** to Goa. • **Impact on Financial Inclusion:** Aims to raise **financial literacy** and **life insurance coverage**, promoting **financial inclusion** for women and the community.
PARTH Yojana			• **PARTH Yojana** is a scheme launched in **Madhya Pradesh** to provide pre-recruitment training for youth aiming to join the **Indian Army, Police,** and **Para-Military forces**. • The program focuses on **physical fitness**, **mental agility**, and **personality development**, with training on physical tests, written exams, and general knowledge.

Name of Initiative	Ministry	Year	Purpose
			• Training centers will operate at **divisional levels**, overseen by **District Sports and Youth Welfare Officers** and supported by local coordinators. • The scheme aims to instill **patriotism**, **discipline**, and **fitness** among participants.
Subhadra Scheme			• The **Subhadra Scheme**, launched by the **Odisha Government's Women and Child Development Department**, empowers women through **financial support**, **digital literacy**, and access to **social safety nets**. • Part of the BJP's poll promises ahead of the 2024 elections, the scheme aims to improve women's socio-economic conditions and encourage **entrepreneurship**. • Partnering with **IIM Sambalpur**, the government seeks research-based guidance to enhance the scheme's impact.
Mahila Evam Kishori Samman Yojana'			• On **National Girl Child Day 2025**, Haryana Cabinet Minister Shruti Choudhry launched the **'Samman Sanjeevani' app** to improve the **'Mahila Evam Kishori Samman Yojana'**. • The app aims to provide essential services, including **sanitary napkins**, to **BPL women and girls** aged 10-45. • The event also marked the 10th anniversary of the **'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao'** scheme, focusing on **women's empowerment**.

APPS & WEB PORTAL

App & Web Name	Launched By	Purpose
e-Shram portal	Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya	The **e-Shram portal** has been upgraded to support all **22 scheduled languages**, enhancing accessibility for unorganised workers across India. Launched by **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya**, this expansion, facilitated by the **Bhashini project**, allows workers to register and access schemes in their native languages. The portal has seen over **30,000 daily registrations**, reflecting growing engagement and trust.
Clari5 Portal	Punjab National Bank	**Punjab National Bank (PNB)** became the first Indian bank to implement Clari5**'s National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) Integration Solution**, enhancing **fraud prevention** and **complaint management**. Developed with the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**, the system automates real-time processing of cybercrime complaints across **retail banking channels** like **Internet Banking**, **ATMs**, and **UPI**.
iSPOT Portal	Securities and Exchange Board of India	The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** is launching the **Integrated SEBI Portal for Technical Glitches (iSPOT)** on **February 3, 2025**, to replace the outdated email system. This new, structured portal will allow **Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs)**, including stock exchanges and depositories, to report technical issues with detailed **root cause analysis (RCA)**. The initiative aims to improve **transparency**, **efficiency**, and **real-time issue resolution**, enhancing the overall **financial market infrastructure**.
BHARATPOL portal	Amit Shah	Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, launch the **BHARATPOL portal developed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** on January 7, 2025, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The portal aims to facilitate real-time international police assistance and enhance India's efforts to combat transnational crimes. Developed by the CBI, which acts as the National Central Bureau (NCB) for INTERPOL in India, the portal will improve communication between law enforcement agencies (LEAs) across India and INTERPOL.
super app	Elon Musk's	**Elon Musk's X** (formerly Twitter) is set to launch **X Money**, a **digital wallet** powered by **Visa**, as part of its strategy to evolve into a **"super app"**. This move aims to integrate **payment services** with its existing features, competing with apps like **WeChat**, offering everything from **messaging** to **financial transactions**.

App & Web Name	Launched By	Purpose
SwaRail' SuperApp	Ministry of Railways	On **January 31, 2025**, the **Ministry of Railways** launched the **'SwaRail' SuperApp** to integrate multiple railway services into one platform. Currently in **beta**, the app offers **ticket bookings**, **platform and parcel bookings**, **train and PNR inquiries**, **food ordering**, and **Rail Madad** for complaints and assistance. This app aims to enhance the **user experience** and reduce the need for multiple apps.
Portal Baanknet	M. Nagaraju	• **Shri M. Nagaraju, Secretary, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance**, launched **revamped e-auction portal ⬜Baanknet⬜** in New Delhi. • This platform consolidates information on e-auction properties from all Public Sector Banks and offers a one-stop destination for buyers and investors to discover a wide range of assets.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

• South Korea's **political crisis** deepened on **December 27, 2024**, when **parliament** voted to impeach **Acting President Han Duck-soo**. This followed the impeachment of **President Yoon Suk Yeol** on **December 14, 2024**, after he imposed **martial law** on **December 3**. Han's refusal to appoint three judges to the **Constitutional Court** sparked opposition calls for his impeachment, marking a historic moment as the first time an **acting president** has been impeached in South Korea.

• China has introduced the **CR450**, the world's fastest high-speed train prototype, achieving **test speeds of 450 km/h**. It surpasses the previous **CR400 Fuxing** trains (350 km/h) and combines **speed**, **energy efficiency**, **safety**, and **passenger comfort**. The CR450 aligns with China's goal to expand its high-speed rail network to **70,000 km by 2035**, reinforcing its leadership in global rail systems. The CR450's **maximum operating speed** is 400 km/h, after extensive testing.

• Starting January 1, 2025, **Russia** introduced a new **tourist tax**, replacing the earlier resort fee, aimed at boosting regional tourism infrastructure. The phased plan begins with a **1%** charge on lodging costs, increasing to **3% by 2027**. The tax applies to **hotels** and accommodations, with costs passed on to tourists. **Regional authorities** can implement this as a local levy to enhance Russia's **tourism landscape**.

• Starting **January 1, 2025**, **Switzerland** introduces significant changes, including a **facial coverings ban** in public, impacting **burqas**, **niqabs**, and similar face coverings. **Violations** could lead to fines up to **CHF 1,000 ($1,143)**. Other reforms include **inheritance law changes**, **increased pensions**, and measures to boost **bank solvency and liquidity**, aligning with **European norms** and addressing past **financial crises**.

• China is facing a surge in **human metapneumovirus (HMPV)** cases, raising concerns of a potential health crisis similar to **COVID-19**. Hospitals are overcrowded, with **HMPV**, **influenza A**, **Mycoplasma pneumoniae**, and **COVID-19** potentially contributing to the situation. **HMPV**, identified in 2001, causes **respiratory infections** and primarily affects **young children**, the **elderly**, and those with weakened immune systems. No official emergency has been declared by Chinese authorities.

• On **January 1, 2025**, **Pakistan** began its **two-year tenure** as a **non-permanent member** of the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**, its **eighth term**. Pakistan secured its seat with **182 votes** in the General Assembly. During its term, Pakistan will **preside over the UNSC** in **July 2025** and serve on the **ISIS and Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee**, focusing on terrorist designations and sanctions. Ambassador **Munir Akram** highlighted Pakistan's commitment to an **active** and **constructive role**.

• **Mike Johnson**, a Republican from **Louisiana**, was re-elected as the **Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives** in a tense vote on the first day of the new Congress. Despite opposition from hard-right Republicans and challenges from a slim majority, Johnson secured the position with support from **President-elect Donald Trump**. His re-election comes amid internal GOP divisions and increased political stakes as the party prepares for ambitious **policy initiatives** under Trump's leadership.

• **Tomiko Itooka**, recognized as the **world's oldest person** by **Guinness World Records**, passed away at **116** in January 2025. Born in **May 1908**, she lived through major historical events, including both **World Wars** and significant **technological advancements**. Her remarkable life story serves as a testament to **resilience** and **longevity**.

• **Hanoi**, Vietnam's capital, was recently reported as the **world's most polluted city** on January 3, 2025, with **PM2.5 levels** reaching **266 micrograms per cubic meter**. The major sources of **pollution** include **heavy traffic**, **trash burning**, and **industrial emissions**, raising serious **health concerns** among residents.

• **Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau** announced his resignation as leader of the **Liberal Party** after nearly a decade in power, citing **internal conflicts** and declining **public support**. He will remain in a **caretaker role** until a new leader is elected. This comes amid growing support for **Pierre Poilievre** and the **Conservative Party**.

- **Sister Inah Canabarro Lucas**, from **Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil**, has been confirmed as the **world's oldest living person** at **116 years old**. Born on **June 8, 1908**, she is a lifelong **nun**, **teacher**, and **soccer enthusiast**. Lucas is also the **20th oldest person** ever recorded and the **second-oldest nun** in history. She is the **great-granddaughter** of **General David Canabarro**, a leader in the **Ragamuffin War**.

- On **January 9, 2025**, **General Joseph Aoun** was elected **Lebanon's new president**, ending a **two-year political vacuum**. The election concluded Lebanon's **political paralysis** that began after **Michel Aoun's** term ended in **October 2022**. General Aoun, who has led the **Lebanese Armed Forces** since 2017, secured **99 out of 128 votes** in the second round, overcoming divisions within the **Lebanese parliament**, particularly between **Hezbollah** and its opponents.

- Southern California, particularly **Los Angeles County**, is grappling with some of its most destructive **wildfires** in January 2025. Key fires, including the **Pacific Palisades** and **Eaton fires**, have destroyed thousands of structures, with over 179,000 residents evacuated. At least 10 deaths have been confirmed, and looting has led to arrests. **Firefighting efforts** are ongoing, with some fires uncontained, such as the **Kenneth** and **Eaton fires**. **Power outages**, **traffic congestion**, and school closures, including at **UCLA**, are further disrupting daily life. Climate change continues to intensify fire risks in the region.

- Japan has imposed new sanctions on **Russia**, targeting **11 individuals**, **29 organizations**, and **3 banks** within Russia, as well as entities in other countries aiding in sanction evasion. Japan has also enforced **export bans** on **22 Russian organizations** and **31 non-Russian groups** in countries like **China**, **Turkey**, and **Hong Kong**. Additionally, from **January 23**, Japan will ban the export of **335 items** including **construction vehicle engines**, **motorized bicycles**, and **communication devices**, aiming to hinder Russia's military and industrial capabilities.

- **Mount Ibu**, situated in **North Maluku, Indonesia,** erupted on January 11, 2025, sending ash **clouds up to 4,000 meters high** and ejecting glowing lava up to **two kilometers from its crater.** This event has prompted authorities to issue warnings and implement safety measures for the public.

- On **January 13, 2025**, a **magnitude 6.9 earthquake** struck **southwestern Japan**, with its epicenter in the **Hyuga-Nada Sea** near **Miyazaki Prefecture**. The **Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA)** issued a **tsunami advisory** for **Miyazaki** and **Kochi** Prefectures, warning of waves up to **1 meter**. The advisory was later lifted, and no significant **damage** or **injuries** were reported.

- **Nicolas Maduro**, the **46th President of Venezuela**, was sworn in for a third term after a disputed election. His opponent, **Edmundo Gonzalez**, alleged **voter fraud** and declared himself the winner. Despite **international pressure**, including **U.S. sanctions**, Maduro's inauguration occurred amid **controversy** and **public protests**.

- **Hindenburg Research**, founded by **Nate Anderson** in 2017, has announced its **closure**. Known for exposing **corporate fraud** and **mismanagement**, it impacted companies like **Nikola Corp.**, **Icahn Enterprises**, and the **Adani Group**. Anderson cited **personal reasons** for shutting down the firm.

- **Tarun Das**, former **Director General of CII**, was awarded Singapore's **Honorary Citizen Award** for his pivotal role in strengthening **Singapore-India relations**. Notably, in 1993, he led an Indian industrialist delegation to Singapore, advancing India's **"Look East" policy** and fostering continuous engagement between the two nations' **political leaders** and **businesses**.

- India and Spain will celebrate **2026 as a 'dual year'**, focusing on **culture**, **tourism**, and advancements in **artificial intelligence (AI)**. Announced by **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar**, this initiative aims to strengthen **bilateral ties** and promote **mutual understanding** between the two nations.

- The **U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)** updated its **Entity List**, removing three **Indian organizations**—**Indian Rare Earths**, **IGCAR**, and **BARC**—due to national security concerns. The removal aims to enhance **energy cooperation** and **joint research** for shared **energy security** goals. Eleven **Chinese firms** were added to the list.

- On **January 17, 2025**, **China** successfully launched **Pakistan's first indigenous Electro-Optical (EO-1) satellite**, PRSC-EO1, from the **Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center**. The satellite, designed for **Earth observation** using **electro-optical sensors**, was deployed into orbit by a **Long March-2D carrier rocket** at **12:07 pm Beijing Time**.

- In **January 2025**, **TikTok faced a brief shutdown** in the **U.S.** due to a **law mandating ByteDance** to sell the app over **national security concerns**. The law, passed with **bipartisan support**, aimed to ensure TikTok's operations were controlled by a **U.S.-based entity**. The app was swiftly restored after **President-elect Donald Trump** intervened with an **executive order**, delaying the ban. TikTok now faces ongoing challenges in securing its **long-term presence** in the U.S. market.

- China has completed the construction of the **Tianshan Shengli Tunnel**, the **world's longest expressway tunnel,** marking a significant advancement in infrastructure development and enhancing connectivity within the **Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.**

- Donald Trump was sworn in as the 47th President of the United States on **January 20, 2025**, marking his return to the White House after four tumultuous years. The inauguration, held indoors at the **Capitol Rotunda** due to extreme cold, symbolizes one of the most extraordinary political comebacks in American history. Trump is only the second president after **Grover Cleveland** in 1893 to regain the presidency after losing it. At **78 years old**, Trump also replaces Joe Biden as the oldest president to take the oath of office.

- **President Donald Trump** signed an executive order initiating the **United States'** withdrawal from the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and suspending all **foreign aid for 90 days.** This decision has sparked significant global concern and debate.

- **President Donald Trump** initiated the **United States' second withdrawal** from the **Paris Climate Agreement,** a move that has significant implications for both domestic and international climate policies. Adopted in 2015, the Paris Agreement is a global accord aimed at limiting global warming to well **below 2°C above** pre-industrial levels, with efforts to limit the **increase to 1.5°C**. The agreement encourages countries to set and achieve their own emission reduction targets, known as **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).**

- **Nigeria was officially admitted** as a partner country of the **BRICS bloc,** which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. This strategic move aims to bolster Nigeria's economic and diplomatic ties with leading emerging economies. The announcement was made by **Brazil's Foreign Ministry,** highlighting **Nigeria's significant role** in strengthening South-South cooperation and advocating for global governance reforms.

- **Usha Vance** made history by becoming the first **Indian-American** and **Hindu Second Lady** of the United States. Her husband, **J.D. Vance**, was sworn in as the **50th Vice President** of the United States, marking a significant milestone in American politics. Usha's journey, deeply rooted in her Indian heritage and her remarkable accomplishments, has garnered widespread attention and admiration.

- The **Stargate AI Project**, announced by **US President Donald Trump** at the White House, marks a monumental step in the evolution of artificial intelligence (AI). Touted as the **largest AI infrastructure initiative in history**, this ambitious project has garnered support from some of the world's biggest tech and business names. With an investment of **$500 billion** over the next four years, the Stargate AI Project aims to develop world-class AI infrastructure, create jobs, and boost the US economy.

- Trump administration has officially changed the name of the **Gulf of Mexico** to the **Gulf of America** as part of a series of executive actions aimed at fulfilling campaign promises. This decision was announced by the **Interior Department** on a Friday, hours after **President Donald Trump** took office, marking the beginning of a new chapter for U.S. territorial names and symbols. Another prominent change was the renaming of **Denali**, Alaska's towering peak, back to its former name, **Mount McKinley**. These actions reflect the administration's focus on **reaffirming the nation's historical heritage** and honoring the legacy of significant figures and places.

- U.S. President Donald Trump took significant steps towards reshaping the nation's cryptocurrency regulations, fulfilling his promise to overhaul U.S. crypto policy quickly. The executive order laid out the creation of a **cryptocurrency working group** with a primary focus on proposing **new digital asset regulations** and exploring the possibility of creating a **national cryptocurrency stockpile**. This action marks a bold move to make the U.S. a leader in the cryptocurrency space, contrasting sharply with the regulatory stance taken by former President Joe Biden's administration, which had pursued a more restrictive approach.

- The **United States** has suspended all **USAID funding** to **Bangladesh** following **President Donald Trump's** directive for a 90-day review of **foreign aid programs**. The decision halts **USAID activities** in Bangladesh, impacting various development projects. This suspension is part of a broader review of U.S. **foreign development assistance**, with exceptions for military funding to **allies** like **Israel** and **Egypt**.

- **Alexander Lukashenko** won a **seventh term** as **President of Belarus** on **January 26, 2025**, with **86.8%** of the vote, a result widely criticized as fraudulent. Opposition candidate **Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya** received around **3%** and called the election a **"farce"**, urging global rejection of the results.

- Chinese AI startup **DeepSeek** has surpassed **OpenAI's ChatGPT** as the most-downloaded free app in the U.S. on Apple's App Store. Founded in 2023, DeepSeek is gaining attention with its advanced **AI models**, especially **R1**, a reasoning model that competes with OpenAI's technology. This milestone highlights the growing competition in the **generative AI market**, which is expected to reach **$1 trillion** in revenue within the next decade. However, the company faces challenges, including **cybersecurity threats** and **regulatory scrutiny**.

- India and Oman are strengthening their economic ties by expediting discussions for a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** and amending their **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)**. The amendment aligns the tax treaty with **international standards** on **cross-border taxation**, aiming to simplify procedures and enhance cooperation between the countries' tax authorities, benefiting businesses engaged in **bilateral trade**.

- During Indonesian President **Prabowo Subianto's** visit to **India**, five **Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)** were signed to strengthen bilateral ties. The agreements cover key areas including **health cooperation**, **maritime safety and security**, **traditional medicine quality assurance**, **digital development**, and a **cultural exchange program** (2025-2028), aimed at enhancing collaboration in these sectors and fostering mutual understanding.

- **UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan** declared **2025** as the **"Year of Community"** with the slogan **"Hand in Hand"** to promote unity and inclusion. The initiative focuses on strengthening **social bonds**, encouraging **volunteering**, and celebrating **cultural diversity** through various programs and events, reflecting the UAE leadership's commitment to building a cohesive and empowered community.
- On January 30, 2025, **Niger** became the first **African** country to eliminate **onchocerciasis** (river blindness) as a public health threat, joining **Colombia**, **Ecuador**, **Guatemala**, and **Mexico** in this achievement. This milestone reflects significant progress in controlling neglected tropical diseases, particularly in **sub-Saharan Africa**, and underscores global efforts to tackle parasitic diseases.

VISITS

India Visits By Foreigners

- Microsoft Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO**) Satya Nadella** made a visit to India on January 2025 as a part of the Microsoft AI (Artificial Intelligence) Tour with an aim for expansion and investment plans to make India a leader in AI. **IndiaAI,** an Independent Business Division (IBD) under the Digital India Corporation, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Microsoft to drive the adoption and development of artificial intelligence (AI) in India. Establish **"AI Catalysts,"** a Center of Excellence, to promote rural AI innovation in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities and equip **100,000 AI innovators** and developers through hackathons, community building, and an AI marketplace. Microsoft announced a USD 3 billion investment in India over the next two years to enhance AI and cloud infrastructure and skilling initiatives in India.
- Singapore President **Tharman Shanmugaratnam,** visited India **from January 14 to 18, 2025,** marking his 1st bilateral state visit to India. He was accompanied by **Chee Hong Tat,** Minister for Transport and 2nd Minister for Finance of Singapore; and Sim Ann, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of National Development of Singapore. President of Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratnam and President of India Droupadi Murmu jointly unveiled the 60th Anniversary Commemorative logo at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. The logo celebrates six decades of strong ties between India & Singapore. During his visit, several Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between the Odisha government and Singaporean organizations.
- **Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto chief guest** at India's **2025 Republic Day parade**, strengthening **India-Indonesia relations** and supporting the **Act East Policy**. This visit aims to enhance **strategic cooperation**, **defense ties**, and **economic engagement**. The two nations share **over 2,000 years** of cultural and commercial ties, with Indonesia's traditions influenced by the **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata**.
- Abdulla Khaleel, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives made an Official visit to India from 2nd January to 4th January 2025 with an aim to strengthen bilateral ties in several key areas including maritime security, trade and investment. ✓ India and Maldives have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the execution of the 3rd phase of High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP) in Maldives.

Indian States Visits

- Prime Minister (PM) **Narendra Modi visited Andhra Pradesh(AP) and Odisha** from 8th January to 9th January 2025 to launch various projects worth over Rs 2 lakh crore to promote sustainable development, industrial growth, and infrastructure enhancement. Laid the foundation stone and inaugurated various railway and road projects worth over Rs.19,500 crore in AP. First Green Hydrogen Hub under National Green Hydrogen Mission(NGHM) launched in Pudimadaka, AP. 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas(PBD) convention inaugurated in and remotely flagged-off the inaugural journey of the Pravasi Bharatiya Express in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Foreign Visits By Indian Personalities

- Union Minister **Kiren Rijiju,** Ministry of Minority Affairs(MoMA) and Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs(MoPA) visited **Saudi Arabia** from 11th January to 14th January 2025 with an aim to look into the important arrangements related to preparations for the upcoming Haj pilgrimage to enhance the experience of Indian pilgrims. On 13th January 2025, India signed a Hajj agreement with Saudi Arabia securing a quota of 1,75,025 pilgrims for Indian pilgrims for 2025. The agreement was signed between Kire Rijiju.
- Union Minister S. Jaishankar, Ministry of External Affairs(MEA) made a 2-day visit to Spain from January 13th to 14th, 2025 which marks his second visit to Spain and first visit as External Affairs Minister(EAM). The aim of the visit was to meet the leadership of Spain and hold wide range discussions with the Spain's Foreign Minister Manuel Albares. He also addressed the 9th Annual Conference of Spanish Ambassadors and met the Indian community. During the meeting, India and Spain signed two Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) that focused on cooperation in sports and sustainable urban development.

BANKING & FINANCE

S. No.	Bank Name	Details
1	SBI TAB-Based Digital Onboarding for NRIs	• Launched on January 2, 2025, this service offers faster account setup through digital document verification at SBI branches in India and select foreign offices. • To enable NRIs to open NRE and NRO accounts through a digital process, eliminating physical paperwork.
2	SBI 'Har Ghar Lakhpati' and 'SBI Patrons' Schemes	• 'Har Ghar Lakhpati' is a recurring deposit for minors to build savings early, while 'SBI Patrons' is a fixed deposit scheme for senior citizens aged 80+ with higher interest rates. • To offer tailored deposit schemes: Har Ghar Lakhpati for saving ₹1 lakh and SBI Patrons for senior citizens with enhanced interest rates.
4	HDFC Bank	• HDFC Bank has received RBI approval to acquire up to 9.5% stake in Kotak Mahindra Bank, AU Small Finance Bank, and Capital Small Finance Bank through group entities (HDFC Mutual Fund, HDFC Life Insurance, HDFC ERGO). • Approval valid until January 2, 2026. The combined stake across entities must not exceed 9.5% in each bank.
5	SBI	• SBI revised GDP growth forecast for FY25 to 6.3%, slightly lower than NSO's 6.4%. The adjustment is due to concerns over slowdown in lending, manufacturing, and high base effect. • Key factors: agriculture growth of 3.8%, industry (6.2%), services (7.2%), private consumption rise (7.3%), and expected investment growth of 6.4%. Per capita nominal GDP set to rise by ₹35,000.
6	**IDFC FIRST Bank**	• **IDFC FIRST Bank** has partnered with **RuPay to launch the FIRST EA₹N RuPay Credit Card**, a secured credit card that combines the benefits of a fixed deposit with the convenience of UPI transactions. • This innovative card aims to provide users with enhanced financial flexibility and rewards.
7	**Dhanlaxmi Bank**	• **P. Suriaraj** has been appointed **Executive Director** at **Dhanlaxmi Bank**, bringing valuable experience from his tenure at **Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd**.
8	**Punjab National Bank**	• **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** became the first Indian bank to implement **Clari5's National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) Integration Solution**, enhancing **fraud prevention** and **complaint management**. • Developed with the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**, the system automates real-time processing of cybercrime complaints across **retail banking channels** like **Internet Banking**, **ATMs**, and **UPI**.
9	**City Union Bank**	• **City Union Bank (CUB)** won **seven prestigious awards** at the **19th Banking Technology Conference** organized by the **Indian Banks Association (IBA)** in **Mumbai**, marking its second consecutive win. • CUB was recognized in categories including **Best AI & ML Bank**, **Best Fintech & Digital Payment Index Adoption**, and **Best Financial Inclusion**, highlighting its commitment to **innovation**, **digital payments**, and expanding banking access to **underserved populations**.
10	**State Bank of India**	• **State Bank of India (SBI) Payments** and **Pine Labs** have strengthened their 12-year partnership, starting on **January 25, 2025**, to boost **digital payments** adoption across India. • The collaboration focuses on enhancing **merchant solutions** and creating seamless **payment experiences**, aiming to transform the **digital payment landscape** and benefit both **consumers** and **businesses**.
11	**Karnataka Bank**	• **Karnataka Bank** secured top honours in **six categories** at the **20th Annual Banking Technology Conference, Expo & Citations, 2024** by **IBA**, highlighting its commitment to **technological innovation**. • Key awards included **Best Tech Talent & Organisation** (Runner Up), **Best IT Risk Management** (Runner Up), and **Best Technology Bank** (Runner Up). The bank also earned special mentions for **Best Fintech & Digital Payment Integration** and **AI/ML Adoption**, emphasizing advancements in **digital payments**, **AI-powered banking**, and **cybersecurity**.

S. No.	Bank Name	Details
12	ICICI Prudential Life	• **ICICI Prudential Life Insurance** has partnered with **Reinsurance Group of America (RGA)** to launch a **unique health insurance product.** • The product specifically caters to women's health, covering critical illnesses and surgeries. • Critical Illness Coverage:The product provides an instant payout of up to 100% of the health cover amount upon the diagnosis of critical illnesses. • Key covered conditions include breast cancer, cervical cancer, uterine cancer, and heart ailments. • Premium Guarantee and Payment Flexibility:ICICI Pru Wish offers a premium guarantee for 30 years, helping customers plan their premium payments better. • It also allows customers to take a premium sabbatical for up to 12 months during the premium payment term. • Target Audience:The product is designed to address health risks specific to women, providing financial support in case of critical illnesses. • Sunil Sharma, Chief Executive Officer, Reinsurance Group of America.
13	IDBI Bank	• **IDBI Bank** has approved the issuance of **Long-Term Bonds to finance Infrastructure and Affordable Housing projects, raising up to ₹10,000 crore**. • The bond issuance will occur in tranches, with ₹5,000 crore expected to be raised by March 31, 2025, and the balance during FY 2025-26. • **Purpose of Bonds:** The funds raised through these bonds will be used for financing infrastructure and affordable housing projects. • Regulatory Exemptions: These long-term infrastructure bonds are eligible for certain regulatory exemptions, including relief from statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) and cash reserve ratio (CRR) requirements. • Infrastructure Bonds: Banks and financial institutions use infrastructure bonds to raise funds for long-term infrastructure projects, with a minimum maturity of seven years. • Relevance to Industry Trends: The move reflects the growing trend among banks to raise funds through infrastructure bonds, particularly due to slower deposit growth in the banking sector.
14	Indian Bank	• **Indian Bank** aims to maintain a **3.4% net interest margin (NIM) in FY25**, with a possible variation of ±10-15 basis points. **Key Highlights :** • Factors Supporting NIM Maintenance:Loans linked to external benchmarks will reprice immediately when interest rates decline, helping to manage interest income. • Around 55-60% of the bank's loans are linked to the Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate (MCLR), providing a hedge. • The bank has a strong investment portfolio with yields over 7%, which will support its margin. • As interest rates decline, deposit prices will decrease, further helping to maintain NIM. • Recovery Target:Indian Bank targets a recovery of ₹7,000 crore to ₹8,000 crore in FY25. • The bank has already recovered ₹3,958 crore in H1FY25, making it on track to meet its annual recovery target. • Digital Transformation:Over the past three years, the bank generated ₹1.8 lakh crore in digital business and increased mobile banking customers from 50 lakh to 1.81 crore. • The bank has built an analytics centre of excellence using AI and ML to offer personalized products, enhancing customer experiences and operational efficiency. • Employee Productivity and Transparency:Indian Bank has implemented a scientific target-setting system for employees, linking Key Result Areas (KRA) with the core banking system. • This system allows employees to track their performance and fosters a culture of transparency, contributing to higher productivity. • Improved Customer Service and Earnings:The bank has focused on improving customer service, which has resulted in consistent earnings over 13-14 quarters. • Indian Bank has shown good quality growth post the merger with Allahabad Bank, with a significant increase in net profit. • Leadership Transition:The current MD, **V. Srinivasan,** emphasized the importance of change management as his successor, Binod Kumar, took charge on January 1, 2025.

S. No.	Bank Name	Details
15	Federal Bank	• **Federal Bank**, one of India's largest private sector banks, launched **FedOne, a new digital transaction banking platform.** • The platform is powered by Nucleus Software's FinnAxia solution. **Key Highlights :** • Implementation Timeline: The platform was implemented after a 10-month collaboration between **Federal Bank** and **Nucleus Software.** • Purpose of FedOne: The platform aims to modernize the bank's corporate banking services and streamline treasury operations. • Features of FedOne: It is designed to enhance working capital management capabilities and provide faster service delivery for corporate customers. • Nucleus Software: Nucleus Software, the technology partner, supports over 200 financial institutions in 50 countries. • Capital Adequacy Ratio: Federal Bank's Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) stood at 15.20% as of September 30, 2024. • International Presence: Federal Bank operates Representative Offices in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, as well as an IFSC Banking Unit in GIFT City.
16	State Bank of India	• State Bank of India (SBI) has launched a TAB-based digital onboarding process for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to facilitate the opening of NRE (Non-Resident External) and NRO (Non-Resident Ordinary) accounts. • Purpose and Availability: The initiative aims to streamline the account opening process, offering it across SBI branches in India and select foreign offices. • Paperless and Efficient: The process eliminates the need for physical paperwork, utilizing digital tools to verify documents and speed up the account opening. • Account Types for NRIs: NRIs can open accounts denominated in Indian Rupees (NRE/NRO) or Foreign Currency, including FCNR (B) accounts in USD, EURO, GBP, CAD, JPY, and AUD. • Types of Accounts: NRE and NRO accounts can be either running accounts or fixed deposits, while FCNR (B) accounts are only available as fixed deposits.
17	Punjab & Sind Bank	• **Punjab & Sind Bank** plans to launch an **instant loan scheme for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs),** with loans up to **₹25 lakh.** • The scheme will be rolled out this month as part of the bank's initiative to digitally push credit. • The bank has already introduced digital home loan and vehicle loan schemes, where in-principle approval is granted within 15 minutes. • These schemes operate on a **Straight Through Process (STP)**, running on a pre-defined Business Rule Engine (BRE), which automates the loan processing and sanctioning stages.
18	Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	• **Bajaj Broking**, a subsidiary of Bajaj Finance Limited., has partnered with **Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB)** to offer a **3-in-1 account solution**. • The 3-in-1 account combines banking, broking, and investment services, enabling seamless access to all three functions for customers. • Customers of TMB will now be able to trade online through Bajaj Broking and utilize its diverse range of products and services. • The platform offers integrated fund transfers, reducing paperwork and providing tech-driven investment options across various products.
19	Exim Bank of India	• **Exim Bank of India raised $1 billion via a 10-year USD-denominated bond,** marking a significant milestone in its international fundraising efforts. • The bond achieved the lowest-ever spread of **100 basis points over 10-year US treasuries** for a **BBB-rated issuer in Asia.**
20	Punjab National Bank	• **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has launched its **first Cybersecurity Hackathon 2024-25,** with the theme Code Against Malware. • The hackathon **aims** to address the rising threat of malware and enhance the nations cybersecurity defences. • **Objective**: The event brings together innovators, researchers, and academicians from across India to collaborate on developing advanced solutions for cybersecurity in the banking sector.

S. No.	Bank Name	Details
21	Indian Overseas Bank	• **Indian Overseas Bank (IOB)** is selling **Rs 11,500 crore worth of non-performing assets (NPAs)** to **asset reconstruction companies (ARCs).** • The sale involves **46 loan accounts** and is part of the bank's effort to enhance its asset quality.
22	State Bank of India	• **State Bank of India (SBI) chairman C S Setty** has suggested **creating a common mechanism** to track the utilization of funds raised by **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)** through debt and equity. • This mechanism aims to provide comfort to lenders and investors and enhance the competitiveness of pricing. • The system would ensure that funds are used for the intended purposes, minimizing risks related to misallocation.
23	Bank of Baroda	• **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** has announced setting up **AI-driven customer support,** full-fledged branches with forex transaction facilities in Prayagraj to facilitate the visitors. • As the convenor of the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC), Uttar Pradesh, BoB is leveraging **Maha Kumbh** to promote digital payments, offer AI-driven customer support, and provide robust banking infrastructure. • BoB is establishing two full-fledged branches with forex transaction facilities. • It is setting up onsite and mobile ATMs, along with coin vending machines, to cater to diverse banking needs. • The Bank has developed a GenAI-powered Virtual Relationship Manager, Aditi, to answer banking-related queries and enhance customer service to the pilgrims visiting Mahakumbh. • The Maha Kumbh is being celebrated after 12 years, and over 45 crore devotees are expected for the event.
24	Suryoday Small Finance Bank	• **Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SSFB)** announced its partnership with **Tata Digital to extend its FD offerings.** • This collaboration will enable SSFB to leverage Tata Neu's reach, providing retail customers with access to the deposit scheme. • SSFB's FD offering will be available on the Tata Neu platform, where customers can invest in fixed deposits at interest rates of up to 9.1% without the need for a savings account. • Customers can start investing with as little as Rs. 1,000 and the onboarding process can be completed in a few minutes.
25	Bank of Baroda	• **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** has partnered with **Truworth Wellness** to extend an **enhanced wellness program for its 75,000+ employees and their families.** • The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is focused on improving emotional, mental, and psychological well-being. • It provides confidential counseling with experts to address issues like anxiety and stress. • Employees and their families can access counseling through various modes: in-person, video calls, or a 24/7 helpline. • A mobile app is also available, offering wellness assessments, mood trackers, and AI-based virtual therapy. • Truworth Wellness, founded in 2011, specializes in providing corporate wellness solutions with a preventive approach.
26	India to reduce stakes in 5 public sector banks	• **India** is considering reducing its **ownership in 5 state-run banks,** including **UCO Bank, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Bank of Maharashtra,** and **Punjab and Sind Bank,** through stake sales or allowing the banks to **sell shares to large investors.** **Key Highlights :** • Minimum Public Holding Norms: The goal is to bring down the government's stake in these banks below **75% to meet regulatory norms.** • Methods of Stake Reduction:The **Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM)** may facilitate the stake sales. • The alternative is for the banks to sell shares to large investors, which will help them meet the required public holding norms.

S. No.	Bank Name	Details
		• Liquidity and Lending: Allowing stake sales will improve the liquidity of these banks, which could enable them to lend more, especially as analysts suggest asset quality in the banking sector may have peaked amid slowing economic growth. • Market Response: Shares of UCO Bank and Indian Overseas Bank surged significantly, indicating strong investor interest in state-run banks. • Performance of State-Run Banks:Over the last 12 months, state-owned bank stocks have shown a positive performance, with a 4% increase in the Nifty gauge of state-owned banks, contrasting with a 3.6% decline in the Nifty Private Bank index. • Valuation of Banks: The banks where the government plans to reduce its stake are trading at a price-to-book ratio between 1.43 and 3.62, compared to the State Bank of India's price-to-book ratio of 1.44.
27	Bank of Baroda	• **Bank of Baroda (BoB) raised Rs 5,000 crore** through a **10-year infrastructure bond at a coupon rate of 7.23%.** • The infrastructure bond issued by BoB was rated **AAA by CRISIL and India Ratings,** indicating a high credit rating. **Key Highlights :** • Issue Details:The base issue size was Rs 2,000 crore, with a green shoe option of Rs 3,000 crore, allowing for an additional issue of bonds. • The demand for the bond was strong, with total demand amounting to Rs 14,830 crore, which was 7.5 times the base issue size. • Full Issue Amount Retained: BoB decided to retain the full issue amount of Rs 5,000 crore despite the demand exceeding the issue size. • IRFC's Bond Issuance: The Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) also raised Rs 2,780 crore through 10-year bonds at a 7.25% interest rate. • The base issue size was Rs 500 crore, and the green shoe option was Rs 2,500 crore. • Demand for IRFC Bonds: IRFC received bids worth Rs 6,030 crore but retained Rs 2,780 crore, falling short of its target amount. • IREDA's Upcoming Bond Issue: The **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)** plans to raise **Rs 1,500 crore** through a 10-year bond issuance later in the week, with bonds rated AAA by ICRA and India Ratings
28	**3 Indian Banks Rank Among Top 25 Global Banks by Market Cap**	According to a report by **GlobalData**, a leading data analytics and research company, **3 Indian banks -HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, and State Bank of India (SBI) ranked** in the **top 25 global banks by market capitalization for Q4 2024:** ○ **HDFC Bank: Ranked 13th with a market cap of $158.5 billion.** ○ **ICICI Bank: Ranked 19th with a market cap of $105.7 billion.** ○ **SBI: Ranked 24th with a market cap of $82.9 billion.**

RBI News

RBI's Financial Stability Report, 2024

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released its **Financial Stability Report (FSR)** for December 2024, providing a comprehensive analysis of the Indian financial system's health. The FSR is published **biannually**, typically in June and December, offering insights into the stability and resilience of the financial sector.

Key Highlights from the RBI Financial Stability Report, December 2024
1. **Asset Quality of Banks**: The gross non-performing assets (NPAs) ratio of Indian banks has declined to a 12-year low of 2.6% as of September 2024. This improvement is attributed to recoveries, write-offs of legacy bad loans, and a reduction in the growth of bad assets.
2. **Projections for NPAs**: The report projects that the gross bad loan ratio may rise to 3% by March 2026 under a baseline scenario, and could reach up to 5.3% under high-risk scenarios. Despite these potential increases, the RBI assures that no bank is expected to fall below the minimum capital requirement of 9% even in adverse conditions.

3. **Economic Growth Forecast**: The RBI anticipates a GDP growth rate of 6.6% for the fiscal year 2024-25, indicating a positive outlook for the Indian economy following a slowdown in the first half of the fiscal year.

4. **Liquidity Deficit**: The banking system is facing a significant liquidity deficit, which is expected to widen further in the upcoming quarter. As of December 23, 2024, the liquidity deficit stood at 2.43 trillion rupees, driven by tax outflows and the central bank's foreign exchange interventions. Market participants suggest that measures such as open market bond purchases and potential cuts in the cash reserve ratio (CRR) may be considered to address this issue.

5. **Regulatory Compliance**: The report notes a 47% decline in monetary fines imposed by the RBI from June to November 2024, totaling nearly Rs 30 crore, compared to over Rs 57 crore in the same period the previous year. This decrease reflects improved regulatory compliance across banks and financial institutions.

6. **Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)**: The balance sheets of NBFCs have strengthened, with stress tests indicating that even under high-risk scenarios, their capital requirements would remain well above the minimum needed level.

Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2023-24

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released the **"Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2023-24,"** offering a comprehensive analysis of the banking sector's performance during the fiscal year 2023-24. This **annual report** provides insights into various facets of the banking industry, including asset quality, profitability, capital adequacy, and emerging challenges.

Key Highlights from RBI Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2023-24

1. Asset Quality of Banks:
The gross non-performing assets (NPAs) ratio of Indian banks has fallen to a 12-year low of 2.5% as of September 2024, the lowest since 2012. This improvement is attributed to recoveries, write-offs of legacy bad loans, and more effective management of asset quality. The reduction in bad loans is reflective of better risk management and recovery efforts.

2. Projections for NPAs:
The report projects that the gross bad loan ratio could rise to 3% by March 2026 under a baseline scenario. In high-risk scenarios, it could reach up to 5.3%. While the sector anticipates some increase in NPAs, the RBI assures that banks will maintain sufficient capital and not fall below the 9% minimum capital requirement, even in adverse conditions.

3. Credit Growth and Economic Outlook:
The Indian banking sector has witnessed a significant 19% increase in credit growth during 2023-24, reflecting positive economic growth and robust demand for loans. The growth in advances is particularly strong in sectors like infrastructure, housing, and personal loans. The optimistic credit outlook is also indicative of an improving economic environment in India.

4. Digital Transformation in Banking:
The Indian banking sector has been undergoing a digital revolution, with an increase in online and mobile banking transactions. The launch of Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) pilots further highlights the sector's move towards embracing cutting-edge digital financial solutions. Digital banking continues to grow rapidly, helping increase financial inclusion and improving customer experiences.

5. Strong Capital Adequacy:
The Capital-to-Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of Indian banks stood at 16.8% as of September 2024, significantly higher than the regulatory minimum of 9%. This indicates that Indian banks are in a strong position to absorb any shocks, with robust capital buffers ensuring financial stability.

6. Increasing Bank Frauds:
The report highlighted an alarming increase in bank frauds, with fraud-related cases seeing a significant rise in the first half of FY25. This trend is expected to continue, raising concerns about cybersecurity and internal controls in the banking sector. The RBI is likely to take measures to mitigate these risks going forward.

Detailed Analysis of each point

1. Asset Quality Improvement:
The banking sector has made significant strides in enhancing asset quality. The GNPA ratio's decline to 2.5% in September 2024 reflects effective recovery efforts and prudent lending practices. The reduction in Net NPAs to 0.57% indicates improved asset quality and better risk management.
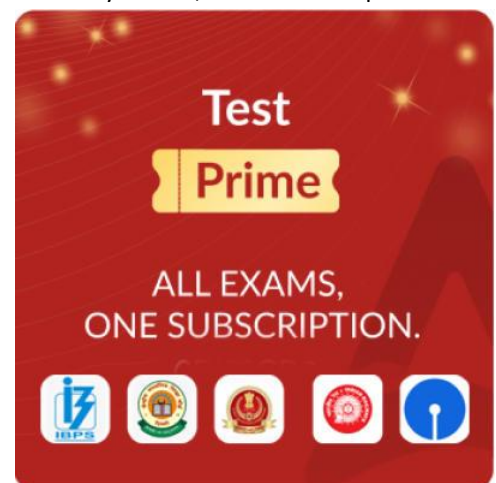
2. Profitability Growth:
SCBs have demonstrated consistent profitability, with a RoA of 1.4% and RoE of 14.6% in 2023-24. This sustained growth underscores the sector's resilience and operational efficiency.

3. Capital Adequacy:
The CRAR of 16.8% as of September 2024 surpasses the regulatory minimum, ensuring banks have sufficient capital buffers to absorb potential losses and support growth.

4. Credit Growth:
The 19% increase in advances highlights robust credit demand, indicating confidence in economic recovery and expansion.

5. Digital Transformation:
The rise in digital banking transactions and the initiation of CBDC pilots reflect the sector's commitment to modernization and financial inclusion.

6. Emerging Risks:
The projected increase in the GNPA ratio to 3% by March 2026 and the rise in bank fraud cases necessitate enhanced risk management and vigilance.

RBI's Guidelines on Government Debt Relief Scheme

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued detailed guidelines for lenders participating in the **Government Debt Relief Scheme**, aiming to provide structured relief to borrowers facing financial distress. This initiative aligns with the **RBI's ongoing efforts** to enhance financial stability and support economic recovery.

Crux of the Guidelines
The RBI's guidelines outline the framework for lenders to offer debt relief to borrowers impacted by financial challenges. The scheme is designed to facilitate the restructuring of loans, ensuring that borrowers receive the necessary support while maintaining the integrity of the financial system.

Key Components of the Scheme
Eligibility Criteria: The scheme targets borrowers who have demonstrated a consistent repayment history but are currently facing financial difficulties due to unforeseen circumstances.
Restructuring Framework: Lenders are permitted to restructure loans by extending repayment periods, reducing interest rates, or converting a portion of the debt into equity, subject to specific conditions.
Regulatory Oversight: The RBI will monitor the implementation of the scheme to ensure compliance with established guidelines and to maintain financial stability.

Historical Context
This initiative builds upon previous measures taken by the RBI to address financial stress among borrowers. Notably, in 2016, **Hindustan Construction Company (HCC)** became the first firm to receive debt relief under the RBI's Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A), which allowed banks to convert a portion of the company's loans into equity or debentures.

Implications for Lenders and Borrowers
For Lenders: The guidelines provide a structured approach to managing distressed assets, enabling banks to offer relief to borrowers while safeguarding their financial interests.
For Borrowers: The scheme offers a pathway to financial recovery, allowing businesses and individuals to restructure their debts and continue operations without the immediate threat of insolvency.

RBI's 2024-25 Report on State Finances

The Reserve Bank of **India's (RBI) recent report**, **"State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2024-25,"** highlights significant improvements in the fiscal health of state governments post-pandemic, while also identifying areas requiring further attention.

Fiscal Consolidation Achievements
Gross Fiscal Deficit (GFD): States have successfully contained their consolidated GFD within 3% of GDP during 2022-23 and 2023-24, with a budgeted GFD of 3.2% for 2024-25.
Revenue Deficit: Maintained at a low 0.2% of GDP during 2022-23 and 2023-24.
Capital Expenditure: Increased from 2.4% of GDP in 2021-22 to 2.8% in 2023-24, with a further budgeted rise to 3.1% in 2024-25, indicating a focus on developmental spending.

Debt Levels and Liabilities

Outstanding Liabilities: Declined from 31% of GDP at end-March 2021 to 28.5% at end-March 2024, yet still above the pre-pandemic level of 25.3% at end-March 2019.

Contingent Liabilities: State guarantees have risen from 2% of GDP at end-March 2017 to 3.8% by March 2023, posing potential fiscal risks.

Subsidy Expenditures

Rising Subsidies: Significant increases in spending on subsidies, including farm loan waivers and free or subsidized services like electricity, transport, and gas cylinders, have been noted. For instance, 14 states have implemented income transfer schemes for women, totaling approximately ₹2 lakh crore, or about 0.6% of GDP.

Power Sector Concerns

Discom Losses: Power distribution companies have accumulated losses amounting to ₹6.5 lakh crore by 2022-23, equivalent to around 2.4% of GDP, despite multiple reform attempts.

Recommendations for Fiscal Sustainability

Debt Consolidation: The RBI emphasizes the need for a credible roadmap for debt consolidation, particularly for states with elevated debt levels, recommending clear, transparent, and time-bound strategies aligned with macroeconomic objectives.

Expenditure Efficiency: States are urged to enhance expenditure efficiency through outcome-based budgeting and to rationalize subsidies to prevent the crowding out of productive expenditures.

Fiscal Framework Reforms: Adoption of risk-based fiscal frameworks with provisions for counter-cyclical policies, along with strengthening State Finance Commissions, is advised to ensure fiscal discipline and adequate fund transfers to local bodies.

Current Affairs related to Regulatory authorities			
S.No.	Name	Purpose	Details
1.	RBI's GDP Growth Projection for FY25	To project India's GDP growth at 6.6%, highlighting factors like rural consumption, government spending, and exports.	Despite a slowdown in H1 FY25 to 6% from 8.2% in H1 FY24, India's economy remains resilient due to strong fundamentals and a robust financial system. Risks include global uncertainties and urban demand moderation.
2	Merger of National Co-operative Bank with Cosmos Co-operative Bank	To consolidate banking operations and improve financial stability post-merger, effective January 6, 2025.	The merger addresses the financial weaknesses of National Co-operative Bank. Post-merger, its branches will operate under Cosmos Co-operative Bank.
3	Name Lookup Facility for RTGS and NEFT	To reduce fraud and errors by allowing remitters to verify beneficiaries' names before transactions.	Developed by NPCI, this feature will be available via internet banking, mobile banking, and bank branches, free of charge. Banks must implement it by April 1, 2025.
4	**Reserve Bank of India**	**Increase Gold Reserves**	**Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** added **8 tonnes of gold** to its reserves, increasing India's total to **876 tonnes**, making it the **second-largest gold buyer** globally after **Poland**. The **RBI's strategy** aligns with a global trend among central banks to bolster **gold reserves** as a hedge against **inflation** and **foreign currency risks** amid economic uncertainties.
5.	**Reserve Bank of India**		The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** appointed **M. Rajeshwar Rao**, Deputy Governor, to oversee the **Monetary Policy** and **Economic Research Departments** after **Michael Patra** completed his term on **January 15, 2025**.

	Current Affairs related to Regulatory authorities		
S.No.	Name	Purpose	Details
6.	Reserve Bank of India		The **RBI** has authorized overseas branches of authorized banks to open **Indian Rupee (INR) accounts** for **non-residents**, aiming to enhance the global use of the **Indian Rupee** in cross-border transactions and investments. This move facilitates **settling transactions** with non-residents, supports **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)**, and allows **Indian exporters** to receive export proceeds and manage payments, reducing currency conversion costs.
7.	Reserve Bank of India		In **November 2024**, the **RBI** sold a record **$20.2 billion** in the foreign exchange market to stabilize the **rupee** amid **foreign portfolio investor (FPI) outflows**. Despite purchasing **$30.8 billion** and selling **$51.1 billion** in the spot market, the **rupee depreciated by 0.48%** against the US dollar, increasing the RBI's **net short position** in the forward market to **$58.9 billion**.
8.	Reserve Bank of India		The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has introduced stricter guidelines for **Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs)** to enhance transparency and accountability in borrower settlements, aligning them with bank and NBFC practices. ARCs must now establish **board-approved policies** detailing one-time settlement criteria, exposure-based sacrifices, and security valuation methods. For dues exceeding **₹1 crore**, an **Independent Advisory Committee (IAC)** will assess borrower financials before recommending settlements, which must then be deliberated by the **Board of Directors**, including at least two independent members. For settlements **below ₹1 crore**, ARCs can follow board-approved policies, but asset acquisition officials cannot approve settlements to avoid conflicts of interest. **Quarterly reporting** is mandated, covering settlement trends, fraud/wilful default cases, and recovery timelines. **Wilful defaulters and fraud cases** will follow stringent procedures regardless of settlement amount, ensuring no undue leniency. These guidelines take **immediate effect**, reinforcing compliance and consumer protection in the ARC settlement process.
9.	RBI		**HSBC India** has received **RBI approval** to open **20 new branches** across key cities, marking the largest foreign bank expansion in over a decade. The branches will target cities like **Amritsar, Bhopal, Lucknow, Surat, and Vishakhapatnam**, focusing on **growing wealth pools** and catering to **affluent, high net worth, and ultra-high net worth clients** with **domestic and international banking** needs.
10.	Reserve Bank of India		The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has mandated banks and regulated entities (REs) to use **the '1600xx' numbering series exclusively** for transactional calls and the '140xx' series for promotional communications to enhance the security of digital transactions and combat financial fraud. Banks are required to monitor and clean customer databases by utilizing the Mobile Number Revocation List (MNRL) available on the Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP) developed by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to identify and remove invalid or revoked numbers. Additionally, financial institutions must develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for updating registered mobile numbers after verification and strengthen monitoring of accounts linked to revoked numbers to prevent misuse.

S.No.	Name	Purpose	Details
		Current Affairs related to Regulatory authorities	
11.	Reserve Bank of India		The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed monetary penalties on **Canara Bank**, **Bank of India**, and **Jammu & Kashmir Bank** for regulatory compliance failures. **Jammu & Kashmir Bank** was fined **₹3.31 crore** for violations related to **financial inclusion** and **KYC** norms. **Bank of India** faced a **₹1 crore** penalty for non-compliance with the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949**, while **Canara Bank** was fined **₹1.63 crore** for issues with **priority sector lending**, **interest rates**, and **financial inclusion**.
12.	Reserve Bank of India		In **2024**, the **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Integrated Ombudsman Scheme** recorded a **32.81% increase** in **bank customer complaints**, totaling **9.34 lakh**. The rise reflects growing concerns over **delays in service**, **transaction errors**, and **inadequate redressal**, highlighting the need for better **customer service** and **grievance handling** in the banking sector.
13.	Reserve Bank of India		The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has approved the formation of the **National Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation (NUCFDC)** to enhance the operational efficiency of **Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs)** in India. This initiative addresses challenges like **regulatory compliance**, **financial stability**, and **technological advancement**. The move comes as the number of UCBs has declined from 1,926 in 2004 to about 1,500 in 2024. NUCFDC aims to provide crucial support, including **IT infrastructure** and **operational assistance**.
14.	Reserve Bank of India		The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has set the interest rate for the **Government of India Floating Rate Bonds 2035 (GOI FRB 2035)** at **6.66% per annum**, effective from **January 25, 2025** to **January 24, 2030**. The rate is based on the prevailing **5-year yield** on **Government of India securities** as of **January 24, 2025**, reflecting current market conditions.
15.	Reserve Bank of India Governor projects improved economic outlook for 2025		• Despite facing global uncertainties, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra** is optimistic about **India's economic prospects, citing high consumer and business confidence in 2025** and expecting an improvement in the second half of the financial year. **Key Highlights :** • Focus on Financial Stability: Malhotra emphasized that the RBI's focus remains on preserving financial stability, supporting higher economic growth, and ensuring systemic stability in financial institutions. • Growth and Inflation: India recorded a slowdown in GDP growth to **5.4% in Q2 of FY24**, with a 6% growth in the first half of the fiscal year. • There are discussions about the possibility of RBI reducing policy rates to support growth, especially as inflation moderates. • Strong Business Confidence: The RBI Governor highlighted that businesses are entering 2025 with robust balance sheets and high profitability, contributing to an improved investment scenario. • Financial Sector Resilience: Malhotra noted that financial sector regulators are intensifying reforms and strengthening surveillance. • Stress test results indicate that both banks and NBFCs will maintain capital levels above regulatory minimums even under adverse scenarios.

S.No.	**Name**	**Purpose**	**Details**
			• Commitment to Financial Inclusion: Malhotra reaffirmed the RBI's commitment to developing a modern, customer-centric, technologically advanced, and financially inclusive financial system to support India's growth aspirations. • Global Economic Resilience: While acknowledging challenges from geopolitical conflicts, trade uncertainties, and economic policy issues,Malhotra pointed out that the global economy shows resilience, and declining inflation may help improve global purchasing power. • Medium-Term Outlook and Risks: The medium-term outlook remains uncertain, with risks from geopolitical tensions, financial market instability, climate events, and rising global indebtedness. • Other risks include asset valuation concerns, challenges in the non-bank financial sector, and new emerging technologies.
16.	**Reserve Bank Innovation Hub Teams Up with Digital Lender Vivifi Finance to Launch Pilot for Unsecured Loans to Gig Workers**		• The **Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH)** has partnered with **Vivifi Finance** to launch a pilot project **aimed** at providing unsecured loans to gig workers. • The pilot aims to develop a digital platform for providing loans to cab-hailing app drivers, such as those working with Ola and Uber, food delivery drivers employed by Swiggy and Zomato, and other gig workers. **Key Highlights :** • The RBI innovation hub is running a pilot with Vivifi Finance and three other gig platforms, where alternate data is being used to underwrite these gig workers. • The Reserve Bank Innovation Hub is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), established to promote and foster an environment that accelerates innovation across the financial sector. • **Unified Lending Interface (ULI)** is a digital public infrastructure designed to provide lenders with access to critical financial, non-financial, and alternative data for informed credit decisions. • Currently, 36 lenders, including banks and NBFCs, are onboarded, leveraging over 50 data services such as authentication, land records from six states, satellite data, property searches, dairy insights, and document verification. • The RBIH initially launched the **Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit** to develop an end-to-end digital solution for agriculture loans. • This platform was subsequently renamed the Unified Lending Interface and entered its pilot phase on August 17, 2023.
17.	**Reserve Bank of India Introduces Guidelines for Reporting Gold Derivative Transactions to Clearing Corporation of India Limited Trade Repository**		• The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) mandates that Authorized Dealer Category-I Banks** report **gold derivative transactions** to the **Clearing Corporation of India Limited. (CCIL) trade repository.** • Effective Date: The reporting requirement will start from **February 1, 2025** for all over-the-counter (OTC) transactions in gold derivatives conducted by banks and eligible customers. • Report Submission: Banks must submit reports by noon (12:00 PM) on the next business day, including any amendments or unwinding of transactions.

S.No.	Name	Purpose	Details
			• Retrospective Reporting: Banks are required to retrospectively report all matured and outstanding transactions from April 15, 2024, to February 28, 2025, to ensure data completeness. • Quarterly Reporting: Banks must submit a quarterly report on gold derivative transactions at exchanges in International Financial Services Centres (IFSC) and overseas, including transactions by eligible customers/constituents at IFSC exchanges. • This report should be submitted within ten days of the succeeding quarter, starting from the quarter ending December 31, 2024. • Legal Framework: These guidelines are issued under the powers vested in the **RBI under Section 45W of the RBI Act, 1934, Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, and Banking Regulation Act, 1949.** • Scope: The guidelines apply to both domestic market transactions and those conducted in International Financial Services Centres (IFSC) or overseas.
18.	Reserve Bank of India		• The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has issued **guidelines for lenders participating in Government Debt Relief Schemes (DRS),** focusing on the sacrifice of interest, principal, and loan account status. • DRS are typically announced by states to provide financial relief to borrowers, especially during natural calamities, or as political promises during elections. • These schemes target specific segments of borrowers, such as farmers. **Key Highlights :** • Model Operating Procedure (MOP): RBI has shared a Model Operating Procedure (MOP) with State Governments, which includes steps for consultation with **State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC)** and **District Level Consultative Committee (DCC),** and guidelines for the scheme's design and funding. • Provision for Dues Pending Beyond 90 Days: For any dues pending from the Government for more than 90 days, RBI has mandated a 100% provision, emphasizing that lenders must actively pursue the settlement of these dues. • DRS as a Last Resort: RBI stresses that DRS should only be considered as a last resort and must be implemented following proper consultation and within a well-defined framework to avoid financial instability. • No Receivables from Government: Lenders are prohibited from creating any receivable against the Government concerning DRS. • Until the receipt of funds from the Government, lenders must continue applying prudential norms to the borrower accounts. • Lender's Action for Settlement: Lenders must take necessary actions to follow up with the Government for the early settlement of dues and ensure proper handling of borrowers' accounts under the DRS. • Applicability of Guidelines: These guidelines apply to **all Commercial Banks (including Regional Rural Banks and Local Area Banks), Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks, State and Central Co-operative Banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), Housing Finance Companies, and All-India Financial Institutions.**

		Current Affairs related to Regulatory authorities	
S.No.	**Name**	**Purpose**	**Details**
			• Impact on Financial Stability: The RBI emphasizes that DRS must be carefully designed to avoid creating financial instability or moral hazards, and should address critical aspects like borrower identification, scheme timelines, and claim settlements. • Role of Lenders in the Process: Lenders should ensure that any sacrifice in interest or principal under DRS is done in a manner that complies with the relevant asset classification, provisioning norms, and credit discipline.
19.	Reserve Bank of India		• The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has **lifted the restrictions on Chennai-based Asirvad Micro Finance** and **Delhi-based DMI Finance**, effective immediately. • **Reason for Lifting Restrictions:** The RBI was satisfied with the companies' actions to comply with regulatory guidelines, including revamped processes and systems, and their commitment to ensure adherence to regulations, particularly regarding fairness in loan pricing.
20.	Reserve Bank of India		• **KredX, a supply chain finance platform,** has announced that it has received **final approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to commercially launch its **Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) platform** under the brand name **DTX (Domestic Trade Exchange).** • With this, KredX becomes the **fifth RBI-regulated TReDS platform in India,** marking a significant milestone in its journey to revolutionise supply chain financing.
21.	Reserve Bank of India		• The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** came up with new guidelines for **Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs)** to streamline and provide an efficient settlement process for the dues of borrowers. • The new guidelines were set in motion on **January 20, 2025**, after a detailed review of existing rules and regulations. • The guidelines aim to streamline the **settlement process** for borrowers' dues and enhance **transparency** in the recovery of **Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)**. • The focus is on settlements for borrowers who have defaulted on loans, with debts managed by ARCs, ensuring **fairness** and **efficiency** in settlements while protecting the interests of both borrowers and financial institutions.

SEBI News

S.No	Announcement	Key Details
1.	Securities and Exchange Board of India	The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** is launching the **Integrated SEBI Portal for Technical Glitches (iSPOT)** on **February 3, 2025**, to replace the outdated email system. This new, structured portal will allow **Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs)**, including stock exchanges and depositories, to report technical issues with detailed **root cause analysis (RCA)**. The initiative aims to improve **transparency**, **efficiency**, and **real-time issue resolution**, enhancing the overall **financial market infrastructure**.
2.	SEBI	On **January 26, 2025**, SEBI launched **"Dharohar – Milestones in the Indian Securities Market"**, a digital repository preserving the history of India's **securities market**. This initiative highlights key **milestones** in the market's evolution over **150+ years**, offering valuable insights into India's **financial market** development.

S.No	Announcement	Key Details
3.	Securities and Exchange Board of India	• The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has imposed a **₹9 lakh penalty on Stockholding Services** for violating regulatory norms. • The violations were identified during Sebi's thematic inspection conducted between April 2022 and June 2023.
4.	Securities and Exchange Board of India	• Capital markets regulator **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** announced the **introduction of the Mutual Funds Lite (MF Lite) framework** to ease the compliance process for companies launching passively managed mutual fund schemes. • The framework is designed to encourage new flows, encourage innovation and promote investment diversification in the mutual fund sector.
5.	Securities and Exchange Board of India	• The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has **updated the timelines for credit rating agencies (CRAs)**, shifting from "days" to "working days" to improve ease of doing business and standardize processes.
6.	Securities and Exchange Board of India	• As per **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, total capital market fundraising** in FY2025 is expected to rise by **21% to ₹14.7 lakh crore** from ₹11.8 lakh crore in FY2024.
7.	Securities and Exchange Board of India	• The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has proposed **raising the investment threshold for granular disclosures** by **foreign portfolio investors (FPIs).** • The current threshold of **Rs 25,000 crore will be increased to Rs 50,000 crore** for FPIs to provide detailed disclosures of their holdings.
8.	Securities and Exchange Board of India	• The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has partnered with the **National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM)** to launch an **e-learning course on municipal bonds.** • **Objective of the Course:** The course aims to enhance the understanding of municipal bonds among municipal corporations, urban local bodies, and other stakeholders, helping them leverage bonds for urban infrastructure development. • Encouraging Municipal Bond Issuance: The initiative promotes the issuance of municipal bonds as an alternative funding mechanism for urban infrastructure projects. • Municipal Bonds Overview: Municipal bonds (muni bonds) are debt securities issued by urban local governments and agencies. They are used to fund everyday obligations and finance capital projects such as highways, roads, and schools.
9.	Securities and Exchange Board of India	• The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) tightened rules** for **initial public offerings (IPO) of small and medium enterprises,** and tweaked the framework for merchant bankers and custodians by raising their minimum net-worth requirements. • Tightened IPO Rules for SMEs : SEBI has proposed raising the minimum application size for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) IPOs from **₹1 lakh to ₹2-4 lakh.**

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

GDP & GROWTH RATE as per October 2024

- India's economy is projected to grow at **6.5-6.8%** in FY2025, driven by **domestic consumption**, **infrastructure development**, and **digitisation**, with growth rising to **6.7-7.3%** in FY2026. However, challenges like **geopolitical tensions**, **trade disputes**, and **global liquidity** may affect the long-term outlook. India's **resilience** in **services**, **manufacturing exports**, and **stable capital markets** can offset global uncertainties and support growth.

- India's **GST collection growth** slowed to **7.3% YoY** in **December 2024**, with gross revenue at **₹1.77 lakh crore**, compared to **₹1.65 lakh crore** in December 2023. This marks the slowest growth in three months, reflecting a slight dip in **consumer spending** post-holidays. Despite this, **GST revenues** remained above **₹1.7 lakh crore** for **10 consecutive months**, with the **December quarter** averaging **₹1.82 lakh crore** (up **8.3% YoY**). **Domestic transactions** grew by **8.4%** to ₹1.32 lakh crore, while revenue from **imports** rose by **3.9%**. **Net GST collections** grew **3.3%** YoY, influenced by higher **refunds**.

- India's coffee exports reached a record **$1.14 billion** between April and November FY24, marking a **29% growth** from the previous year. This surge is driven by rising global demand for **Robusta coffee** and challenges in major coffee producers like **Brazil** and **Vietnam**. India's premium coffee, especially from **Karnataka**, is gaining traction in markets like **Italy, Russia, UAE, Germany**, and **Turkey**. Total exports for FY24 are projected to reach **$1.28 billion**, a 12.22% increase.

- India achieved a **36% reduction** in GDP emission intensity from 2005 to 2020, aligning with its **climate action targets** under the **Paris Agreement**. In 2020, total **greenhouse gas emissions** were **2,959 million tonnes** (excluding LULUCF), showing a **7.93% decrease** from 2019. This progress supports India's goal to meet its **Nationally Determined Contribution** (NDC) target of a **45% emissions reduction** by 2030.

- **Nomura** revised its forecast for **India's fiscal year 2025 GDP growth** to **6.7%**, down from **6.9%**, following a **6.7% growth** in the **April-June quarter**, below expectations. Key factors influencing the downgrade include **reduced government spending** during elections, **weak consumer demand** due to high **interest rates** and **moderating wage growth**, and a slowdown in **industrial activity**, reflected in declining sales of **passenger** and **commercial vehicles**.

- The **Government of India** plans to update the base year for calculating **GDP** from **2011-12** to **2022-23** to better reflect the current economic landscape. This is the first revision in over a decade. A **26-member Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics (ACNAS)**, chaired by **Biswanath Goldar**, has been formed to identify new data sources and refine the methodology for compiling **National Accounts Statistics**.

- India's GDP is projected to grow by 6.4% in 2024-25, down from 8.2% in 2023-24. Key sectors showing strong growth include **Agriculture** (3.8%), **Construction** (8.6%), and **Financial, Real Estate, and Professional Services** (7.3%). **Private Final Consumption Expenditure** is expected to rise by 7.3%, reflecting stronger consumer spending, while **Government Final Consumption Expenditure** is forecasted at 4.1%, signaling increased government spending.

- India's **GDP growth forecast** for FY25 has been revised down to **9.7%**, slightly below the earlier estimate of **10.5%**. Despite this, the government's **fiscal deficit target** of **4.9% of GDP** remains on track. To offset the lower growth, **capital expenditure** will be reduced by **₹1–1.5 trillion**, ensuring fiscal discipline and keeping the **deficit** within the target of **₹16.13 trillion**.

- **SBI** has revised its **GDP growth forecast** for FY25 to **6.3%**, slightly lower than the **NSO's** projection of **6.4%**. The adjustment reflects concerns over **slowdown in lending** and **manufacturing**, along with a **high base effect**. Key factors include **agriculture growth** of 3.8%, a **slowdown in industry** (6.2%) and **services** (7.2%), and a rise in **private consumption** (7.3%). **Investment growth** is expected at 6.4%, lower than the previous year. Despite these challenges, **per capita nominal GDP** is set to rise by ₹35,000.

- India's economy is projected to grow by **6.6% to 6.8%** in **FY2025-26**, reflecting its resilience and role in regional economic growth. **Bank of Baroda** forecasts **6.8% growth**, driven by strong indicators like **increased air passenger traffic**, **higher PMI**, **GST collections**, and **enhanced rabi crop sowing**, supporting agricultural growth and overall economic expansion.

- India's **GDP growth** is projected to rise to **6.7%** in FY25, after moderating to **6.4%** in the current fiscal year, down from **8.2%** previously. **Food inflation** declined, with **CPI inflation** cooling to **5.2%** in December. This trend, alongside stable **non-food inflation** at **3.1%**, may pave the way for a potential **rate cut** by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.

- India is projected to become the world's **fourth-largest economy** by 2026, surpassing **Japan**, driven by **6.8% GDP growth** in FY2024-25 and **7.7% growth** in FY2025-26, according to **PHDCCI**. Strategic policies aim to boost economic **resilience** and **sustainable development**.

- India is projected to remain the fastest-growing major economy, with a 6.7% growth rate for fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27, according to the World Bank. Key drivers include the expanding **services sector**, strengthening **manufacturing**, and government initiatives to improve **logistics infrastructure** and **tax reforms**.

- FICCI revised India's economic forecast, projecting a **6.4% GDP growth** and **4.8% CPI-based inflation** for fiscal year **2024-25**, reflecting a cautious outlook due to **global uncertainties** and **domestic challenges**.

- The **IMF** has revised India's **FY25 economic growth forecast** to **6.5%**, down from earlier projections, citing **global economic uncertainties**, **domestic inflation**, and **investment slowdown**. Despite this, the IMF maintained a stable outlook for **FY26**. The revision reflects challenges impacting India's post-pandemic recovery, including **geopolitical risks** and inflation.

- The **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** projects India's **GDP growth** at **7%** for **FY 2025-26**, driven by rising **private investments** and **employment generation**. A CII survey reveals that **75%** of respondents view the economic climate as favorable for investments, with **70%** of firms planning to invest in FY'26.

- Deloitte India has revised its **GDP growth** projection for the **fiscal year 2024-25** to a **range of 6.5% to 6.8%**, citing global trade uncertainties and domestic challenges. The firm emphasizes the need for cautious optimism as the economy navigates these complexities.

ECONOMY NEWS

- India's **net direct tax collection** reached **₹16.90 lakh crore** by **January 12, 2025**, a **15.88% increase** year-on-year. Key highlights include **₹8.74 lakh crore** from **personal income tax**, **₹7.68 lakh crore** from **corporate tax**, and **₹44,538 crore** from **Securities Transaction Tax (STT)**, reflecting robust economic activity and market trading.

- India's **retail inflation** dropped to **5.22%** in **December 2024**, from **5.48%** in November, mainly due to slower food price increases, especially in **vegetables**, **cereals**, and **pulses**. **Food inflation** fell to **8.39%**, while **core inflation** decreased to **3.5%**. **Rural areas** saw inflation at **5.76%**, compared to **4.58%** in urban areas.

- India's **wholesale price inflation** rose to **2.37%** in **December 2024**, up from **1.89%** in November. Key drivers included **manufactured products** (+2.14%), **non-food articles** (+2.46%), and **fuel and power** (improved deflation of -3.79%). The rise in non-food articles reflects increased costs in sectors like **oilseeds**. India's **wholesale price inflation** rose to **2.37%** in **December 2024**, up from **1.89%** in November. Key drivers included **manufactured products** (+2.14%), **non-food articles** (+2.46%), and **fuel and power** (improved deflation of -3.79%). The rise in non-food articles reflects increased costs in sectors like **oilseeds**.
- The global ratings agency Moody's has downgraded India's economic growth forecast for the fiscal year 2024-2025 to **7%, down from the 8.2% growth recorded in the previous fiscal year.**

BUSINESS NEWS

- Reliance Industries, led by **Mukesh Ambani**, acquired **Karkinos Healthcare** for **₹375 crore** through **Reliance Strategic Business Ventures Ltd (RSBVL)**. The deal involves 10 million equity shares and 36.5 million optionally convertible debentures. Karkinos, founded in 2020, specializes in **early cancer detection** and management, with partnerships across **60 hospitals** and plans for a **150-bed cancer hospital** in **Imphal, Manipur**.
- The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** has partnered with **boAt**, an Indian audio and wearables brand, to support **DPIIT-recognized startups** in the **D2C** and **manufacturing** sectors. The collaboration aims to provide **mentorship**, **resources**, and **guidance**, helping startups scale locally and globally. Key initiatives include **tailored mentorship programs** covering stages like **prototype development**, with expert support from both **boAt's industry expertise** and government backing.
- **BharatPe**, India's leading **fintech** company, plans to sell up to **25%** of its **49% stake** in **Unity Small Finance Bank** to raise around **$800 million (Rs 6,500 crore)**. This move aims to meet **RBI's regulatory requirements**. BharatPe has appointed **Rothschild & Co** to manage the stake sale.
- **Suzuki Motor Corporation** will acquire a **26% stake** in **NDDB Mirda Ltd**, a bio-gas venture by the **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)**, with an initial investment of **₹8.84 crore**. The deal supports Suzuki's use of **Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG)** for enhancing vehicle performance and sustainability. Suzuki has the option to increase its stake to **49%** over time.
- **Bajaj Broking** has partnered with **Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB)** to offer a **3-in-1 account** that integrates **banking**, **broking**, and **investment services**. TMB customers can now trade online, access a unified platform, and benefit from **easy fund transfers**, reduced paperwork, and **advanced trading features** supported by **research insights** for informed decisions.
- Ahead of the **Maha Kumbh Mela** (January 13 - February 26, 2025) in **Prayagraj**, PhonePe has partnered with **ICICI Lombard** to offer specialized insurance for attendees. **Coverage options** include **₹59** for train/bus travelers and **₹99** for domestic flight travelers. The insurance provides **hospitalization** up to ₹50,000, **personal accident cover** up to ₹1 lakh, **OPD treatment**, **trip cancellation** up to ₹5,000, and more, including **baggage loss** and **missed flight** reimbursements.
- **Swiggy** launched **'Snacc'** on **January 7, 2025**, in select **Bengaluru** areas, offering snacks, beverages, and meals with a **15-minute delivery** promise. The app features a menu with items like **chocolate cookies**, **Indian breakfast**, **coffee**, **eggs**, and **sandwiches**. Collaborating with brands like **Blue Tokai** and **The Whole Truth**, Snacc operates independently from **Swiggy's Bolt**. In a competitive **quick commerce** market, **Zomato** (with **Blinkit's Bistro**), **Zepto**, and **Magicpin** (with **magicNOW**) have also introduced rapid food delivery services.
- India aims for **$100 billion** in combined exports from the **Food & Beverage (F&B)**, **agriculture**, and **marine sectors** over the next five years, with a targeted **14-15% annual growth**. This goal was highlighted by **Piyush Goyal** at **Indusfood 2025**. Last year, India achieved **$50 billion** in exports, with contributions from **APEDA** and **MPEDA**.
- India's **factory output** surged by **5.2%** in **November 2024**, the highest in six months, driven by a **favorable base effect** and increased demand during the festive season. The **cumulative growth** for **April-November 2024** stands at **4.1%**, down from **6.5%** in the same period last year, reflecting a slowdown. Key contributors include **manufacturing**, **capital goods**, and **consumer durables**.
- On **January 10, 2025**, the **Indian rupee** hit an all-time low of **₹86** against the **US dollar**, driven by factors such as the **strengthening US dollar**, **FII outflows** (₹7,170.87 crore on January 9), and **rising crude oil prices**. These factors contributed to a significant depreciation of the rupee, marking economic challenges.
- In **December 2024**, **e-way bills** reached 8.8 crore, marking a **9.3% increase** from the previous month and a **7.4% rise** from December 2023. This reflects a **strong economic recovery**, driven by increased **transportation** and **trade movements**. The surge aligns with seasonal trends, highlighting higher consumption during the festive season.
- **NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL)** has partnered with UAE-based **fintech firm Magnati** to enable **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** transactions for Indian travelers in the UAE. This collaboration aims to integrate **UPI** into the UAE's **payment ecosystem**, allowing Indian visitors to make seamless payments using their preferred method.

- **Shriram Housing Finance** has rebranded as **Truhome Finance** following its acquisition by **Warburg Pincus** and **QIA**, Qatar's sovereign wealth fund. The rebranding reflects the company's focus on enhancing **accessibility to affordable home loans** across diverse **socio-economic segments**.

- The government has launched **Entity Locker,** a secure, cloud-based digital platform developed by the **National eGovernance Division (NeGD)** under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).** Building on the success of **DigiLocker,** Entity Locker is designed to streamline the management, verification, and secure sharing of documents for a wide range of entities, including corporations, MSMEs, trusts, startups, and societies. By leveraging advanced technology, the platform aims to enhance operational efficiency and establish a more secure and efficient digital governance system.

- In a decisive move to address liquidity constraints in the **Indian banking system,** the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has conducted a series of **Variable Rate Repo (VRR) auctions**, infusing a substantial ₹**76,000 crore** into the financial ecosystem. This initiative aims to alleviate the liquidity deficit and stabilize short-term interest rates, particularly the call money rates, which had been trading above the **RBI's repo rate of 6.5%**.

- **Bharti Airtel and Bajaj Finance** have formed a partnership to create one of **India's largest digital platforms** for financial services, leveraging Airtel's customer base and distribution network with Bajaj Finance's diverse product offerings. The collaboration aims to enhance financial inclusion through a seamless user experience on the **Airtel Thanks App,** offering products like gold loans and business loans. This strategic move builds on **India's growing digital infrastructure,** with a focus on underserved regions and accessible financial solutions.

- **Tata AIG General Insurance Company** has launched **CyberEdge,** a comprehensive cyber insurance solution designed to protect Indian businesses from **escalating cyber risks.** This initiative aligns with the company's strategic goal to **capture 25% of the cyber insurance market** within the **next five years.**

- **Tata AIA Life Insurance** has unveiled **'Shubh Muhurat,'** a life insurance solution designed to assist families in financially preparing for their children's weddings. This initiative aims to address the escalating costs associated with weddings in India, a sector valued at **over ₹10.7 lakh crore in 2024.**

- **Skydo Technologies**, a Bengaluru-based fintech firm, has received **in-principle authorization** from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to function as a **Payment Aggregator-Cross Border (PA-CB) entity.** This approval underscores Skydo's commitment to providing compliant, seamless, and cost-effective cross-border payment solutions for Indian exporters.

- **Shri Vikram Dev Dutt, Secretary of the Ministry of Coal,** virtually inaugurated digital classrooms in government schools across Jharkhand. These classrooms are part of **'Digi Vidya,'** a **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative** by **Coal India Limited (CIL)** subsidiaries. The event was attended by **Shri PM Prasad, Chairman of CIL, Smt. Rupinder Brar, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Coal,** and other senior officials.

- The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** issued notices to **Ola** and **Uber** over claims of **differential pricing** based on mobile operating systems, with **iPhone users** allegedly charged higher fares than **Android users**. **Union Minister Pralhad Joshi** directed the CCPA to investigate, ensuring **consumer rights** and **fair trade practices**. In response, both companies denied the allegations, stating they do not differentiate pricing based on the **mobile device** used and are willing to cooperate with the CCPA.

- In 2024, **UPI** accounted for **83%** of India's **digital transactions**, up from 34% in 2019, highlighting its rapid adoption. The total transaction volume exceeded **208.5 billion**, while traditional payment methods like **NEFT**, **RTGS**, and **IMPS** saw a decline from **66%** in 2019 to **17%** by 2024.

- The **Government of India** has approved a ₹**500 crore capital infusion** into the **Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI)** for **2024-25**. This move, aimed at strengthening IFCI's financial health, comes ahead of its **restructuring and consolidation**. The infusion includes ₹499.99 crore for **share capital subscription** and efficient use of savings to avoid extra cash outflow.

- **CheQ**, an Indian fintech company, has launched **Wisor**, India's first **AI-driven credit card expert**. Wisor offers **personalized credit assistance** with an intuitive Q&A interface, **comprehensive spend analysis** across cards and merchants, and **optimized rewards management**. This tool helps users maximize credit card rewards and manage spending efficiently with personalized insights.

- The **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)** is facing a slowdown, with **recovery rates** for banks dropping from 40% in **2022-23** to 28% in **2023-24**. This decline, due to prolonged **resolution timelines** and the erosion of **non-performing assets (NPAs)**, has led banks to explore alternative recovery methods. The number of cases admitted to the **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)** also decreased, from 501 to 417 cases.

- India's **foreign exchange reserves** declined to **$625.87 billion** as of **January 10, 2025**, from **$634.59 billion** the previous week. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has been intervening in the **forex market** to stabilize the **rupee**, which has depreciated against the **U.S. dollar**, leading to a depletion of reserves amidst global economic challenges.

- **Jio** has launched **JioSoundPay**, a free feature on the **JioBharat** phone to simplify **UPI payments** for small businesses in India. This feature provides **instant, multilingual audio confirmations** for every transaction, helping small merchants like **kirana stores**, **vegetable vendors**, and **roadside eateries** handle payments seamlessly, reflecting Jio's commitment to simplifying digital tools for everyday users.

- **CRED** has launched the **beta version** of the **e₹ wallet**, making it the first **fintech platform** to adopt India's **central bank digital currency (CBDC)**, the **e-rupee**. This initiative, in collaboration with the **RBI** and **YES Bank**, enables users to store and transact using digital currency, marking a significant step in India's **digital payments** transformation.
- The Indian government has launched the **Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme (MCGS-MSME)** with a ₹100 crore corpus to boost the **MSME manufacturing sector**. The initiative aims to enhance **credit availability** for MSMEs, enabling them to acquire essential equipment and machinery without requiring **collateral**.
- **Tata Steel** has become the first Indian company to develop **hydrogen-compliant pipes** for transporting hydrogen, marking a significant step in **India's clean energy transition**. The **API X65 pipes**, produced at Tata Steel's **Khopoli plant** and made from steel at its **Kalinganagar facility**, align with **India's National Hydrogen Mission** and global sustainability goals. This innovation highlights Tata Steel's commitment to **clean energy** and infrastructure development.
- The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** is enforcing new compliance measures for **UPI transactions** starting **February 1, 2025**. **UPI transaction IDs** will now be strictly **alphanumeric**, with special characters like **@, #, $, %** banned to enhance **security**, ensure **uniformity**, and improve **transaction efficiency** in India's growing digital payments ecosystem.
- The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has introduced a new directive to protect **senior citizens** from sharp increases in **health insurance premiums**. Insurers are now restricted from raising premiums for individuals aged **60 and above** by more than **10% per year** without prior approval. This initiative aims to ensure **affordable** and **accessible health insurance** for the elderly.

MoU's & AGREEMENTS

MoUs WITH COUNTRY

Country	MoU's With	Field/Purpose
India	**Mongolia**	India is set to sign a **preliminary agreement** with **Mongolia** to boost cooperation in **geology** and **exploration**, focusing on sourcing critical minerals like **copper** and **coking coal**.
Russian President Vladimir Putin	**Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian**	**Russian President Vladimir Putin** and **Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian** signed a 20-year **"Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty" in Moscow,** aiming to bolster bilateral relations across various sectors.
UNESCO's South Asia Regional Office	**Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**	In a significant move to align **India's artificial intelligence (AI)** ecosystem with global ethical standards, **UNESCO's South Asia Regional Office**, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** and **Ikigai Law,** organized a two-day stakeholder consultation on the **AI Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM)**. Held on January 16 and 17, 2025, at IIIT Bangalore and the NASSCOM AI office, respectively, the event aimed to craft an India-specific AI policy report that identifies strengths and growth opportunities within **India's AI landscape.**

MoUs WITH STATE

State	MoU's With	Field/Purpose
Uttar Pradesh government	**Google Cloud (India)**	The **Uttar Pradesh government** has partnered with **Google Cloud (India)** to launch the **Uttar Pradesh Open Network for Agriculture (UPONA)**, powered by **Gemini AI** and **Beacon technology**. This digital infrastructure will provide **farmers** with access to **advisory services**, **credit**, **mechanization**, **market connectivity**, and **real-time weather data**. The initiative aims to **double farmers' income** and enhance **digital empowerment** in agriculture. The **MoU** was signed by **Manoj Kumar Singh** (UP Chief Secretary) and **Anil Bhansali** (Google Cloud India VP).
Uttarakhand government	**Iceland**	To tap into the state's **geothermal potential**. Through a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Verkis Consulting Engineers**, this collaboration aims to harness **geothermal energy** for **electricity generation**, marking a significant step in the development of **renewable energy** in India.

MoUs BETWEEN ORGANIZATION

Organization	MoU's With	Field/Purpose
C-DOT	**IIT Mandi** and **IIT Jammu**	• **C-DOT**, in collaboration with **IIT Mandi** and **IIT Jammu**, has signed an agreement to develop a **Wideband Spectrum-Sensor ASIC-Chip** to improve **spectrum utilization** and enhance **broadband services** in **rural India**. • The project, under the **Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF)**, aligns with India's **Atmanirbhar Bharat** and **Make-in-India** goals.
C-DOT	**IIT Bombay**	• India is advancing in **6G technology** with a collaboration between **C-DOT** and **IIT Bombay** to develop an **Optical Transceiver Chipset** for **high-bandwidth 6G wireless links**. • Supported by the **Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF)**, this initiative aims to position India as a leader in **6G innovation** by 2030, focusing on **affordability**, **sustainability**, and **ubiquity**.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

APPOINTMENTS NATIONAL

Person Name	Appointed As	Entity / Place	Key Notes
Bhuvnesh Kumar	CEO	Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)	1995-batch IAS officer (UP cadre); assumed charge on January 1, 2025; succeeds Amit Agrawal.
Manish Singhal	Secretary General	Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)	Succeeds Deepak Sood; brings 35+ years of experience, including roles at Tata Motors and FICCI.
Faiz Ahmed Kidwai	Director-General (DG)	Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)	1996-batch IAS officer (MP cadre); replaces Vikram Dev Dutt; tasked with resolving pilot duty and rest disputes.
Azimul Haque	CEO	Delhi Waqf Board	Appointed by L-G V.K. Saxena; post vacant since November 28, 2024, causing delays in salary disbursements for imams and Board employees.
Dr. V. Narayanan	Secretary of the Department of Space and Chairman of ISRO	ISRO	Succeeds S. Somanath; nearly 40 years in propulsion; key contributor to GSLV Mk III and Chandrayaan-3 missions; appointment effective January 14, 2025.
Bahadur Singh Sagoo	President	Athletics Federation of India (AFI)	Succeeds Adille Sumariwalla; announced initiatives like major javelin competition and hosting international events to boost Indian athletics.
Tuhin Kanta Pandey	Secretary, Department of Revenue; Finance Secretary	Ministry of Finance	Key reassignment ahead of Union Budget 2025; retains Finance Secretary role; strengthens leadership for critical budget decisions.
Arunish Chawla	Secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM)	Ministry of Finance	Assigned additional charges for DPE and Ministry of Culture; appointment aims to enhance financial oversight ahead of Budget 2025.
Ashish Naithani	Judge	Uttarakhand High Court	Appointed under Article 224 of the Constitution; addresses shortage in sanctioned strength of 11 judges, as court operated with only 6 judges.
Vineet Joshi	**Secretary of the Department of Higher Education**	**Ministry of Education**	**Vineet Joshi** has been appointed **Secretary of the Department of Higher Education** in the **Ministry of Education** on **January 17, 2025**, at **Shastri Bhawan**, New Delhi.
Justice Arun Mishra	**Ombudsman and Ethics Officer**	**Board of Control for Cricket in India**	This appointment marks a significant milestone in his career, leveraging his **legal expertise** and **leadership experience** to ensure **ethical practices** and address **disputes** within the BCCI.

Person Name	Appointed As	Entity / Place	Key Notes
Gyanendra Pratap Singh	Director General (DG)	Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)	1991-batch IPS officer; tenure until Nov 30, 2027
Sanjiv Ranjan	Secretary General	Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)	1993-batch IFS officer
Alok Kumar Agarwal	MD & CEO	Zurich Kotak General Insurance	Succeeds Suresh Agarwal, effective Jan 1, 2025
Ambarish Kenghe	Group CEO	Angel One	Assumes role in March 2025
Dhananjay Shukla	President	Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI)	Elected for the year 2025
Pawan G Chandak	Vice President	Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI)	Elected for the year 2025
Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal	Additional Director General (ADG)	Border Security Force (BSF)	1994-batch IPS officer; tenure of 4 years
Neeraj Parakh	Executive Director & CEO	Reliance Power Limited	Effective from Jan 20, 2025, for three years
Akhil Gupta	Chairman	Bharti AXA Life Insurance	Vice Chairman of Bharti Enterprises
Amrit Mohan Prasad	Additional DG, BCAS	Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS)	Six-month tenure starting November 1, 2024; also DG of SSB.
Sridhar Vembu	Chief Scientist	Zoho Corporation	Stepped down as CEO to focus on R&D.
Shailesh Kumar Davey	Group CEO	Zoho Corporation	Co-founder of Zoho, succeeds Sridhar Vembu as CEO.
Deshnee Naidoo	CEO	Vedanta Resources Ltd (VRL)	Over 20 years of experience in the resources industry; previously CEO of Vale Base Metals.
Rajesh Nirwan	Director General	Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS)	Appointment approved by ACC; tenure until further orders.
M. Mohan	**Director**	**Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre**	Succeeding **Dr. V. Narayanan;** Mohan's extensive experience in **liquid propulsion systems** has been key in advancing **India's space capabilities**.

APPOINTMENTS – INTERNATIONAL

Person Name	Appointed As	Entity / Place	Key Notes
Hiroki Totoki	CEO	Sony Corporation	Currently President & COO; will assume CEO role from April 1, 2025.
Hisashi Takeuchi	MD & CEO (Re-appointed)	Maruti Suzuki India Ltd	Reappointed for a three-year term from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2028.
Sir Mo Farah	International Event Ambassador	Tata Mumbai Marathon	Represents global appeal of the event; 20th edition set for January 19, 2025, with 60,000 participants; Farah is a decorated long-distance runner with four Olympic golds.

BRAND & CAMPAIGN AMBASSADORS

Person Name	Brand / Campaign	Key Notes	
Ayushmann Khurrana	Brand Ambassador	FICCI Frames 2025	Celebrating the 25th anniversary of FICCI Frames
Jitender Pal Singh	Ambassador to Israel	Government of India	IFS officer (2002 batch), previously led the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Iran division.

CONSTITUTIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Designation / Post	Person Name	Key Notes	
Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya	Chief Justice	Delhi High Court	Sworn in at Raj Niwas, Delhi
Justice Alok Aradhe	Chief Justice	Bombay High Court	Appointed by the central government
Justice V Ramasubramanian	Chairperson	National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)	Appointed on December 23, 2024; position was vacant since June 1, 2024, after Justice Arun Kumar Mishra's tenure ended.

AWARDS

ICC Awards 2024

- **ICC Emerging Women's Cricketer of the Year**: Annerie Dercksen (South Africa) – Recognized for exceptional rise in Women's cricket with consistent performances.
- **ICC Emerging Men's Cricketer of the Year**: Kamindu Mendis (Sri Lanka) – Young all-rounder showcasing impressive talent.
- **ICC Women's Associate Cricketer of the Year**: Esha Oza (UAE) – Outstanding contributions in Women's Associate cricket.
- **ICC Men's Associate Cricketer of the Year**: Gerhard Erasmus (Namibia) – Continued brilliance as a key player for Namibia.
- **Umpire of the Year**: Richard Illingworth – Acknowledged for excellence and consistency in officiating.
- **ICC Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year**: Melie Kerr (New Zealand) – Consistent performer with both bat and ball.
- **ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year**: Arshdeep Singh (India) – Known for lethal pace and accuracy in death overs.
- **ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year**: Captain: Laura Wolvaardt, Smriti Mandhana, Chamari Athapaththu, Hayley Matthews, Nat Sciver-Brunt, Melie Kerr, Richa Ghosh, Marizanne Kapp, Orla Prendergast, Deepti Sharma, Sadia Iqbal.
- **ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year**: Captain: Rohit Sharma, Travis Head, Phil Salt, Babar Azam, Nicholas Pooran, Sikandar Raza, Hardik Pandya, Rashid Khan, Wanindu Hasaranga, Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh.
- **ICC Men's Test Team of the Year**: Captain: Pat Cummins, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ben Duckett, Kane Williamson, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Kamindu Mendis, Jamie Smith, Ravindra Jadeja, Matt Henry, Jasprit Bumrah.
- **ICC Women's ODI Team of the Year**: Captain: Laura Wolvaardt, Smriti Mandhana, Chamari Athapaththu, Hayley Matthews, Marizanne Kapp, Ashleigh Gardner, Annabel Sutherland, Amy Jones, Deepti Sharma, Sophie Ecclestone, Kate Cross.
- **ICC Men's ODI Team of the Year**: Captain: Charith Asalanka, Saim Ayub, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis, Sherfane Rutherford, Azmatullah Omarzai, Wanindu Hasaranga, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf, AM Ghazanfar.
- **ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year**: Smriti Mandhana (India) – Key contributions in India's success in various series.
- **ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year**: Azmatullah Omarzai (Afghanistan) – Elevated Afghanistan's cricketing stature with exceptional performances.
- **ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year**: Jasprit Bumrah (India) – Exceptional performance, solidifying his status as a top Test bowler.
- **ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year**: Melie Kerr (New Zealand) – Key player in New Zealand's first T20 World Cup win.
- **ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year**: Jasprit Bumrah (India) – Outstanding performances across all formats.

BCCI Awards 2024: Honoring Cricket Legends and Rising Stars

BCCI Awards 2025 winners list
- **Col. C. K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award - Men**: Sachin Tendulkar
- **Polly Umrigar Award** - **Best International Cricketer - Men**: Jasprit Bumrah
- **Best International Cricketer - Women**: Smriti Mandhana
- **Best International Debut - Men**: Sarfaraz Khan
- **Best International Debut - Women**: Asha Sobhana
- **BCCI Special Award**: Ravichandran Ashwin
- **Highest Run-Getter in ODIs - Women**: Smriti Mandhana
- **Highest Wicket-Taker in ODIs - Women**: Deepti Sharma
- **Best Umpire In Domestic Cricket**: Akshay Totre
- **M.A. Chidambaram Trophy - Highest Run-Getter in U-19 Cooch Behar Trophy**: Kavya Teotia
- **M.A. Chidambaram Trophy - Highest Wicket-Taker in U-19 Cooch Behar Trophy**: Vishnu Bhardwaj

- **Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy - Best Woman Cricketer Senior Domestic**: Priya Mishra
- **Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy - Best Woman Cricketer Junior Domestic**: Ishwari Awasare
- **Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy - Highest Wicket-Taker in U-16 Vijay Merchant Trophy**: Hemchudeshan Jeganathan
- **Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy - Highest Run Getter in U-16 Vijay Merchant Trophy**: Lakshya Raichandani
- **MA Chidambaram Trophy - Highest Wicket-Taker in U-23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Plate Group)**: Neizekho Rupreo
- **MA Chidambaram Trophy - Highest Run Getter in U-23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Plate Group)**: Hem Chetri
- **MA Chidambaram Trophy - Highest Wicket-Taker in U-23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Elite Group)**: P Vidyuth
- **MA Chidambaram Trophy - Highest Run Getter in U-23 CK Nayudu Trophy (Elite Group)**: Aneesh KV
- **Madhavrao Scindia Award - Highest Wicket-Taker in Ranji Trophy (Plate Group)**: Mohit Jangra
- **Madhavrao Scindia Award - Highest Wicket-Taker in Ranji Trophy (Elite Group)**: Tanay Thyagarajan
- **Madhavrao Scindia Award - Highest Run Getter in Ranji Trophy (Plate Group)**: Agni Chopra
- **Madhavrao Scindia Award - Highest Run Getter in Ranji Trophy (Elite Group)**: Ricky Bhui from Andhra Pradesh was the winner.
- **Lala Amarnath Award for the Best All-Rounder in Domestic Limited-Overs Competitions**: Shashank Singh from Chhattisgarh received this medal.
- **Lala Amarnath Award for the Best All-Rounder in Ranji Trophy**: Tanush Kotian
- **Best Performance in BCCI Domestic Tournaments**: Mumbai

82nd Annual Golden Globe Awards (2025)

Awards in Arts & Culture / Films
- **Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture — Drama**: Adrien Brody, "The Brutalist"
- **Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture — Drama**: Fernanda Torres, "I'm Still Here"
- **Best Motion Picture — Drama**: "The Brutalist"
- **Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in any Motion Picture**: Zoe Saldaña, "Emilia Pérez"
- **Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture**: Kieran Culkin, "A Real Pain"
- **Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series — Musical or Comedy**: Jean Smart, "Hacks"
- **Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series — Drama**: Hiroyuki Sanada, "Shōgun"
- **Best Screenplay — Motion Picture**: Peter Straughan, "Conclave"
- **Best Original Song — Motion Picture**: "El Mal," by Clément Ducol, Camille, and Jacques Audiard (from "Emilia Pérez")
- **Best Motion Picture — Non-English Language**: "Emilia Pérez"
- **Best Director — Motion Picture**: Brady Corbet, "The Brutalist"
- **Best Motion Picture — Animated**: "Flow"
- **Best Television Series — Drama**: "Shōgun"
- **Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series — Musical or Comedy**: Jeremy Allen White, "The Bear"
- **Best Television Series — Comedy or Musical**: "Hacks"
- **Best Performance by an Actress in a Limited Series, Anthology Series or Motion Picture Made for Television**: Jodie Foster, "True Detective: Night Country"
- **Best Television Limited Series, Anthology Series or Motion Picture Made for Television**: "Baby Reindeer"
- **Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Television Series**: Jessica Gunning, "Baby Reindeer"
- **Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Television Series**: Tadanobu Asano, "Shōgun"
- **Best Performance in Stand-Up Comedy on Television**: Ali Wong, "Single Lady"
- **Best Cinematic and Box Office Achievement**: "Wicked"
- **Best Original Score — Motion Picture**: Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross, "Challengers"

Other Important Awards

Award Name	Award Winner	Field	Key Notes
Electronic Media Award	Doordarshan	Voter Awareness & Education	Recognized for "Chunav Ka Parv Desh Ka Garv" during Lok Sabha Elections 2024; award presented by President Droupadi Murmu.
Padma Shri	Hariman Sharma	Agriculture	Honored for developing the HRMN-99 apple variety, which thrives in tropical and subtropical regions.
Academy Award Nomination	*Anuja* (Short Film)	Film Industry	Nominated for Best Live Action Short Film at the 97th Academy Awards; produced by Priyanka Chopra and Guneet Monga.

Award Name	Award Winner	Field	Key Notes
Maharaja Hari Singh Award	Manoj Sinha	Governance & Public Service	Recognized for contributions to reforms and planning in Jammu & Kashmir; ceremony held in Jammu.
Great Place to Work Certification	Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)	Corporate	Re-certified as a 'Great Place to Work' for January 2025 to January 2026; recognition for positive work environment, trust, and employee empowerment.
Gangadhar National Award for Poetry 2023	Prativa Satpathy	Poetry	Awarded on January 5, 2025; includes ₹1,00,000 prize, citation, and shawl; honors excellence in poetry.
Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award 2025	Sai Paranjpye	Film Industry	Awarded at AIFF 2025 for contribution to Indian parallel cinema; includes films like *Sparsh*, *Chashme Buddoor*, and *Katha*.
Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award	**Aparna Sen**	Film Industry	The **West Bengal Film Journalists Association (WBFJA)** hosted its annual awards on **January 13, 2025**, at **Priya Cinema, Kolkata**. The event celebrated **Bengali cinema** with awards in categories like **Best Film**, **Best Actor**, and **Best Director**, and paid tribute to **Raj Kapoor** on his **birth centenary** with a thematic tribute to the **circus industry**.
RK Srikantan Trust Award	T.V. Gopalakrishnan		. A versatile artist, he excels in **Carnatic** and **Hindustani vocals**, **mridangam**, and **violin**, earning prestigious awards like the **Padma Bhushan** (2012) and **Sangeetha Kalanidhi** (2014).
Gates-Cambridge Impact Prize 2025	**Professor Urbasi Sinha**		**Professor Urbasi Sinha**, a distinguished faculty member in the **Light and Matter Physics theme** at the **Raman Research Institute (RRI)**, has been awarded the prestigious Gates-Cambridge Impact Prize 2025 by the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation at Cambridge, UK.**
Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2025	Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services **(INCOIS) in Hyderabad**		The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services **(INCOIS) in Hyderabad** has been selected for the **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2025** in the Institutional Category, recognizing its exceptional contributions to disaster management.
Crystal Awards	**David Beckham, Diane von Furstenberg, and Riken Yamamoto**		The **55th World Economic Forum (WEF)** Annual Meeting commenced in **Davos, Switzerland**, with the presentation of the **prestigious Crystal Awards** to three distinguished individuals: **David Beckham, Diane von Furstenberg, and Riken Yamamoto**. These awards recognize their significant contributions to social, environmental, and creative progress worldwide.

SUMMITS, EVENTS & CONFERENCE

Category	Event	Venue	Key Points
Summits	**World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit**	**New Delhi**	• India will host the **first-ever World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES)** in **New Delhi** from **February 5-9, 2024**. • Announced by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, this global event aims to position India as a hub for **content creation** and **creative collaboration**, drawing leaders from the **media**, **entertainment**, and **creative industries** worldwide.
Summits	**AI Action Summit**	**Paris**	• Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will attend the **AI Action Summit** in **Paris** on **February 10-11, 2025**, hosted by **French President Emmanuel Macron**. • The summit will focus on **Public Interest AI**, **Future of Work**, **Innovation**, **Trust in AI**, and **Global AI Governance**, with a special emphasis on combating **misinformation** and **misuse of AI**.

Category	Event	Venue	Key Points
			• The event will bring together global leaders, including **heads of state**, **CEOs**, **academia**, and **NGOs**. India's participation highlights its role in shaping global AI discussions.
Events	**Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2025**	**New Delhi**	• The **Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2025**, organized by the **Department of Youth Affairs** under **Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya**, began on **January 10, 2025**, at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**. • This reimagined version of the **National Youth Festival** aims to celebrate youth leadership, with over **3,000 participants** selected from **30 lakh applicants**. • The event focuses on empowering young leaders to contribute to **India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047**, through **thematic discussions**, **creative competitions**, and **cultural experiences**.
Conference	**Sun, Space Weather, and Solar-Stellar Connections'**	Bengaluru	• An international conference titled **'Sun, Space Weather, and Solar-Stellar Connections'** was held in Bengaluru from January 20 to 24, 2025, to commemorate the **125th anniversary** of the **Kodaikanal Solar Observatory (KSO).** • Organized by the **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)**, the event gathered over **200 solar physicists** from India and abroad to discuss advancements in solar magnetism, solar-stellar connections, and space weather.
Conference	**Raisina Middle East Conference**	**Abu Dhabi, UAE**	• The **first Raisina Middle East Conference** was held in **Abu Dhabi, UAE**, on **January 28-29, 2025**, with **Dr. S. Jaishankar**, India's **External Affairs Minister**, as the Chief Guest. • Organized by the **Observer Research Foundation (ORF)** in collaboration with the **UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and the **Indian Ministry of External Affairs**, the conference focused on **regional geopolitics**, **trade**, and **strategic partnerships**.
Conference	**BRICS Youth Council Entrepreneurship Working Group Meeting**	India	• India will host the **BRICS Youth Council Entrepreneurship Working Group Meeting** from **March 3-7, 2025**. • The event, themed "**Youth Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Growth**," will bring together around **45 youth representatives** from **BRICS nations** to strengthen **entrepreneurship** and **innovation** cooperation. • Key discussions will focus on building a framework for young entrepreneurs and increasing their participation in global markets.

COMMITTEES & MEETINGS

Government Forms Committee to Update WPI Base Year

On January 2, 2025, the Government of India established an **18-member committee** to revise the base year of the Wholesale Price Index **(WPI) from 2011-12 to 2022-23.** This initiative aims to enhance the accuracy of factory-gate inflation measures, reflecting structural changes in the economy over the past decade.

Committee Leadership and Composition
The committee is chaired by **Professor Ramesh Chand,** a member of NITI Aayog. It includes experts from various sectors, such as economics, finance, and statistics, ensuring a comprehensive approach to the revision process.

Terms of Reference

The committee has been tasked with:
1. **Commodity Selection**: Identifying commodities for inclusion in the WPI and Producer Price Index (PPI) for the 2022-23 base year, considering structural economic changes.
2. **Price Collection System Review**: Evaluating and recommending improvements to the existing price collection methodology.

3. **Computational Methodology**: Proposing computational methods for WPI and PPI.
4. **PPI Compilation Methodology**: Assessing and suggesting enhancements to the PPI compilation methodology approved by the Technical Advisory Committee on Statistics of Prices & Cost of Living.
5. **Transition Roadmap**: Developing a plan for transitioning from WPI to PPI.
6. **Reliability Enhancements**: Recommending measures to improve the reliability of WPI and PPI data.

The committee is expected to submit its final report within 18 months.

Context and Implications

The last revision of the WPI occurred in 2015, updating the base year from 2004-05 to 2011-12. The upcoming revision to 2022-23 aims to incorporate significant economic developments, including the expansion of the service sector, which constitutes over half of India's economic output. Transitioning to a Producer Price Index (PPI) will provide a more comprehensive measure of inflation at the producer level, encompassing both goods and services.

India Joins UN's Big Data for Official Statistics Committee

Summary/Static	Details
Why in the news?	India Joins UN's Big Data for Official Statistics Committee
UN Committee	United Nations Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD)
India's Membership	Joined in January 2025 to contribute to global statistical practices
Key Contribution	Shaping global standards for using Big Data in official statistics
India's Innovations	Data Innovation Lab, use of satellite imagery, machine learning
Benefits of Big Data	Enhances real-time insights, reduces time lag, improves data accuracy
Strategic Importance	Aligns domestic advancements with global goals for evidence-based policymaking
Non-Traditional Data Sources	IoT, satellite imagery, private sector data to modernize statistical processes
Policymaking Impact	Provides real-time insights to address socio-economic challenges
SDG Monitoring	Helps in tracking and reporting on sustainable development goals
What is Big Data?	High-volume, high-velocity, and wide-variety digital information generated from GPS, ATMs, sensors, satellites, etc.
Sources of Big Data	GPS devices, ATMs, scanning devices, sensors, mobile phones, satellites, social media
UN-CEBD Formation	Established by the UN Statistical Commission during its 45th session
Purpose of UN-CEBD	To explore benefits and challenges of Big Data for official statistics and SDG monitoring
Key Issues Addressed	Methodology, quality, technology, data access, legislation, privacy, management, and finance
Benefits of Big Data	Real-time insights, monitoring SDGs, timely policy interventions, cost-effective solutions
Focus Areas	Cost-benefit analysis of Big Data usage in official statistics

India to Host 28th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in 2026

Key Points	Details
Why in News	India to host the 28th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CSPOC) in 2026, announced by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, focusing on AI and social media in parliamentary processes.
Last Hosted by India	2010
Previous Hosting Years	1970-71, 1986, and 2010
Establishment of CSPOC	1969, by Lucien Lamoureux, Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada
Frequency of CSPOC Conferences	Biennially
CSPOC Secretariat	Canada
Themes for 2026	AI integration, social media in parliamentary processes
India's Parliamentary Initiative	Lok Sabha's adoption of AI for translations and accessibility
Philosophy Highlighted	"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" – The world is one family
Key Global Challenges Addressed	Climate change, terrorism, cybercrime, and inequality

RBI Constitutes New Advisory Committee for Bank Licensing

On January 20, 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) established a new **Standing External Advisory Committee (SEAC)** to evaluate applications for **Universal Banks and Small Finance Banks (SFBs).** This committee is chaired by former **RBI Deputy Governor M. K. Jain** and comprises five members.

Committee Composition and Tenure

The SEAC includes:
* **M. K. Jain**: Chairperson and former Deputy Governor, RBI.
* **Revathy Iyer**: Director, Central Board, RBI.
* **Parvathy V. Sundaram**: Former Executive Director, RBI.
* **Hemant G. Contractor**: Former Managing Director of State Bank of India and former Chairman of the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority.
* **N. S. Kannan**: Former Managing Director and CEO of ICICI Prudential Life Insurance.

The committee's tenure is set for three years, with secretarial support provided by the RBI's Department of Regulation.

Background and Evolution

This initiative follows the **precedent set in March 2021,** when the RBI formed a similar committee led by former **Deputy Governor Shyamala Gopinath.** The SEAC's role is to assess applications for Universal Banks and SFBs, ensuring applicants meet the necessary criteria. Notably, applications from existing SFBs seeking Universal Bank licenses may bypass this vetting process, as their credentials were previously evaluated during their initial licensing.

Current Applications Under Review

The RBI is currently reviewing applications from:
* **Annapurna Finance**: Seeking a Universal Bank license.
* **AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB)**: Applied for a Universal Bank license.
* **Fino Payments Bank**: Applied for an SFB license.
* **VFS Capital**: Applied for an SFB license.

Waqf Amendment Bill Cleared by Joint Parliamentary Committee: Key Changes and Implications

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) approved the Waqf Amendment Bill, a significant legislative reform aimed at restructuring the management of Muslim charitable properties in India. The bill proposes 44 amendments to the existing framework, with the JPC approving 14 key alterations. This article delves into the specifics of the bill, its proposed changes, and the political dynamics that shaped its approval.

What is Waqf Amendment Bill?
The Waqf Amendment Bill seeks to overhaul the administration of Waqf properties across the country by introducing 44 changes to the current system. These changes were drafted and tabled in the Lok Sabha in August 2024. The bill aims to bring about greater inclusivity and transparency in the functioning of Waqf boards and the

Central Waqf Council.
* **Key Objective**: Improve the governance of Waqf properties to benefit marginalized communities, including the Pasmanda Muslims.
* **Amendments Proposed**: A total of 66 amendments were suggested—23 by MPs from the ruling BJP and 44 by opposition members.

Political Dynamics of the Committee
The Joint Parliamentary Committee tasked with examining the bill comprises 31 members from both houses of

Parliament:
* **Ruling Party Representation**: 16 MPs from the BJP and its National Democratic Alliance (NDA) allies.
* **Opposition Representation**: 13 MPs, including one from the YSR Congress Party and one nominated member.

Waqf Board Amendment Bill 2024-Voting on Amendments

During the committee's deliberations:
- The **14 amendments** approved were proposed by the ruling BJP and NDA members.
- The **44 amendments** proposed by the opposition were rejected, with voting largely along party lines (16 in favor of the BJP's stance vs. 10 opposing).

Details of the Approved Amendments
- **Inclusion of Non-Muslim Members**: The composition of state Waqf boards will now allow for non-Muslim CEOs and at least two non-Muslim members.
- **Changes in the Central Waqf Council**: The council will now include a union minister, three Members of Parliament, two ex-judges, four individuals of 'national repute,' and senior government officials. None of these members are required to belong to the Islamic faith.
- **Property Ownership Disputes**: Section 3C(2) of the bill empowers the state government, through the jurisdictional Collector, to determine whether a property claimed as Waqf is actually government land. This change shifts the authority from Waqf Tribunals to Collectors.

Rejected Opposition Amendments
The opposition's proposed changes, aimed at strengthening the autonomy of Waqf boards and safeguarding against government overreach, were voted down. Key suggestions included:
- Increasing representation from minority communities.
- Retaining the Waqf Tribunal's authority in property disputes.
- Ensuring transparency in the appointment of board members.

Opposition members alleged bias in the voting process, highlighting the dominance of the ruling party in the JPC.

Timeline and Next Steps
- **Initial Deadline**: The committee was originally required to submit its report by November 29, 2024.
- **Extension**: The deadline was extended to February 13, 2025, coinciding with the final day of the Budget Session.
- **Final Voting**: The approved amendments will be confirmed through voting on January 29, 2025.
- **Report Submission**: The final report is expected by January 31, 2025.

Impact of the Proposed Changes

On Waqf Property Management
The bill introduces significant changes to the way Waqf properties are governed:
- Greater government oversight through the inclusion of non-Muslim members.
- A shift in dispute resolution authority from Waqf Tribunals to state-appointed Collectors.

On Minority Representation
While the amendments aim to enhance inclusivity, critics argue that the inclusion of non-Muslim members could dilute the community-specific focus of Waqf boards.

On Marginalized Communities
The government asserts that the bill will benefit poor and Pasmanda Muslims by improving the efficiency and transparency of Waqf property administration.

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RANKING

Hanley Passport Index 2025

India's ranking in the Henley Passport Index for 2025 has dropped to 85th, five points lower than its 80th position in 2024. The index, based on data from the International Air Transport Authority (IATA), is a globally recognized tool for assessing passport mobility. Singapore retains its top spot for the second consecutive year, while Japan ranks second after holding the top position from 2018-2023.

Key Highlights

Henley Passport Index Overview

- **Published by Henley & Partners**, a citizenship advisory firm.
- Based on IATA data with historical data spanning 19 years.
- Includes 199 passports and 227 travel destinations.
- A standard reference for global mobility ranking.

India's Ranking Trends

- **2025:** 85th
- **2024:** 80th
- **Best ranking**: 71st (2006)
- **Lowest ranking**: 90th (2021)

India and Its Neighbor Country Rankings

- **China** – 60th
- **India** – 85th
- **Bhutan** – 90th
- **Sri Lanka-** 96th
- **Bangladesh** – 100th
- **Nepal** – 101st
- **Pakistan** – 103rd
- **Afghanistan** – 106th

Top 10 Rankers in Index

- **1st**. Singapore
- **2nd**. Japan
- **3rd**. Finland, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, South Korea
- **4th**. Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway
- **5th**. New Zealand, Switzerland, Portugal, United Kingdom
- **6th**. Australia, Greece
- **7th**. Canada, Malta, Poland
- **8th**. Czechia, Hungary
- **9th**. Estonia, United States
- **10th**. Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, UAE

Key Global Ranking

- **Singapore**: 1st (second year in a row)
- **Japan:** 2nd (previously top from 2018-2023)
- **US:** Second-biggest faller over a decade, from 2nd (2015) to 9th (2025).

Notable Climbers and Fallers

- **China:** Improved from 94th (2015) to 60th (2025), gaining 40 visa-free destinations.
- Venezuela, US, Vanuatu, UK, and Canada are the top five fallers over the past decade.

Global Mobility Trends

- Only 22 passports have declined in ranking over the past decade.
- Wealthy individuals increasingly seek alternative residence or citizenship to optimize outcomes amid global volatility.

India Ranked Second for Cyberattacks in 2024

In 2024, **India** became the **second most** targeted nation globally for **cyberattacks,** with 95 entities falling victim to data theft, according to **CloudSEK's ThreatLandscape Report 2024.** The United States topped the **list with 140 attacks**, while **Israel ranked third with 57 attacks**.

Key Findings from the Report

- **Sector-Specific Impact**: The finance and banking sectors were the most affected, with 20 victims. Other impacted sectors included government (13 victims), telecommunications (12), healthcare and pharma (10), and education (9).

- **Major Data Breaches**: Significant breaches included the leak of 850 million records of Indian citizen data from Hi-Tek Group, customer data from Star Health and Allied Insurance, and 2TB of data from Telecommunications Consultants India.
- **Ransomware Incidents**: The report identified 108 ransomware incidents in India, with Lockbit being the most active group, responsible for over 20 incidents. Other notable groups included Killsec and Ransomhub.

Historical Context
- India has faced significant cyber threats in the past. In 2018, it ranked second globally for data breaches, with over 690 million internet subscribers and a growing number of breaches in both private and public sectors.

Implications
- The surge in cyberattacks underscores the critical need for robust cybersecurity measures across all sectors in India. The rapid digitization of services has exposed vulnerabilities, making it imperative to enhance security protocols to protect sensitive data and maintain public trust.

Edelman Trust Barometer 2025 Rankings

The **Edelman Trust Barometer 2025**, an annual survey by the global communications firm Edelman, revealed key insights into public trust levels in government, businesses, media, and NGOs. This year, India has slipped one rank to the **third spot** globally in terms of overall trust, despite its score remaining unchanged. The study, released ahead of the **World Economic Forum Annual Meeting**, highlighted significant disparities in trust levels across income groups and nations.

Key Highlights of the Edelman Trust Barometer 2025

India's Position in Trust Rankings
India ranked third globally in terms of **trust in institutions** (government, businesses, media, and NGOs). The **top three positions** were as follows:
1. **China**
2. **Indonesia**
3. **India**
   - India lost its second position to **Indonesia**, which achieved an **increased score** despite India's score remaining stable.
   - India ranks **13th** in trust for **companies headquartered in Indian origin**, with **Canada**, **Japan**, and **Germany** topping this specific category.

Trust Gap Between Income Groups in India

The survey emphasized a stark gap between the **high-income and low-income populations**:
- Among the **high-income group**, India ranks **4th globally** after **Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and China**.
- However, the **low-income group** trusts Indian institutions less, placing India in the **3rd position globally**, following **China and Indonesia**.

Income Group	Rank	Trust Level
High-Income Population	4th	80%
Low-Income Population	3rd	65%

This **15% trust gap** highlights economic inequality and its impact on perceptions of institutional credibility.
Global Trends Highlighted in the Survey
Disparities Between Developed and Developing Nations
The survey revealed a stark contrast between trust levels in **developed and developing nations**:

Developing Nations:
- **China**: 77%
- **Indonesia**: 76%
- **India**: 75%
- **UAE**: 72%

Developed Nations:
- **Japan**: 37% (lowest globally)
- **Germany**: 41%
- **UK**: 43%
- **US**: 47%
- **France**: 48%

This data highlights a trend of **higher institutional trust in developing countries** as compared to wealthier nations.

Tata Tops India, Apple Leads Globally in 2025 Brand Rankings

In the latest Brand Finance Global **500 report for 2025**, Tata Group has solidified its status as India's most valuable brand, achieving a **brand value of $31.6 billion—a 10% increase** from the previous year. This marks the first time an Indian brand has surpassed the **$30 billion threshold.** Globally, Apple continues to dominate with a brand value of **$574.5 billion, maintaining** its lead over competitors.

Tata Group's Consistent Growth

Ranked 60th among the **world's top 100 brands,** Tata Group has maintained its **AAA- brand strength rating**. This consistent performance underscores the conglomerate's diversified business model and its ability to adapt to evolving market dynamics.

Surge of Indian Brands on the Global Stage

The report highlights significant advancements by other Indian brands:

Infosys: Achieved a 15% increase in brand value, reaching $16.3 billion, and climbed to the 132nd position globally. Notably, Infosys has recorded the fastest compound annual growth rate (18%) among IT services brands over the past five years.

LIC: Emerged as the fastest-growing Indian brand with a 36% surge in brand value, totaling $13.3 billion. The company boasts a Brand Strength Index score of 88 out of 100, the highest among Indian brands in the global ranking.

Reliance Group: Experienced a 17% growth in brand value, reaching $9.8 billion, reflecting its expanding influence across various sectors.

Larsen & Toubro (L&T): Made a notable entry with a brand value of $7.4 billion, highlighting its significant presence in the diversified sector.

Global Brand Valuations

On the international front, technology giants continue to lead:

1. **Apple**: Retains the top spot with a brand value of $574.5 billion, an 11% increase from the previous year.
2. **Microsoft**: Holds the second position with a brand value of $461.1 billion, marking a 35% growth.
3. **Google**: Ranks third with a brand value of $413 billion, up by 24%.

These valuations underscore the enduring strength and global influence of technology brands.

Indian Banking Sector's Rising Influence

The report also highlights the ascent of Indian banking brands in the global arena:

HDFC Group: Entered the global ranking with a brand value of $14.2 billion.

SBI Group: Secured a position with a brand value of $9.6 billion.

ICICI Group: Marked its presence with a brand value of $6.4 billion.

Top 10 Indian brands

Rank	Brand	2025 Ranking	2024 Ranking	Brand Value
1	Tata Group	60	64	$31.6 billion
2	Infosys	132	145	$16.3 billion
3	HDFC Group	164	228	$14.2 billion
4	Reliance Group	237	261	$9.8 billion
5	LIC	117	222	$13.3 billion
6	L&T Group	316	456	$7.4 billion
7	SBI Group	241	330	$9.6 billion
8	ICICI Group	–	–	$6.4 billion
9	Mahindra Group	–	–	–
10	Bharti Airtel	–	–	–

Globally, Apple is the most valued brand at $574.5 billion, ahead of Microsoft at $461 billion, said the Brand Finance report.

Brand Finance IT Services rankings

Why in News	Key Points
Top IT Services Rankings for 2025	Accenture, TCS, Infosys, and HCLTech rank among the top global IT services brands for 2025.
Accenture's Brand Value	Accenture leads with a brand value of $41.5 billion, maintaining its top spot for seven years.
TCS's Growth	TCS holds the second position with a brand value of $21.3 billion, an 11% increase.
Infosys's Brand Performance	Infosys reaches $16.3 billion, with a 15% increase in brand value.
HCLTech's Rapid Growth	HCLTech's brand value increased by 17%, reaching $8.9 billion.
Wipro and Tech Mahindra's Rankings	Wipro has a brand value of $6 billion, and Tech Mahindra ranks in the top 10.
Global IT Market Influence	Indian IT companies are showing significant growth, contributing to India's influence in the global IT services sector.

Global Firepower Index 2025: India's Position

In the 2025 edition of the Global Firepower Index, India maintains its position at number **four, with a score of 0.1184.** The index evaluates the military strength of 145 countries based on over 60 parameters, including manpower, natural resources, finance, and geography. A score of 0.0000 represents an ideal military strength, which no country possesses. The top ten countries in the 2025 ranking are:

1. **United States of America – Score: 0.0744**
2. **Russia – Score: 0.0788**
3. **China – Score: 0.0788**
4. **India – Score: 0.1184**
5. **South Korea – Score: 0.1656**
6. **United Kingdom – Score: 0.1785**
7. **France – Score: 0.1878**
8. **Japan – Score: 0.1839**
9. **Turkey – Score: 0.1902**
10. **Italy – Score: 0.2164**

NITI Aayog Unveils Fiscal Health Index 2025 in New Delhi

Key Point	Details
Why in News	NITI Aayog launched the "Fiscal Health Index 2025" on January 24, 2025, in New Delhi, evaluating the fiscal performance of 18 Indian states. Odisha ranked first, followed by Chhattisgarh and Goa.
Top-Ranked States	Odisha (67.8), Chhattisgarh (55.2), Goa (53.6)
States with Challenges	Karnataka faced issues with expenditure quality and debt management.
Odisha (Static Data)	CM: Mohan Charan Majhi ; Capital: Bhubaneswar
Purpose of Index	Assesses revenue mobilization, expenditure management, and debt sustainability to guide policy reforms for economic growth.
Framework Alignment	Supports "Viksit Bharat @2047" vision for sustainable and balanced regional development.

India's Coffee Journey: From Roots to Global Reach; World's 7th Largest Coffee Producer

India has ascended to the position of the **world's seventh-largest coffee producer**, with exports **reaching $1.29 billion** in the fiscal year **2023-24**, nearly **doubling from $719.42 million in 2020-21.**

World's Largest Coffee Producers (Ranked)
1. **Brazil** – The largest coffee producer, contributing approximately 37% of global coffee supply.
2. **Vietnam** – The second-largest, known primarily for its Robusta coffee.
3. **Colombia** – A major Arabica coffee producer, ranked third globally.
4. **Indonesia** – A key producer, particularly known for its robusta and specialty coffees.
5. **Honduras** – One of the leading coffee producers in Central America.
6. **Mexico** – A major exporter of Arabica coffee, ranked sixth globally.
7. **India** – Seventh-largest, growing both Arabica and Robusta beans.

World University Rankings by Subject 2025

The Times Higher Education (THE) **World University Rankings by Subject 2025** have been released, highlighting the leading institutions across various disciplines. Notably, the United States continues to dominate, securing top positions in nine out of eleven subjects. This trend underscores the nation's sustained excellence in higher education.

Engineering Excellence: Harvard Leads
In the Engineering category, Harvard University maintains its position at the top, a feat it achieved in 2024. The top ten universities in this field are predominantly from the U.S., reflecting the country's leadership in engineering education. The rankings are as follows:

1. **Harvard University**
2. **Stanford University**
3. **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**
4. **University of California, Berkeley**
5. **California Institute of Technology (Caltech)**
6. **Princeton University**
7. **Georgia Institute of Technology**
8. **University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)**
9. **Yale University**
10. **Carnegie Mellon University**

These institutions are recognized for their research excellence, innovation, and comprehensive engineering programs. The consistent performance of U.S. universities in this category highlights their significant contribution to global engineering education.

Subject-Specific Highlights
Arts and Humanities: MIT has ascended to the top position, overtaking Stanford University. This shift marks a significant change in the traditional hierarchy of leading institutions in this field.
Business and Economics: The University of Pennsylvania leads this category, reflecting its strong programs and research output in business and economics.
Computer Science: The University of Oxford has secured the top spot, indicating its growing influence and excellence in computer science education.
Education Studies: Stanford University leads this category, underscoring its commitment to educational research and innovation.
Law: Stanford University also tops the law rankings, reflecting its prestigious law program and research contributions.
Life Sciences: Harvard University leads this category, highlighting its extensive research and contributions to life sciences.
Medical and Health: Harvard University also tops this category, reflecting its excellence in medical research and education.
Physical Sciences: The California Institute of Technology (Caltech) leads this category, underscoring its strength in physical sciences research.
Psychology: Stanford University leads this category, reflecting its influential psychology programs and research.
Social Sciences: Harvard University leads this category, highlighting its comprehensive social sciences programs and research output.

REPORT

India's 4th Biennial Report to UNFCCC Submitted

India submitted its 4th Biennial Update Report (BUR-4) to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** on 30th December, 2024. This report builds upon the Third National Communication (TNC) and provides a comprehensive update on India's National Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory for the year 2020. It also includes critical information on national circumstances, mitigation actions, and the associated finance, technology, and capacity-building needs.

Union Minister for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, highlighted India's leadership in sustainablea growth, emphasizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to balancing economic progress with meaningful climate action.

Key Highlights of BUR-4 Report
1. GHG Inventory for 2020
- **Total GHG emissions in 2020,**
- **Without LULUCF** (Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry): 2,959 million tonnes of CO_2 equivalent (CO_2e).
- **With LULUCF:** 2,437 million tonnes of CO_2e.
- **Reduction In Emissions:** A 7.93% decrease in total GHG emissions compared to 2019.

2. Sectoral Contributions to Emissions

- **Energy sector:** 75.66% of total emissions.
- **Agriculture:** 13.72%.
- **Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU):** 8.06%.
- **Waste:** 2.56%.

3. Forest and Tree Cover Contributions

- Forests and tree cover sequestered 522 million tonnes of CO_2 in 2020, reducing 22% of total CO_2 emissions.
- India's forest and tree cover stands at 25.17% of the total geographical area.

Achievements in NDC's Targets

1. Decoupling Economic Growth Emissions

- Between 2005 and 2020, India's emission intensity of GDP reduced by 36%, exceeding its target of 33-35%.

2. Renewable Energy Progress

- By October 2024, the share of non-fossil sources in installed electricity generation capacity reached 46.52%.
- Renewable power capacity (excluding large hydro): 156.25 GW (4.5 times increase from 35 GW in March 2014).
- Total installed renewable capacity (including large hydro): 203.22 GW.

3. Additional Carbon Sink

- Between 2005 and 2021, India created an additional carbon sink of 2.29 billion tonnes of CO_2 equivalent through increased forest and tree cover.

Commitment to Climate Action

- Despite contributing minimally to historical and current global emissions, India remains proactive in combating climate change, aligning with the principles of equity and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), as stated in the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

Decline in Student Enrolment: UDISE+ Report 2023-24

The Ministry of Education's Unified District Information System for Education Plus **(UDISE+) report for 2023-24** reveals a significant decline in **student enrolment**, marking a notable shift from the stable figures observed in previous years.

What is UDSIE+?
UDISE+ (Unified District Information System for Education Plus) is an online data collection system developed by the Department of School Education & Literacy in 2018-19. It was introduced to replace the manual paper-based data collection process, with improvements in data capture, mapping, and verification.

Key Findings
Overall Enrolment Decline
The total student enrolment decreased to 24.8 crore in 2023-24, a drop of over one crore compared to the previous years. This marks a 6% decline from the 26.02 crore recorded in 2018-19.

Gender-wise Enrolment Trends
Boys: Enrolment fell from 13.53 crore in 2018-19 to 12.87 crore in 2023-24, a 4.87% decline.
Girls: Enrolment decreased from 12.49 crore in 2018-19 to 11.93 crore in 2023-24, a 4.48% decline.

Regional Variations
Bihar: Enrolment dropped from over 2.49 crore in 2018-19 to over 2.13 crore in 2023-24, a decrease of over 35.65 lakh students.
Uttar Pradesh: Enrolment fell from 4.44 crore in 2018-19 to 4.16 crore in 2023-24, a reduction of 28.26 lakh.
Maharashtra: Enrolment decreased from over 2.32 crore in 2018-19 to 2.13 crore in 2023-24, a decline of 18.55 lakh students.

School Infrastructure:
- Over 90% of schools have basic amenities like electricity and gender-specific toilets.
- 57.2% of schools have functional computers.
- 53.9% of schools have internet access.
- 52.3% of schools are equipped with ramps.

Implications

The substantial drop in enrolment raises concerns about the effectiveness of current educational policies and the need for targeted interventions. The data collected through UDISE+ will be crucial in informing future strategies aimed at improving student enrolment and retention rates across various states and demographics.

DEFENCE

- **Vitul Kumar**, a 1993-batch **IPS officer** from the **Uttar Pradesh cadre**, has been appointed as the **officiating Director General (DG)** of the **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** following the retirement of **Anish Dayal Singh** on **December 31, 2024**. Kumar, currently serving as **Special Director General**, will lead the CRPF during a crucial period, especially with challenges in **Chhattisgarh** and **Manipur**, ensuring continuity in leadership until a permanent successor is named.

- The **Abdali Missile** (Hatf 2) is a **short-range**, **road-mobile** ballistic missile developed by **Pakistan Space Research Commission** (SUPARCO). It has a **range** of **180-200 km**, a **payload** of high explosives or submunitions, and uses an **inertial guidance system**. The missile is transported on a **Transporter-Erector-Launcher** (TEL) vehicle, which elevates and launches the missile. Its **destructive power** is moderate, suitable for targeting **military bases**, **airfields**, and **critical infrastructure**.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi commissioned three significant naval assets—INS Surat, INS Nilgiri, and INS Vagsheer—at the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai. This event underscores India's commitment to enhancing its maritime capabilities and achieving self-reliance in defense production.

- **DRDO** unveiled the **HIMKAVACH** multi-layer clothing system, designed to improve military personnel's efficiency in extreme cold, tested between **+20°C to -60°C**. It offers **insulation**, **breathability**, and **moisture protection**, with outer layers repelling **water** and **wind**, and inner layers trapping **heat**.

- India successfully conducted field trials of the **Nag Mk 2 Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM)** at **Pokhran Field Firing Range**, Rajasthan. Developed by **DRDO**, the missile is part of India's **Integrated Missile Development Program** and enhances the **Indian Army's anti-tank warfare** capabilities. The **Nag Mk 2** features **infrared** and **fire-and-forget** technology, making it a **precise** and **versatile** weapon system.

- The Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), a Hyderabad-based facility under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has made significant strides in developing next-generation hypersonic technology. This advanced technology revolves around the **Supersonic Combustion Ramjet (Scramjet)**, a revolutionary propulsion system designed for hypersonic missiles. Recently, DRDL achieved a historic milestone by successfully conducting a **ground test of an Active Cooled Scramjet Combustor** for 120 seconds, marking a first for India. This accomplishment brings India closer to operationalizing hypersonic missiles capable of unprecedented speed and agility.

- India became an **Observer State** in the **Eurodrone programme**, led by **Airbus Defence and Space** under the **Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR)**. The programme, involving **Germany, France, Italy**, and **Spain**, focuses on developing a **Medium Altitude Long Endurance Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (MALE RPAS)** for **ISTAR**, maritime surveillance, and more. The **Eurodrone** is expected to enter service by **2030**, enhancing India's **defence collaboration** with European nations.

EXERCISE

EXERCISE NAME	VENUE / PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES	KEY NOTES
Surya Kiran	India-Nepal joint military exercise/ Saljhandi in Nepal	The **18th edition** of the **India-Nepal joint military exercise "Surya Kiran"** is underway at **Saljhandi, Nepal**, from **December 29, 2024, to January 13, 2025**. The exercise focuses on enhancing **interoperability** in **jungle warfare**, **counter-terrorism operations** in **mountainous terrains**, and **humanitarian assistance and disaster relief**. **Indian Army's Kumaon Regiment** and **Nepalese Army's Tara Dal Battalion** are participating.
La Perouse	Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok straits	The **Indian Navy's guided-missile destroyer**, **INS Mumbai,** is actively participating in the **fourth edition** of the multinational **exercise La Perouse,** which commenced on January 16, 2025. This exercise involves nine nations and is being conducted in the strategic waterways of the Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok straits, vital corridors for global maritime trade.

EXERCISE NAME	VENUE / PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES	KEY NOTES
Operation Sard Hawa'	Jaisalmer	Ahead of **Republic Day**, the **Border Security Force (BSF)** has heightened its vigilance along the India-Pakistan border at **Jaisalmer** to prevent any potential infiltration attempts. The BSF has initiated a special operation named **'Operation Sard Hawa'**, starting on **January 22**, aimed at foiling infiltration efforts by taking advantage of the reduced visibility caused by the dense **winter fog**. The operation will continue until **January 29**, with a focus on strengthening security along the border during this critical period.

TESTING

- India has successfully tested its first indigenous **micro-missile system, 'Bhargavastra,'** designed to counter swarm drone threats. This development marks a significant milestone in enhancing the nation's defense capabilities against emerging aerial threats.

DEAL & MoU's

- India's **defence exports** have surged to a record **Rs 21,000 crore**, up from Rs 2,000 crore a decade ago. **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** set a target of **Rs 50,000 crore** in defence exports by **2029**. This growth reflects India's expanding global presence in **defence production**, driven by **indigenous manufacturing** and **technological advancements**. Singh stressed the need to master **frontier technologies** to tackle challenges like **AI-based warfare**, **cyber-attacks**, and **space warfare**. (Click here to read article)
- India and the U.S. will collaborate on the **co-production** of **sonobuoys** to enhance the **Indian Navy's** submarine detection capabilities. The **final assembly** of U.S.-specification sonobuoys will take place in India, with production set to begin by **2027**. The partnership involves **Ultra Maritime** and **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)**, boosting India's **undersea warfare** capabilities.

ARMY, NAVY & AIR FORCE NEWS

- The **Indian Army** unveiled a statue of **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** at **Pangong Tso** in **Ladakh** on December 26, 2024, symbolizing India's strategic and cultural assertion near the **India-China border**. Installed by the **Fire and Fury Corps** at **14,300 feet**, the statue honors Shivaji's legacy of **valor** and **foresight**, while reinforcing India's position along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**. This move, part of a broader **infrastructure push**, aims to enhance **mobility**, **surveillance**, and **defensive readiness** but has sparked debates over **cultural relevance**, **consultation**, and **ecological concerns**.
- Raksha Mantri **Rajnath Singh** chaired a meeting with Ministry of Defence (MoD) Secretaries, designating **2025 as the 'Year of Reforms'**. This initiative aims to transform India's Armed Forces into a **technologically advanced, combat-ready force** for integrated **multi-domain operations**. The focus will be on **modernizing defence infrastructure**, fostering **efficiency**, **innovation**, and **collaboration** across stakeholders.
- On **January 1, 2025**, **Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra** took command of the **Indian Air Force's Western Air Command**, succeeding **Air Marshal Pankaj Mohan Sinha**. Commissioned in **1986** as a fighter pilot, Mishra has over **3,000 flying hours** and holds degrees from prestigious institutions like the **National Defence Academy** and **Royal College of Defence Studies**. His career includes key roles such as **Commanding Officer**, **Chief Test Pilot**, and **Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff**.
- India and the U.S. have partnered to co-produce **sonobuoys** for the **Indian Navy** to enhance **undersea domain awareness (UDA)**. The collaboration between **Ultra Marine (UM)** and **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)** aims to manufacture sonobuoys to **U.S. Navy standards** under the **'Make in India'** initiative. These sonobuoys will improve submarine detection in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**, strengthening maritime security and interoperability with allied nations like **Australia** and **Japan**.
- Indian Navy's **second Multi-Purpose Vessel (MPV)**, **'Utkarsh'**, was launched at **L&T Shipyard**, Kattupalli, Chennai.
- The event, attended by **Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh**, marks a significant step in **India's indigenous shipbuilding** and **self-reliance in defense manufacturing**. The vessel is designed for a **multi-dimensional role**, reflecting its name, meaning "Superior in Conduct."
- The **Indian Armed Forces** are conducting **Exercise Devil Strike** from **January 16 to 19, 2025**, under the leadership of the **Indian Army**. The exercise aims to boost **combat readiness** by simulating high-intensity combat operations, featuring **advanced strategies** and **innovative combat techniques**. It will test **synchronization** between various military branches, ensuring a coordinated response to external threats and strengthening **national security**.
- **Indian Navy** celebrated the **'Year of Naval Civilians'** at the **Dr DS Kothari Auditorium**, New Delhi. The event, attended by **Raksha Mantri**, honored the crucial contributions of **Naval Civilians** in supporting the Navy's operations. It showcased their **dedication**, **innovation**, and **service** through **exhibitions**, **performances**, and **awards**.

- **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh** flagged off **'SANJAY – The Battlefield Surveillance System (BSS)'** from the **South Block, New Delhi**. This indigenously developed system marks a major milestone in India's defense technology, strengthening the surveillance capabilities of the **Indian Army**. SANJAY is designed to enhance battlefield transparency, improve situational awareness, and optimize intelligence collection, thus transforming the battlefield in the era of modern warfare.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

SATELLITES LAUNCHES

- India's space journey takes a giant leap as ISRO successfully launched the SpaDeX mission to demonstrate space docking capabilities, marking a key milestone in space exploration. Launched from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC SHAR)** on December 30, 2024, the **PSLV-C60 rocket** carried two small spacecraft, SDX01 (Chaser) and SDX02 (Target), to low-Earth orbit. This mission sets the stage for autonomous docking and undocking technologies, positioning ISRO as the fourth global player in this field after Russia, the US, and China.
- **Blue Origin** is set to launch its **New Glenn rocket** on **January 10, 2025**, from **Cape Canaveral**, marking a key milestone in space exploration. The rocket, standing at **320 feet** tall, can carry up to **45 metric tons** to **low Earth orbit (LEO)**. Powered by **seven BE-4 engines**, the mission will deploy a **Blue Ring payload tug** and a **hoisting platform**. Key objectives include **design validation**, **payload deployment**, and earning **NSSL certification**. Notably, the rocket's **reusable first stage** will land on the **marine vessel "Jacklyn"**, promoting **sustainability**.
- **The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has successfully docked two satellites in space, marking **India as the fourth country to achieve this feat after the United States, Russia, and China.** The docking process, part of the SpaDeX (Space Docking Exercise) mission, demonstrates ISRO's capability to conduct autonomous satellite docking. This milestone is critical for future missions like Chandrayaan-4 and the planned Bharatiya Antariksh Station.
- **ISRO** achieved a major milestone in space docking with the **SpaDeX** mission, testing spacecraft **rendezvous**, **docking**, and **undocking** technologies. On **January 12, 2025**, ISRO successfully brought **SDX01 (Chaser)** and **SDX02 (Target)** within **3 meters** of each other. This positions India as the **4th country** to accomplish this complex maneuver, following the **USA**, **Russia**, and **China**.
- **ISRO** achieved a historic milestone with its **100th launch** from **Sriharikota**. The **GSLV-F15 rocket** successfully placed the **NVS-02** navigation satellite into **Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO)**, boosting India's **NavIC system** and enhancing its **self-reliance** in satellite navigation.

NATIONAL

- **IIT Madras** has partnered with the **Ministry of Agriculture** to launch **Project VISTAAR**, aimed at digitalizing India's **agricultural extension system**. The project will enhance access to **advisory services**, **innovative technologies**, and government schemes. It will also integrate solutions from over **12,000 agriculture-focused start-ups** through the **Centre for Research on Start-ups and Risk Financing**, improving **crop production**, **marketing**, and **supply chain management**.
- **Microsoft**, under **CEO Satya Nadella**, has partnered with the **Indian government** and businesses to boost **AI development** in India. Collaborating with the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** under the **IndiaAI Mission**, the focus is on fostering an inclusive AI ecosystem, promoting **ethical AI**, and investing **$3 billion** in **cloud and AI infrastructure** over two years. This initiative aims to accelerate AI adoption, skilling, and innovation across the country.
- IIT-Madras has commissioned **Asia's largest shallow wave basin** at its **Discovery campus** in **Thaiyur**, Chennai, developed using **indigenous technology**. The facility, in collaboration with **NTCPWC** and the **Ministry of Shipping**, simulates complex wave and current interactions. It supports **coastal engineering**, **port research**, and **climate change studies**, enabling testing of **coastal structures**, **floating solar plants**, and post-impact analyses.
- The **Western Ghats** has been identified as a key hotspot for threatened **freshwater species** in the **IUCN Red List** assessment. The study reveals that **one-quarter** of global freshwater species face high extinction risk, with the Western Ghats being crucial for **biodiversity conservation**. The assessment covers **23,496 species**, including **crustaceans**, **fishes**, and **odonates**, highlighting key **extinction risks** and **threats**.
- India's private space sector achieved a milestone with **Pixxel** and **Digantara** launching satellites aboard a **SpaceX rocket**. **Pixxel** deployed **hyperspectral imaging satellites** to monitor agriculture, defense, and climate, with **high-resolution imagery** for vegetation, water, and atmospheric conditions. Their first **"Firefly"** satellites offer six times the resolution of standard systems, and the company plans further expansion. **Digantara** launched the **SCOT satellite**, a **commercial tracker** for space objects as small as 5 cm in **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)**, addressing space debris and congestion. Both missions focus on **sustainability** and **space safety**.

- **ISRO** achieved a milestone in **space agriculture** by successfully germinating **black-eyed pea (lobia)** seeds aboard its **Compact Research Module for Orbital Plant Studies (CROPS)**. The **CROPS-1 Mission** demonstrated plant growth in a spacecraft's controlled environment, simulating Earth-like conditions. This breakthrough highlights the potential for sustainable **food sources** for **long-duration space missions**, addressing astronauts' **nutritional** and **psychological needs**.
- **Sarla Aviation**, a **Bengaluru-based aerospace startup**, has unveiled **'Shunya,' India's first electric vertical** take-off and landing **(eVTOL) air taxi prototype.** This marks a significant advancement in urban air mobility, aiming to alleviate traffic congestion and pollution in Indian cities.
- **DeepSeek** is a leading **AI company** specializing in **machine learning (ML)**, **natural language processing (NLP)**, and **data analytics** to develop intelligent solutions for various industries. By combining advanced AI technologies with real-world problem-solving, DeepSeek aims to create **scalable**, **efficient**, and **ethical AI solutions** to benefit businesses, governments, and individuals.
- India is set to launch its first **human-operated underwater submersible** as part of the **Deep Ocean Mission**. Initially designed for depths of **500 meters**, it aims to reach **6,000 meters** by next year, marking a significant step in **deep-sea exploration**, **resource identification**, and advancing **marine and space technologies**.
- Recent findings show the **Magnetic North Pole** is shifting rapidly toward **Siberia** and **Russia**, impacting navigation, animal migration, and communication systems. Earth's **geomagnetic field** is dynamic, caused by molten metals in the outer core. The **Magnetic North Pole** was first located in 1831 by James Clark Ross and has been moving ever since.
- **BIMTECH** has launched **BIMCOIN**, a **blockchain-powered digital currency** for secure and efficient transactions on its campus. This makes BIMTECH the first business school in India to adopt such technology, following **IIT Madras**. The initiative marks a forward-thinking approach to integrating **blockchain technology** into the academic setting.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV)**, discovered in **2001**, causes respiratory infections similar to **RSV**. It affects **children**, the **elderly**, and **immunocompromised individuals**. Symptoms include **cough**, **fever**, **runny nose**, and **shortness of breath**. HMPV spreads via **respiratory droplets** and can cause **bronchitis** or **pneumonia** in severe cases. **No specific antiviral treatment** or **vaccine** is available. Recently, **India** reported cases in **Bengaluru**, and **China** saw a rise in cases. **Preventive measures** include **handwashing**, wearing **masks**, and avoiding close contact.
- A fragment of the **original Wright Flyer fabric** from the **1903 Kitty Hawk flight** will be unveiled at the **Frontiers of Flight Museum**, Dallas, on **October 2, 2025**. Donated by **Neil Armstrong's family**, this piece was carried by Armstrong during the **Apollo 11 mission** in 1969, symbolizing the link between early aviation and space exploration. The exhibit will also feature an authentic **Apollo 11 patch**.
- **Blue Origin** successfully launched its **New Glenn** rocket on its maiden test flight, named after **John Glenn**, the first American to orbit Earth. The **320-foot rocket** carried a **prototype satellite** into orbit during a **six-hour mission**, with the second stage reaching a **high orbit** to minimize space debris. This milestone marks Blue Origin's entry into competitive **space exploration** alongside **SpaceX** and **NASA**.
- **Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)**, also called **"Zombie Deer Disease"**, is spreading among wildlife like **deer**, **moose**, and **elk**. While concerns about its transmission to humans have arisen, especially in **hunters** consuming infected meat, the evidence linking CWD to **Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD)** in humans remains inconclusive. Further research is needed to assess the actual risk of human transmission.
- The **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** has discovered a new species of **Indo-Burmese pangolin**, **Manis indoburmanica**, which diverged from the **Chinese pangolin** around **3.4 million years ago**. Using advanced **genetic tools** to analyze mitochondrial genomes, this groundbreaking find sheds light on the species' unique evolutionary history and underscores its importance for **pangolin conservation** and **biodiversity** in the Indo-Burma region, a global biodiversity hotspot.
- **Elon Musk's X** (formerly Twitter) is set to launch **X Money**, a **digital wallet** powered by **Visa**, as part of its strategy to evolve into a **"super app"**. This move aims to integrate **payment services** with its existing features, competing with apps like **WeChat**, offering everything from **messaging** to **financial transactions**.
- **Alibaba** launched a new **AI model**, claiming it outperforms **DeepSeek**, **ChatGPT**, and **Llama** in **natural language processing**. The model boasts improved **natural language understanding**, **context-aware responses**, and better performance in handling **complex queries**. With increased **efficiency**, **scalability**, and **real-time response capabilities**, Alibaba aims to position itself as a strong competitor in the **AI landscape**.
- **Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla** will become the first **Indian astronaut** to pilot a space mission to the **International Space Station (ISS)** as part of **Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4)**, a private spaceflight scheduled for spring 2025. The mission, in collaboration with **NASA**, will see astronauts conduct research, educational outreach, and commercial activities aboard the **SpaceX Dragon capsule**. This milestone continues India's **space exploration journey**, following Rakesh Sharma's historic flight.

- **Sunita Williams**, an Indian-origin astronaut, has set a new record for the **longest spacewalking time by a woman**, surpassing **Peggy Whitson's** previous record. Williams now has **62 hours and 6 minutes** of spacewalking time across **nine spacewalks**. This milestone was achieved during a **maintenance spacewalk** on the **International Space Station (ISS)** alongside astronaut **Butch Wilmore**, as they remain stranded on the ISS since June 2024 due to technical issues with **Boeing's Starliner spacecraft**.

SPORTS

National Sports Awards 2024 Announced

The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports has announced the prestigious **National Sports Awards for 2024,** recognizing outstanding sportspersons, coaches, universities, and entities for their exemplary contributions to sports. The awardees will receive their honors from the **President of India at Rashtrapati Bhavan on January 17, 2025.** These awards aim to motivate and acknowledge the dedication, performance, and progress made by individuals and institutions in the realm of sports.

National Sports Awards 2024 Recipients

1. Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award 2024
Given For: Awarded for the most outstanding performance in sports over the past four years.

Sr. No	Name of Recipient	Discipline
1	Shri Gukesh D	(Chess)
2	Shri Harmanpreet Singh	(Hockey)
3	Shri Praveen Kumar	(Para-Athletics)
4	Ms. Manu Bhaker	(Shooting)

2. Arjuna Awards for Outstanding Performance in Sports 2024
Given For: Awarded for excellence in sports and showing leadership, sportsmanship, and discipline.

Sr. No	Name of Recipient	Discipline
1	Ms. Jyothi Yarraji	(Athletics)
2	Ms. Annu Rani	(Athletic)
3	Ms. Nitu	(Boxing)
4	Ms. Saweety	(Boxing)
5	Ms. Vantika Agrawal	(Chess)
6	Ms. Salima Tete	(Hockey)
7	Shri Abhishek	(Hockey)
8	Shri Sanjay	(Hockey)
9	Shri Jarmanpreet Singh	(Hockey)
10	Shri Sukhjeet Singh	(Hockey)
11	Shri Rakesh Kumar	(Para-Archery)
12	Ms. Preeti Pal	(Para-Athletics)
13	Ms. Jeevanji Deepthi	(Para-Athletics)
14	Shri Ajeet Singh	(Para-Athletics)
15	Shri Sachin Sarjerao Khilari	(Para-Athletics)
16	Shri Dharambir	(Para-Athletics)
17	Shri Pranav Soorma	(Para-Athletics)
18	Shri H Hokato Sema	(Para-Athletics)
19	Ms. Simran	(Para-Athletics)
20	Shri Navdeep	(Para-Athletics)

Sr. No	Name of Recipient	Discipline
21	Shri Nitesh Kumar	(Para-Badminton)
22	Ms. Thulasimathi Murugesan	(Para-Badminton)
23	Ms. Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan	(Para-Badminton)
24	Shri Sajan Prakash	(Swimming)
25	Shri Aman	(Wrestling)
26	Ms. Manisha Ramadass	(Para-Badminton)
27	Shri Kapil Parmar	(Para-Judo)
28	Ms. Mona Agarwal	(Para-Shooting)
29	Ms. Rubina Francis	(Para-Shooting)
30	Shri Swapnil Suresh Kusale	(Shooting)
31	Shri Sarabjot Singh	(Shooting)
32	Shri Abhay Singh	(Squash)

3. Arjuna Awards (Lifetime) for Outstanding Performance in Sports 2024

Given For: Awarded to retired sportspersons who continue to contribute to the promotion of sports.

Sr. No	Name of Recipient	Discipline
1	Shri Sucha Singh	(Athletics)
2	Shri Murlikant Rajaram Petkar	(Para-Swimming)

4. Dronacharya Award for Outstanding Coaches in Sports and Games 2024

Given For: Awarded for consistent excellence in coaching and enabling athletes to excel in international events.

Regular Category

Sr. No	Name of Recipient	Discipline
1	Shri Subhash Rana	(Para-Shooting)
2	Ms. Deepali Deshpande	(Shooting)
3	Shri Sandeep Sangwan	(Hockey)

Lifetime Category

Sr. No	Name of Recipient	Discipline
1	Shri S Muralidharan	(Badminton)
2	Shri Armando Agnelo Colaco	(Football)

5. Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar

Given For: Awarded to entities that have made significant contributions to the promotion of sports in the country.

Sr. No	Name of the Entity
1	Physical Education Foundation of India

6. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2024

Given For: Awarded to the top-performing university in the Khelo India University Games.

Sr. No	Position	Name of University
1	Overall Winner University	Chandigarh University
2	1st Runner Up University	Lovely Professional University, (PB)
3	2nd Runner Up University	Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

CRICKET

- **Jasprit Bumrah** became the **fastest Indian bowler** to reach **200 wickets** in Test cricket during the **Border-Gavaskar Trophy** at the **MCG** in Melbourne, achieving the milestone in just **44 Tests**, surpassing **Mohammed Shami**. His performance in the **Boxing Day Test**, including **four wickets** in the first innings, solidified his position among the **fastest bowlers** globally to 200 Test wickets.
- The **Santosh Trophy 2024** final witnessed **West Bengal** clinching their record **33rd title** with a **1-0 victory** over **Kerala** at **Gachibowli Stadium**, thanks to **Robi Hansda's** decisive goal in **added time**, making him the **tournament's top scorer** with **12 goals**.
- **Devajit Saikia**, former **Assam cricketer**, become the new **BCCI secretary**, while **Prabhtej Singh Bhatia** from **CSCS** take over as **treasurer**. Both are set to be **elected unopposed** at the **BCCI Special General Meeting (SGM)** on **January 12, 2025**, in **Mumbai**.
- **Martin Guptill**, New Zealand's prolific opener, retired after a **14-year career**. He scored **14,877 runs** across formats, including **7,346 runs** in ODIs, ranking third on New Zealand's all-time list. His record **237*** in the 2015 **World Cup** remains the highest individual score. Guptill also led New Zealand in **T20Is** with **3,531 runs** and scored **2,586 runs** in **Test matches**, with three centuries.
- **Shreyas Iyer** has been appointed **captain** of **Punjab Kings** for the **IPL 2025** season. The announcement was made during a segment on **'Bigg Boss'**, where Iyer was joined by teammates **Yuzvendra Chahal** and **Shashank Singh**.
- **Jasprit Bumrah** (India) and **Annabel Sutherland** (Australia) were awarded the **ICC Men's** and **Women's Players of the Month** titles, recognizing their exceptional performances in international cricket.
- **Smriti Mandhana** set a record for the **fastest century by an Indian** in women's ODIs during the 3rd ODI against **Ireland Women** at **Rajkot**. Leading in **Harmanpreet Kaur**'s absence, Mandhana's performance, along with a strong partnership with **Pratika Rawal**, bolstered India's dominant display in the series.
- In a remarkable achievement, **Arshdeep Singh** has overtaken **Yuzvendra Chahal** to become **India's highest wicket-taker in T20 Internationals.** This milestone was reached during the first T20I against England on January 22, 2025, at Eden Gardens in Kolkata.
- The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) has introduced a new **World Cricket Connects advisory board**, which will replace the club's previous **World Cricket Committee**. In a significant development for global cricket, **Jay Shah**, the current **ICC Chair** and former **Secretary of the BCCI**, has been named as one of the **13 founding members** of the newly formed advisory board.
- Former Australian cricket captain **Michael Clarke** has been inducted into the prestigious **Australian Cricket Hall of Fame**, becoming the 64th cricketer to receive this remarkable honor. The announcement, which has been widely celebrated, was made at the iconic **Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG)**, a venue that holds significant sentimental value in Clarke's illustrious career. The induction acknowledges Clarke's exceptional contributions to Australian cricket, both as a player and as a leader.
- Australia won the **ICC Women's Championship** for the third consecutive time, securing 39 points from 24 matches. The championship, introduced in 2014, acts as a pathway to the **ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025**. **Alyssa Healy** received the trophy in Melbourne, with **India**, **England**, **South Africa**, **Sri Lanka**, and **New Zealand** also qualifying for the 2025 World Cup. The remaining teams will compete in a **Qualifier tournament**.
- On **January 29**, **Steve Smith** became the **15th player** and **fourth Australian** to score **10,000 runs** in **Test cricket** during the first Test against **Sri Lanka** in **Galle**. This milestone cements his legacy as one of the **all-time greats**, showcasing his resilience, determination, and unique batting style.
- **Dinesh Karthik** has surpassed **MS Dhoni** to become the **highest run-scoring Indian wicket-keeper** in **T20 cricket**. With a **21-run** knock in a recent match, Karthik's total T20 runs now stand at **7,451** in **361 innings** (409 matches), solidifying his place as one of the most **consistent** and **impactful wicket-keeper batters** in the shortest format.
- **Geoff Allardice**, **CEO of the International Cricket Council (ICC)**, resigned just **21 days before the ICC Champions Trophy 2025** in **Pakistan**. His decision reportedly stemmed from his inability to assess the **Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB)**'s preparedness for the tournament, playing a key role in his resignation.

BADMINTON & TENNIS

India Open 2025: Viktor Axelsen and An Se-young Dominate Singles Titles

India Open 2025 Winners List: Final Results and Scores

Category	Winners	Runners-up
Men's Singles	Viktor Axelsen (DEN)	Lee Cheuk Yiu (HKG)
Women's Singles	An Se-young (KOR)	Pornpawee Chochuwong (THA)
Men's Doubles	Goh Sze Fei / Nur Izzuddin (MAS)	Kim Won-ho / Seo Seung-jae (KOR)
Women's Doubles	Arisa Igarashi / Ayaka Sakuramoto (JPN)	Kim Hye-jeong / Kong Hee-yong (KOR)
Mixed Doubles	Jiang Zhenbang / Wei Yaxin (CHN)	Thom Gicquel / Delphine Delrue (FRA)

- **Jannik Sinner** defended his **Australian Open** title with a dominant 6-3, 7-6(4), 6-3 victory over **Alexander Zverev**, becoming the youngest player since **Jim Courier** to win back-to-back titles at Melbourne Park. This historic win marks the first **Men's Final** between the **World No. 1** and **No. 2** since **2019**, and Sinner's straight-set victory highlights his growing dominance in **men's tennis**.

ATHLETIC & FOOTBALL

- **Lionel Messi**, captain of **Argentina's football team**, was awarded the **United States Presidential Medal of Freedom**, the highest civilian honor. Messi is the second footballer ever to receive this recognition, after **Megan Rapinoe** in 2022. He could not attend the White House ceremony due to prior commitments.
- **Anju Bobby George**, a **2003 World Championships bronze medalist**, was appointed **Chairperson** of the **Athletics Federation of India (AFI) Athletes Commission**. The commission includes prominent retired athletes, with **Neeraj Chopra**, a **two-time Olympic medalist**, as a key male member. It reflects progress towards **gender parity**, with **six women** out of **nine members**.

OTHER SPORTS NEWS

- **Koneru Humpy**, at **37**, won her **second Women's World Rapid Chess Championship** in New York, marking a triumphant return after contemplating retirement. Her journey highlights **resilience**, **passion for chess**, and the ability to balance **motherhood**, **family support**, and a challenging chess career.
- **Lakshya Sen**, India's badminton star, secured **third place** at the **inaugural King Cup International Badminton Open** in **Bangkok, Thailand**. The **23-year-old** from Almora defeated **Alex Lanier** in the bronze-medal playoff, showcasing his **consistency** and **resilience** despite a narrow loss in the semifinals.
- **Kerala** won their **first-ever Senior National Men's Handball Championship** title, defeating **Chandigarh** 34-31 in a thrilling final. The team's success was marked by standout performances, with **Devendar** named the **Best Player** and **Rahul** awarded **Best Goalkeeper** for his exceptional efforts.
- **Haryana Steelers** won their **first-ever Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) title** by defeating **Patna Pirates** 32-23 in the final at the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex, Pune. The victory was driven by strong performances from key players, with solid offensive and defensive strategies maintaining their control throughout the match.
- **Hemanth Muddappa**, also known as the "Drag King" of Indian motorsport, won a **triple crown** at the final round of the **MMSC FMSCI Indian National Motorcycle Drag Racing Championship** at the **Madras International Circuit**. This victory brought his total **National titles** to **15**, solidifying his status as India's most decorated motorsport athlete, despite competing with a **fractured thumb** from a previous crash.
- The **World Blitz Championship** title was controversially shared by **Magnus Carlsen** and **Ian Nepomniachtchi** at the **FIDE Rapid and Blitz Championship** in New York, sparking outrage in the **chess world**. A video surfaced showing the players possibly **strategizing** to pressure **FIDE** into allowing the co-win, leading to accusations of **match-fixing** and **manipulation** of tournament rules. Prominent **grandmasters** and analysts have strongly criticized the decision.
- The inaugural **Kho Kho World Cup** began on **January 13, 2025**, at the **Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium** in **New Delhi**, with **23 nations** participating. The opening ceremony featured **cultural performances** and the unveiling of the **World Cup trophy**, marking a significant step in promoting **Kho Kho**, an indigenous Indian sport, on the international stage.
- Indian grandmaster **Arjun Erigaisi** triumphed in **Titled Tuesday** by defeating **World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen** and **World No. 2 Fabiano Caruana**. Erigaisi scored **10 points** out of **11 rounds**, showcasing his dominance in the competition.
- **PV Sindhu**, the two-time **Olympic medallist**, has entered a multi-year partnership with **PUMA India**, marking the brand's official entry into the **badminton** domain. This collaboration aims to tap into the sport's growing popularity, with a fan base of **57 million** in India. PUMA seeks to strengthen its presence in India's expanding **sports market**, while Sindhu continues to inspire millions with her achievements.
- **Novak Djokovic** broke a tie with **Roger Federer** for the most **Grand Slam matches played** in tennis history, achieving his **430th match** during the second round of the **Australian Open**. Djokovic won a challenging match against **Jaime Faria**, further solidifying his legacy as one of tennis' greatest players.
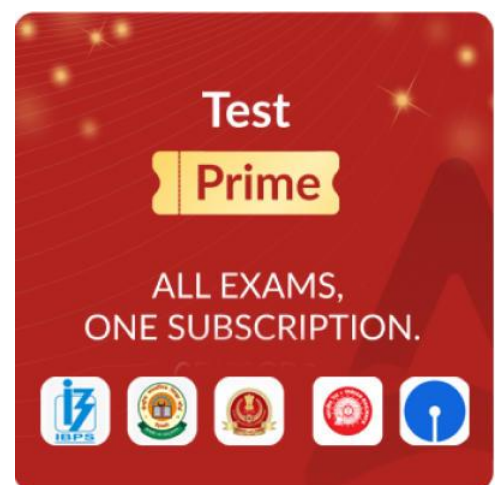
- India's ambition to host the **2036 Olympics** has taken a significant step forward, as officials from the **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** and experts from diverse fields gather in Gujarat for a pivotal four-day event. This meeting, organized in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, focuses on developing strategies and innovative economic models to build sustainable sports infrastructure, essential for positioning India as a strong contender for hosting the prestigious global event.
- The **Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025** were inaugurated amidst great enthusiasm at the iconic **NDS Stadium** in **Leh, Ladakh**, marking the commencement of the fifth edition of this national-level winter sports event. The first phase, hosted by the **Union Territory of Ladakh**, will run from **January 23 to January 27, 2025**, while the second phase, focusing on snow games, will be held in the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir** from **February 22 to February 25, 2025**.
- **Indian Grandmaster Iniyan Panneerselvam** won the **9th Johor International Open Chess Tournament** in **Malaysia**, finishing 1.5 points ahead of his closest rival. The **22-year-old** from **Erode, Tamil Nadu** also triumphed at the **Chennai Open** earlier in January, strengthening his reputation as a rising star in **chess**.
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- The **Odisha Warriors**, led by **Janneke Schopman**, won the inaugural **Women's Hockey India League (HIL)** title, defeating **Soorma Hockey Club** 2-1 in a thrilling final. The match, held at **Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Stadium** in Ranchi, marked a redemption for Schopman. The Warriors' **resilience** and **tactical brilliance**, especially from **Ruturaj Dadaso Pisal**, secured their historic win.
- The **2025 Senior National Table Tennis Championships** concluded on **January 26** in **Surat**, with **Manush Shah** and **Diya Chitale** winning the **men's** and **women's singles** titles. Both champions represented the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, delivering exceptional performances in their respective finals.
- The **23rd National Para Athletics Championship 2025** unveiled its **official logo** and **mascot** on **January 16, 2025**. The **mascot** symbolizes the **determination** and **resilience** of para athletes, while the **logo** reflects the dynamic and inclusive nature of the event. Set in **Tamil Nadu**, the championship emphasizes **empowerment**, **equality**, and **inclusivity** in para sports.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

Book Name	Author	Key Notes
Jammu Kashmir & Ladakh Through the Ages: A Visual Narrative of Continuities and Linkages	Indian Council of Historical Research	The book, published by National Book Trust, documents India's geo-cultural unity from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, counters myths of disunity, and highlights Kashmir's integral role in India's history for over 8,000 years.
Parliament: Powers, Functions & Privileges; A Comparative Constitutional Perspective	Dr. K.S. Chauhan	Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar launched Dr. K.S. Chauhan's book, "Parliament: Powers, Functions & Privileges; A Comparative Constitutional Perspective". The book explores Parliament's role, functions, privileges, and its influence on democratic accountability. Dhankhar praised the author for his in-depth analysis of Parliament's critical role in maintaining the country's democratic fabric.
The World After Gaza	Pankaj Mishra	Pankaj Mishra's latest book, The World After Gaza, offers a profound examination of the ongoing war in the Palestinian Gaza Strip, which he views as a devastating blow to human rights and morality.
How India Scaled Mt G20: The Inside Story of the G20 Presidency" (Rupa Publications).	Amitabh Kant	Amitabh Kant, India's G20 Sherpa, has unveiled the behind-the-scenes journey of India's G20 Presidency in his book "How India Scaled Mt G20: The Inside Story of the G20 Presidency" (Rupa Publications).

Book Name	Author	Key Notes
Soumitra Chatterjee and His World	**Soumitra Chatterjee**	His new biography, Soumitra Chatterjee and His World by Sanghamitra Chakraborty, explores his multifaceted life through journals, letters, and conversations, offering a deep look into his profound impact on Indian cinema and Bengal's cultural landscape.
launch of Indian Renaissance: The Modi Decade	**Dr. Aishwarya Pandit**	The launch of Indian Renaissance: The Modi Decade, edited by Dr. Aishwarya Pandit, took place at the NDMC Convention Center, New Delhi. Published by Westland Non-Fiction, the book examines India's transformation under Prime Minister Narendra Modi from 2014 to 2024, with contributions from 27 authors. The event was graced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah as the Chief Guest and Manohar Lal Khattar, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, as the Guest of Honour.

OBITUARY

NATIONAL

S.No	PERSON NAME	FIELD	BORN PLACE	KEY NOTES
1	**Kattungal Subrahmanyan Manilal**	**Botany**	**Thrissur, Kerala**	Renowned botanist; Padma Shri awardee; translated *Hortus Malabaricus*; contributed significantly to India's botanical heritage; passed away on January 1, 2025.
2	**Dr. Rajagopala Chidambaram**	**Key figure in India's nuclear program**		He played a crucial role in India's nuclear journey, from the 1974 peaceful nuclear test to Operation Shakti in 1998, establishing India as a nuclear power. A leader in condensed matter physics, materials science, energy security, and advanced technologies like supercomputing and nanotechnology, he served as Principal Scientific Advisor from 2002 to 2018, shaping India's scientific development.
3	**Pritish Nandy**	**poet, journalist, filmmaker, and former Rajya Sabha member**		Born in 1951 in Bhagalpur, Bihar, Nandy authored 40+ poetry books and translated works in multiple languages. His poem "Calcutta If You Must Exile Me" is a modern Indian literature classic. Nandy was also a prominent journalist, serving as Publishing Director of The Times of India and editor of The Illustrated Weekly, Filmfare, and The Independent.
4	**H Lakshmanan**	**former Executive Director of Sundaram-Clayton**		A key figure in the TVS Group for nearly seven decades, Lakshmanan started as a typist and rose to become a trusted confidant of the TVS family. He was known for his exceptional management skills, strategic vision, and dedication to the company's growth and success.
5	**P. Jayachandran**	**legendary playback singer**		P. Jayachandran, the legendary playback singer known as "Bhava Gayakan," passed away at 80 after a prolonged illness. With over 16,000 songs in Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi, his soulful voice captured emotions like love, devotion, and longing.
6	**Wing Commander (Retd) Dr. K. Ramchand**	**Aerospace engineer and former director of the Centre for Airborne Systems (CABS)**		Wing Commander (Retd) Dr. K. Ramchand, a distinguished aerospace engineer and former director of the Centre for Airborne Systems (CABS) under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), passed away on January 17, 2025, at the age of 82. His pioneering contributions to India's aerospace sector have left an indelible mark.

S.No	PERSON NAME	FIELD	BORN PLACE	KEY NOTES
7	Narendra Chapalgaonkar	Retired Bombay High Court judge		Known for his significant contributions to literature, law, and social thought, Chapalgaonkar leaves a lasting legacy in these fields.
8	Latika Katt	Indian sculptor		Latika Katt, a celebrated Indian sculptor, passed away at 76. Known for her larger-than-life sculptures and busts of public figures, she worked with mediums like terracotta, papier-mâché, stone, and bronze.
9	Greg Bell	Olympic gold medallist		**Greg Bell**, the oldest living **Olympic gold medallist** in athletics, passed away on **January 25, 2025**, at 94. Known for his **long jump** achievements, Bell also made significant contributions to **dentistry**. His legacy of **resilience**, **athletic success**, and professional accomplishments continues to inspire future generations.

INTERNATIONAL

S.No	PERSON NAME	FIELD	BORN PLACE	KEY NOTES
1	Jimmy Carter	Politics	Plains, Georgia	39th President of the United States; known for humanitarian work, the Camp David Accords; won Nobel Peace Prize in 2002; passed away at 100.
2.	Costas Simitis	former Greece's Prime Minister		He played a key role in **Greece's integration into the eurozone in 2001. Leading PASOK from 1996, he secured electoral wins in 1996 and 2000, succeeding Andreas Papandreou.
3.	Shigemi Fukahori	Nagasaki atomic bombing survivor		At 14, he witnessed the bombing's devastation on August 9, 1945, which killed tens of thousands, including his family. Fukahori dedicated his life to advocating for peace and nuclear disarmament, sharing his experiences globally to prevent future nuclear tragedies.
4	Denis Law	legendary Scottish footballer		Known as "The King" and "The Lawman", Law made a lasting impact with his goal-scoring prowess and charismatic presence, notably with Manchester United and the Scotland national team. His illustrious career is remembered for its significant contributions to both clubs.
	David Lynch	Renowned Hollywood director and writer,		David Lynch, the renowned Hollywood director and writer, passed away at 78. A visionary of modern cinema, Lynch revolutionized film with his surreal style, exploring the darker aspects of human nature and the subconscious.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day/Observance	Theme/Description
January 1	Global Family Day	• **Global Family Day**, observed on **January 1**, promotes **peace**, **unity**, and the importance of **families** in fostering joy and stability. • The day emphasizes the link between **world peace**, **communities**, and strengthening **families**. It encourages a global effort to address conflicts and promote **harmony**.
January 4	World Braille Day	• **World Braille Day** is observed on **January 4** to honor the birth anniversary of **Louis Braille**, the inventor of the **Braille system**. • Recognized by the **UN General Assembly** in 2018, the day highlights **Braille's importance** for literacy, **independence**, and **inclusivity** for the **visually impaired**. • It aims to raise awareness about their rights and needs, emphasizing **accessibility** in creating an inclusive society.

Date	Day/Observance	Theme/Description
January 5	National Bird Day	• **National Bird Day**, celebrated annually on **January 5**, aims to raise **awareness about bird conservation** and their **ecological importance**.
January 6	World Day of War Orphans	• **World Day of War Orphans** (January 6) raises awareness about children who lose their parents due to **war** and **violence**. • The 2025 observance focuses on the struggles of these children, highlighting issues like **displacement**, **poverty**, and **climate change**. It calls for **global action** to provide care, **education**, and **protection** for war orphans.
January 8	Earth's Rotation Day	• **Earth's Rotation Day** on **January 8** honors **Léon Foucault's 1851 experiment** proving Earth's rotation using a **pendulum**. • This landmark discovery revolutionized scientific understanding. The day highlights **scientific curiosity**, especially among children.
January 10	World Hindi Day	• **World Hindi Day** is celebrated on **January 10** to promote Hindi as a widely spoken global language. • Recognized for its rich history and cultural significance, Hindi has evolved over centuries, connecting millions of people worldwide. • **Embassies and cultural centers** organize events like workshops and seminars to celebrate its role in linguistic and international exchanges. • The **2025 theme** is "A **Global Voice of Unity and Cultural Pride**," emphasizing Hindi's role in **global unity** and **cultural exchange**.
January 12	National Youth Day	• **National Youth Day** is celebrated on **January 12** to honor the birth anniversary of **Swami Vivekananda**, recognizing his contributions to **spiritual growth**, **national integration**, and **youth empowerment**. • Declared in **1984** by the **Government of India**, the day encourages youth to follow his ideals for a **progressive**, **united**, and **self-reliant India**.
January 14	Armed Forces Veterans' Day	• **Armed Forces Veterans' Day**, observed annually on **January 14**, honors the sacrifices and service of India's armed forces veterans. • It fosters solidarity with the families of the bravehearts who served the nation and highlights the connection between veterans and current personnel. The day also focuses on addressing the welfare and concerns of veterans.
January 15	Indian Army Day	• **Indian Army Day**, celebrated on **January 15** every year, honors the foundation of the **Indian Army** and the transfer of power to Indian leadership. • It pays tribute to the **valor** and **sacrifices** of soldiers, promoting **patriotism** and **unity**.
January 23	Parakram Diwas	• **Parakram Diwas**, or the "**Day of Valor**," is celebrated **every year on January 23** to honor the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, one of Inida's greatest freedom fighters. • This day is a tribute to his courage, determination and significant contributions to India's independence struggle. Let's understand the history, significance and legacy of this important day.
January 24	National Girl Child Day	• **National Girl Child Day 2025** is observed annually in India on **January 24** to highlight the issues faced by girls in our nation and to advocate for their rights and welfare.
January 24	International Day of Education	• This year, the seventh International Day of Education is celebrated with the theme: '**AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation.**'
January 25	National Tourism Day	• The theme for this year's National Tourism Day is "**Tourism for Inclusive Growth**".
January 25	National Voters' Day	• This year's theme, "**Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure**," continues the emphasis on participatory democracy.
26 January	International Day of Clean Energy	• The **International Day of Clean Energy** on **26 January** highlights the need for a **just and inclusive transition to clean energy**. • It aims to raise awareness about **socio-economic inequalities** and the need to **protect the planet** through **clean energy** solutions, addressing the dual challenge of ensuring **no one is left behind** while mitigating **climate change**.

Date	Day/Observance	Theme/Description
January 26	International Customs Day	• **International Customs Day** on **January 26** honors the vital role of **customs officials** in facilitating trade, ensuring **security**, and preventing **illegal trade**. • Celebrated by the **World Customs Organisation (WCO)**, the 2025 theme is "**Customs Delivering on its Commitment to Efficiency, Security, and Prosperity.**" • The day traces its origins to the **Customs Cooperation Council (CCC)**, founded in 1952, to enhance global **customs efficiency**.
January 26	World Leprosy Day 2025	• **World Leprosy Day 2025** will be observed on **January 26**, with the theme **"Unite. Act. Eliminate."**. • The day focuses on raising awareness about **leprosy (Hansen's disease)**, reducing **stigma**, promoting **early diagnosis** and **treatment**, and encouraging **compassion** and **inclusion**. It calls for global collaboration to combat and aim for the **eradication** of leprosy.
27 January	International Day of Commemoration for Holocaust victims	• The **United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/7** established **27 January** as the **International Day of Commemoration** for Holocaust victims. • In **2025**, marking 80 years since the end of **World War II** and the **Holocaust**, the theme for the year is "**Holocaust remembrance and education for dignity and human rights.**" • This highlights the importance of remembering the **Holocaust** to promote **dignity**, **human rights**, and **collective responsibility**.
January 27	National Geographic Day	• **National Geographic Day** on **January 27** honors the founding of the **National Geographic Society**, known for its contributions to **science**, **exploration**, and **environmental conservation**. • The day celebrates the society's impact on understanding **Earth**, **nature**, and **humanity**, while inspiring global **education**, **exploration**, and **environmental awareness**.
January 29	Indian Newspaper Day	• Indian Newspaper Day, observed on January 29, commemorates the introduction of the first newspaper in pre-Independence India. • The day highlights the **role of newspapers** in shaping India's **socio-political landscape** and encourages the habit of **daily reading** to stay informed on **current affairs**.
January 30th	World Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Day	• **World Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Day** is observed annually on **January 30th**, marking milestones like the **WHO NTDs roadmap** and the **2012 London Declaration**. • The theme for this year, "**Unite, Act, and Eliminate NTDs**", calls for collective action and progress toward eliminating NTDs, with a focus on **sustainable financing** and **global collaboration**, inspired by **President Embaló of Guinea-Bissau**.

ENVIRONMENT

Discovery	Details
Earth Breaches 1.5°C Limit for the First Time in 2024	• In a landmark event for climate change, **2024 became the first year in recorded history when the mean global temperature exceeded the critical 1.5°C threshold above pre-industrial levels**, as reported by the **Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S)**. • This breach marks a dangerous trajectory for global warming, bringing humanity closer to a point of no return. Climate experts warn that if this trend continues without drastic emission cuts, global temperatures could exceed the 2°C limit by 2050, with devastating consequences for ecosystems, economies, and human livelihoods.
Global Water Cycle Disruption in 2024 Caused Wayanad Landslides	• **The 2024 Global Water Monitor Report** highlights significant **disruptions in the global water cycle** due to climate change, which led to devastating water-related disasters worldwide. These events caused over 8,700 deaths, displaced 40 million people, and resulted in economic losses exceeding $550 billion.

Discovery	Details
	• The report emphasizes how extreme weather events, such as landslides, floods, and droughts, are becoming more frequent and intense due to global warming, affecting ecosystems, livelihoods, and infrastructure. Among the major events highlighted, the Wayanad landslides in India stood out as a particularly destructive disaster.
2025 Southern California Winter Wildfires	• In January 2025, **Southern California** experienced **a severe wildfire outbreak that devastated large portions of Los Angeles**, including celebrity homes and neighborhoods like Hollywood Hills. • Wildfires such as the Palisades fire, Eaton fire, Sunset, Hurst, and Lidia fires led to significant destruction, killing 10 people, displacing 130,000 individuals, and delaying the Oscars nominations. • Despite winter traditionally being an off-season for wildfires, these fires are particularly intense due to three main contributing factors: wet weather followed by dry conditions, Santa Ana winds, and climate change.
Banded Royal butterfly (Rachana jalindra indra)	• The **Banded Royal butterfly** (**Rachana jalindra indra**) was discovered in **Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary**, Tripura, on **May 5, 2021**, marking a key addition to the state's biodiversity. • This rare species, now documented in the **Munis Entomology & Zoology** journal, is protected under the **Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, listed in **Schedule II**. The discovery highlights the importance of **ecological research** and **wildlife protection** in the region.

Miscellaneous

• The **2025 Tibet Earthquake**, measuring **7.1** on the Richter scale, struck the **Tibetan Plateau** on **January 5, 2025**, causing widespread destruction and displacing thousands. The event highlighted the **seismic vulnerability** of the region, a geologically active area, and drew **international concern**.

• The ongoing **Maha Kumbh Mela** has witnessed a remarkable collaboration between the **International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)** and the **Adani Group**, which has significantly enhanced the food distribution services at the event. This partnership ensures that nearly **one lakh people** are provided with nutritious meals daily during the 45-day spiritual gathering.

• **Yala Glacier**, situated in **Nepal's Langtang National Park**, has been a focal point for glaciological studies due to its significant retreat over recent decades. Recent analyses predict that this glacier may **vanish by the 2040s**, underscoring the profound impacts of **climate change on the Himalayan cryosphere.**

• A significant historical artifact, a **Umamaheshwara metal sculpture**, has been unearthed in **Taggunje, Ajri village, Kundapura taluk, Udupi district, Karnataka**. This intricate sculpture, believed to have been created in the **17th century** using a **12th-century style**, showcases a rare blend of **Shaiva-Shaktha** and **Naga cult traditions**, according to **T. Murugeshi**, a retired Associate Professor of Ancient History and Archaeology.

• In December 2024, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) resumed excavations at the historic **Buddhist complex in Ratnagiri, Odisha,** after a 60-year hiatus. Spearheaded by ASI's superintending archaeologist D B Garnayak, the project seeks to further uncover Ratnagiri's rich history and explore material evidence of Odisha's connection to Southeast Asia's cultural and maritime heritage.

• The national capital is set to host the much-awaited **New Delhi World Book Fair 2025**, a grand celebration for readers, authors, and publishers alike. This event, scheduled to run from **February 1 to February 9, 2025**, will take place at the **Bharat Mandapam in Pragati Maidan**. With over five decades of legacy, the book fair promises to be a vibrant confluence of literature, culture, and knowledge.

• A **tragic stampede** at the **Maha Kumbh** in **Prayagraj** on **January 29, 2025**, resulted in **30 deaths** and over **60 injuries**. The **Uttar Pradesh government** formed a **three-member judicial commission** to investigate the disaster, headed by **retired High Court judge Harsh Kumar**. The panel, which also includes **D.K. Singh** and **V.K. Gupta**, has a one-month deadline but aims for an expedited inquiry.

• A groundbreaking study, "**Antiquity of Iron: Recent Radiometric Dates from Tamil Nadu**" by **K. Rajan** and **R. Sivanantham**, challenges the timeline of the **Iron Age in India**, suggesting it began as early as **3345 BCE** in **Tamil Nadu**, much earlier than previously thought. The study used advanced techniques like **Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS)** and **Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL)**, providing evidence that **iron technology** was in use in the region, making it the **oldest recorded** in the world.

Static Takeaways

Organizations, Banks, States, and Countries - Static Details

Sr. No	Orgn./Bank/State/Country	Key Person	Designation	Headquarters/Capital
1	RBI	Sanjay Malhotra	Governor	Mumbai
2	SBI	Challa Sreenivasulu Setty	MD	Mumbai
3	EPFO	Ramesh Krishnamurthi	Central PF Commissioner	New Delhi
4	National Cooperative Bank	K. B. Upreti	MD	Mumbai
5	Cosmos Cooperative Bank	Mrs. Apekshita Thipsay	MD	Pune
6	CRPF	Anish Dayal Singh	DG	N/A
7	Brazil	Lula Da Silva	President	Brasília
8	Vietnam	Luong Cuong	President	Hanoi
9	Nepal	KP Sharma Oli	PM	Kathmandu
10	China	Xi Jinping	President	Beijing
11	Switzerland	Viola Amherd	President	Bern
12	Kerala	R. Arlekar / Pinarayi Vijayan	Governor / CM	Thiruvananthapuram
13	Tamil Nadu	RN Ravi / M. K. Stalin	Governor / CM	Chennai
14	Haryana	Bandaru Dattatreya / Nayab Singh Saini	Governor / CM	Chandigarh
15	Chhattisgarh	Ramen Deka / Vishnu Deo Sai	Governor / CM	Raipur
16	Jammu & Kashmir	Manoj Sinha / Omar Abdullah	L. Governor / CM	Jammu
17	Telangana	Jishnu Dev Varma / Revanth Reddy	Governor / CM	Hyderabad
18	Home Minister	Amit Shah	Minister	N/A
19	Defense Minister	Rajnath Singh	Minister	N/A
20	NITI Aayog	PM Narendra Modi	Chairperson	N/A
21	ISRO	V. Narayanan	Chairman	Bengaluru
22	HDFC Bank	Sashidhar Jagdishan	MD	Mumbai
23	Suzuki India	R. C. Bhargava	Chairman	New Delhi
24	ICMR	Dr. Rajiv Bahl	DG	N/A
25	WHO	Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus	DG	Geneva
26	Canada	- (Justin Trudeau resigned)	President	Ottawa
27	Ukraine	Volodymyr Zelenskyy	President	Kiev
28	France	Emmanuel Macron	President	Paris
29	Japan	Shigeru Ishiba	PM	Tokyo
30	Indonesia	Prabowo Subianto	President	Jakarta
31	Vietnam	General Luong Cuong	President	Hanoi
32	Uttar Pradesh	Anandiben Patel / Yogi Adityanath	Governor / CM	Lucknow
33	Madhya Pradesh	Mangubhai Patel / Mohan Yadav	Governor / CM	Bhopal
34	Goa	P. S. Sreedharan Pillai / Pramod Sawant	Governor / CM	Panaji
35	Assam	Lakshman Acharya / Hemanta Biswa Sarma	Governor / CM	Dispur
36	Jharkhand	Santosh Gangwar / Hemant Soren	Governor / CM	Ranchi

Sr. No	Orgn./Bank/State/Country	Key Person	Designation	Headquarters/Capital
37	Delhi	Vinai Saxena / Atishi	L. Governor / CM	New Delhi
38	West Bengal	C. V. Ananda Bose / Mamta Banerjee	Governor / CM	Kolkata
39	BCCI	Devjit Saikia	Secretary	N/A
40	Bank of Baroda	Debadatta Chand	MD	Vadodara, Gujarat
41	IMF	Kristalina Georgieva	President	Washington D.C.
42	FICCI	Harshavardhan Agarwal	Chairman	N/A
43	DRDO	Sr. Subrata Rakshit	DG	N/A
44	Blue Origin	Dave Limp	CEO	N/A
45	NPCI	Ajay Kumar Chaudhary	Non-Executive Chairman	N/A
46	Venezuela	Nicolas Maduro	President	Caracas
47	Spain	Pedro Sanchez	President	Madrid
48	Gujarat	Acharya Devvrat / Bhupendra Patel	Governor / CM	Gandhinagar
49	Dhanlaxmi Bank	K. N. Madhusoodanan	Chairman	Kerala
50	Bank of India	M. R. Kumar	Chairman	Mumbai
51	IDBI Bank	Rakesh Sharma	MD & CEO	Mumbai
52	Jio	Akash Ambani	Chairman	Mumbai
53	Tata Steel	Natarajan Chandrasekaran	Chairman	Mumbai
54	Sony India	Sunil Nayyar	Chairman	New Delhi
55	ZOHO	Sridhar Vembu	Chairman	Chennai
56	CRED	Kunal Shah	Chairman	Bengaluru
57	Niger	Abdourahamane Tchiani	President	Niamey
58	Finance Minister	Nirmala Sitharaman	Minister	N/A
59	Commerce & Industry Minister	Piyush Goyal	Minister	N/A
60	Civil Aviation Minister	Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu	Minister	N/A
61	Chief Economic Advisor	V. Anantha Nageswaran	Advisor	N/A
62	MSME Minister	Giriraj Singh	Minister (Independent Charge)	N/A
63	Jammu & Kashmir	Manoj Sinha / Omar Abdullah	L. Governor / CM	Srinagar
64	UAE	Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan	President	Abu Dhabi

Key Entities - Static Details

Entity	President/Chairman	Headquarters	Established Year	CM/Governor
Election Commission of India	Rajiv Kumar (CEC)	New Delhi	1950	N/A
ISRO	Dr. V. Narayanan (Chairman)	Bengaluru	1969	N/A
BCCI	Roger Binny (President)	Mumbai	1928	N/A
BSF	Daljit Singh Chaudhary (DG)	New Delhi	1965	N/A
Indian Army	General Manoj Pande (COAS)	New Delhi	1895	N/A
Bharti AXA Life Insurance	Parag Raja (MD & CEO)	Gurgaon	2006	N/A
Reliance Power Limited	Neeraj Parakh (CEO)	Mumbai	2007	N/A
Zurich Kotak General Insurance	Srinivas Injeti (Chairman)	Mumbai	2008	N/A

Entity	President/Chairman	Headquarters	Established Year	CM/Governor
IORA	Chairmanship Rotates	Mauritius	1997	N/A
CRPF	Vitul Kumar (DG)	New Delhi	1939	N/A
IDFC FIRST Bank	V. Vaidyanathan (MD & CEO)	Mumbai	2015	N/A
Tata AIA Life Insurance	Saurabh Agrawal (Chairman)	Mumbai	2001	N/A
Bharti Airtel	Sunil Bharti Mittal (Chairman)	New Delhi	1995	N/A
Bajaj Finance	Sanjiv Bajaj (MD & CEO)	Pune	1987	N/A
RBI	Sanjay Malhotra (Governor)	Mumbai	1935	N/A
CII	Sanjiv Puri (President)	New Delhi	1895	N/A
HSBC India	Hitendra Dave (Country Head)	Mumbai	1853	N/A
UNESCO	Audrey Azoulay (DG)	Paris, France	1945	N/A
World Bank	Ajay Banga (President)	Washington D.C.	1944	N/A

January 2025 Months Questions with Answer

Q1. **Where will the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 be held?**
Ans: Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

Q2. **What percentage decline in domestic migration was reported in 2023 compared to 2011 levels?**
Ans: 11.8%

Q3. **Who amended the Foreign Trade Policy 2023 to mandate stakeholder consultations?**
Ans: DGFT

Q4. **Which corridor was inaugurated by PM Modi to reduce travel time between Delhi and Meerut to 40 minutes?**
Ans: Namo Bharat RRTS corridor

Q5. **Where will Aero India 2025 be held, and what is its theme?**
Ans: Bengaluru; "The Runway to a Billion Opportunities"

Q6. **What is the name of the CBI's portal launched for real-time INTERPOL coordination?**
Ans: BHARATPOL

Q7. **Which city became the 69th Railway Division in India?**
Ans: Jammu

Q8. **India has surpassed how many kilometers of metro rail network?**
Ans: 1,000 km

Q9. **Where was the first photographic evidence of Pallas's cat found in India?**
Ans: Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh

Q10. **Which state launched India's first organic fisheries cluster?**
Ans: Sikkim

Q11. **How much cashless treatment will be provided for road accident survivors under the new scheme?**
Ans: ₹1.5 lakh for seven days

Q12. **Where will the memorial for Pranab Mukherjee be set up?**
Ans: Rajghat Complex, Delhi

Q13. **Who will be the Chief Guest at India's 2025 Republic Day parade?**
Ans: Prabowo Subianto

Q14. **When will the Indusfood 2025 exhibition be held?**
Ans: January 8-10, 2025

Q15. **When was NITI Aayog established, replacing the Planning Commission?**
Ans: January 1, 2015

Q16. **Which train was flagged off by PM Modi under the Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana?**
Ans: Pravasi Bharatiya Express

Q17. **How much investment has the government announced for inland water transport development?**
Ans: ₹50,000 crore over five years

Q18. **Which tunnel will boost connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh?**
Ans: Z-Morh Tunnel

Q19. **What system was launched in Assam to enhance inland waterway safety?**
Ans: National River Traffic & Navigation System (NRT&NS)

Q20. **Which city was declared the world's most polluted in 2024?**
Ans: Hanoi

Q21. **Which Canadian Prime Minister recently resigned after nearly a decade in power?**
Ans: Justin Trudeau

Q22. **Who was Shigemi Fukahori?**
Ans: Nagasaki atomic bomb survivor and peace advocate

Q23. **Who was elected as Lebanon's president in 2025?**
Ans: General Joseph Aoun

Q24. **What milestone did the world cross for the first time in 2024 regarding climate change?**
Ans: Earth exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels

Q25. **What is the theme of the 38th National Games torch rally in Uttarakhand?**
Ans: Tejaswini

Q26. **Where was India's first coastal bird census conducted?**
Ans: Jamnagar, Gujarat

Q27. **How much sponsorship was announced for the Indian national kho kho team by Odisha?**
Ans: ₹15 crore

Q28. **Who was appointed as CEO of the Delhi Waqf Board in 2025?**
Ans: Azimul Haque

Q29. **What position will Dr. V. Narayanan hold in ISRO from January 2025?**
Ans: ISRO Chief and Space Secretary

Q30. **What is the new name for the RRTS corridor connecting Delhi and Meerut?**
Ans: Namo Bharat

Q31. **Who unveiled trophies for the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup 2025?**
Ans: KKFI

Q32. **Which country's cricket player, Martin Guptill, announced his retirement in 2025?**
Ans: New Zealand

Q33. **When is National Bird Day observed annually?**
Ans: January 5

Q34. **What theme was announced for Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2025?**
Ans: "Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat"

Q35. **Who is the oldest person confirmed by LongeviQuest in 2025?**
Ans: Sister Inah Lucas

Q36. **Which city will host the Aero India 2025 exhibition?**
Ans: Bengaluru

Q37. **What rank did India achieve in the Henley Passport Index 2025?**
Ans: 85th

Q38. **How many countries are participating in the Kho Kho World Cup 2025?**
Ans: 24

Q39. **Which Indian state recently launched the "PARTH Yojana"?**
Ans: Madhya Pradesh

Q40. **What is the new lending restriction update by RBI for Asirvad Micro Finance?**
Ans: Lending restrictions were lifted

Q41. **Which country has been declared the world's most polluted city in 2024 with PM2.5 levels at 266 μg/m³?**
Ans: Hanoi, Vietnam.

Q42. **Who stepped down as Canadian Prime Minister after nearly a decade in power?**
Ans: Justin Trudeau.

Q43. **What milestone did India achieve in metro rail, becoming the world's 3rd largest network?**
Ans: Surpassing 1,000 km of metro rail network.

Q44. **Which tunnel, enhancing Kashmir-Ladakh connectivity, is set to be inaugurated by PM Modi?**
Ans: Z-Morh Tunnel.

Q45. **What is the theme of Aero India 2025, scheduled from February 10-14 in Bengaluru?**
Ans: "The Runway to a Billion Opportunities."

Q46. **Who has been elected as the new President of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI)?**
Ans: Bahadur Singh Sagoo.

Q47. **Which initiative has Amit Shah recently launched for real-time INTERPOL coordination in India?**
Ans: BHARATPOL Portal.

Q48. **What was the rank of India in the 2025 Henley Passport Index?**
Ans: 85th.

Q49. **Who has been confirmed as the Chief Guest for India's 2025 Republic Day parade?**
Ans: Prabowo Subianto, Indonesian President.

Q50. Which Indian state hosted the first coastal and wader bird census in Jamnagar?
Ans: Gujarat.

Q51. What significant GDP growth rate has NSO projected for India for the year 2024-25?
Ans: 6.4%.

Q52. What is the government's capital investment allocation for developing inland waterways over five years?
Ans: ₹50,000 crore.

Q53. Who has been appointed as the new ISRO Chief and Secretary of Space?
Ans: Dr. V. Narayanan.

Q54. In which state was India's first organic fisheries cluster launched?
Ans: Sikkim.

Q55. Which country signed an MoU with India to strengthen resource security in copper and coking coal sectors?
Ans: Mongolia.

Q56. What is the name of the tourist train launched under Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana?
Ans: Pravasi Bharatiya Express.

Q57. Which nation has implemented new sanctions against entities aiding Russia in the Ukraine war?
Ans: Japan.

Q58. What is the special initiative launched by MBMC and NITI Aayog to empower women in traditional snack production?
Ans: Faral Sakhi Initiative.

Q59. Who has been appointed as the new Judge of the Uttarakhand High Court?
Ans: Shri Ashish Naithani.

Q60. Which rare species was discovered in Himachal Pradesh's Kinnaur during a snow leopard survey?
Ans: Pallas's Cat.

Q61. What cashless treatment plan did Nitin Gadkari announce for road accident survivors?
Ans: ₹1.5 lakh cashless treatment for seven days.

Q62. What rank did India achieve globally in cyberattacks according to the 2024 CloudSEK report?
Ans: 2nd.

Q63. Who was announced as the International Ambassador for the 20th Tata Mumbai Marathon?
Ans: Sir Mo Farah.

Q64. Which state announced ₹15 crore sponsorship for the Indian national kho kho team?
Ans: Odisha.

Q65. Who won the 33rd Santosh Trophy by defeating Kerala?
Ans: West Bengal.

Q66. What is the total gold holdings of RBI after adding 8 tonnes in November 2024?
Ans: 876 tonnes.

Q67. Which new initiative was launched to ensure safety in inland waterways in Assam?
Ans: National River Traffic & Navigation System (NRT&NS).

Q68. Who has been appointed as India's new Revenue Secretary?
Ans: T. Pandey.

Q69. Which Indian athlete was honored with the US Presidential Medal of Freedom?
Ans: Lionel Messi.

Q70. What growth forecast for India in FY25-26 was predicted by the Bank of Baroda report?
Ans: 6.6%-6.8%.

Q71. Which high-value insurance was launched for Prayagraj's Kumbh Mela 2025?
Ans: Maha Kumbh Mela Insurance.

Q72. Where is the theme park dedicated to former President Pranab Mukherjee being set up?
Ans: Rajghat Complex, Delhi.

Q73. What major exhibition is scheduled to be held in Greater Noida from January 8-10, 2025?
Ans: Indusfood 2025.

Q74. What is the theme of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2025?
Ans: "Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat."

Q75. Who was elected as the new President of Lebanon, ending a two-year political vacuum?
Ans: General Joseph Aoun.

Q76. What initiative did PM Modi inaugurate to promote rural innovation and self-reliance?
Ans: Grameen Bharat Mahotsav.

Q77. What is the fiscal deficit target for FY25 according to the government?
Ans: 4.9% of GDP.

Q78. Which Indian state launched the PARTH Yojana for pre-recruitment training?
Ans: Madhya Pradesh.

Q79. Who has been appointed as the Treasurer of the BCCI effective January 12, 2025?
**Ans:** Prabhtej Singh Bhatia.

Q80. How much investment has the government announced for inland water transport development over the next five years?
Ans: ₹50,000 crore.

Q81. Which tunnel, inaugurated by PM Modi, will enhance Kashmir-Ladakh connectivity?
Ans: Z-Morh Tunnel.

Q82. What system did Sarbananda Sonowal unveil in Assam to ensure inland waterway safety?
Ans: National River Traffic & Navigation System (NRT&NS).

Q83. What is the value of the INROAD project to improve natural rubber quality in Northeast India?
Ans: ₹100 crore.

Q84. Who launched the Bharat Cleantech Platform to boost renewable energy sectors?
Ans: Piyush Goyal.

Q85. By what percentage did India achieve growth in renewable energy capacity in 2024?
Ans: 113%.

Q86. Who will represent India at Donald Trump's second-term inauguration ceremony?
Ans: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

Q87. What initiative did SECL launch to provide post-retirement benefits under 'Mission Sambandh'?
Ans: Post-Retirement Benefit Cell (PRB Cell).

Q88. Under which act has the process for appointing Election Commissioners been revised?
Ans: The CEC and Other ECs Act, 2023.

Q89. Where is the headquarters of the newly inaugurated National Turmeric Board?
Ans: Nizamabad, Telangana.

Q90. What is the name of the Indian Railways' world's most powerful hydrogen fuel-run train engine?
Ans: India's Hydrogen Train Engine.

Q91. Which app was launched to enhance broadband connectivity and curb telecom fraud?
Ans: Sanchar Saathi App.

Q92. On which day did the Lokpal of India celebrate its First Foundation Day?
Ans: January 16, 2025.

Q93. Which regional center was announced to enhance climate resilience in J&K?
Ans: Srinagar Meteorology Centre.

Q94. Which FM channel was launched for Maha Kumbh 2025?
Ans: Kumbhvani FM (103.5 MHz).

Q95. Which state joined the Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY scheme as the 34th state?
Ans: Odisha.

Q96. What festival was celebrated by the Zeliangrong community in Manipur?
Ans: Gaan-Ngai Festival.

Q97. What pension amount was announced for Emergency detainees in Odisha?
Ans: ₹20,000 per month.

Q98. What milestone anniversary did the India Meteorological Department celebrate in 2025?
Ans: 150 years.

Q99. What is India's projected GDP growth rate for FY25, according to CRISIL?
Ans: 6.7%.

Q100. Who was appointed the Ombudsman and Ethics Officer of the BCCI?
Ans: Justice Arun Mishra.

Q101. What amount did the RBI sell in November 2024 to stabilize the rupee?
Ans: $20.2 billion.

Q102. What is India's net direct tax collection till January 2025?
Ans: ₹16.90 lakh crore.

Q103. What is the name of the app launched for showcasing India's military history?
Ans: Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan App.

Q104. What does PMKSY stand for in the context of watershed projects?
Ans: Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana.

Q105. What position did Anju Bobby George recently assume in AFI?
Ans: Chairperson of the Athletes Commission.

Q106. Who surpassed Roger Federer's record of Grand Slam matches in the Australian Open 2025?
Ans: Novak Djokovic.

Q107. Which award did Aparna Sen receive at the WBFJA 2025?
Ans: Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award.

Q108. Who was named as Punjab Kings' captain for IPL 2025?
Ans: Shreyas Iyer.

Q109. Which countries will commemorate 2026 as a 'dual year'?
Ans: India and Spain.

Q110. Which new species of pangolin was discovered by ZSI?
Ans: Manis indoburmanica.

Q111. What milestone was achieved by ISRO's SpaDeX mission?
Ans: Spacecraft docking technology demonstration.

Q112. What amount has the Cabinet approved for the revival of RINL?
Ans: ₹11,440 crore.

Q113. Which two beaches in Kerala achieved Blue Flag certification?
Ans: Kappad and Chal beaches.

Q114. What app did NPCI launch to enable UPI transactions in the UAE?
Ans: Magnati.

Q115. Which state launched a power privatization plan for Dakshinanchal and Purvanchal?
Ans: Uttar Pradesh.

Q116. What percentage growth was recorded in India's IIP in November 2024?
Ans: 5.2%.

Q117. Which company launched a laptop assembly line in Chennai under the PLI 2.0 scheme?
Ans: Syrma SGS.

Q118. Who inaugurated the second multi-purpose vessel, 'Utkarsh'?
Ans: L&T Shipyard.

Q119. What is the new record low of the rupee against USD in January 2025?
Ans: ₹86/USD.

Q120. Which new satellite species was discovered by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in 2025?
Ans: Manis indoburmanica (a new Indo-Burmese pangolin species).

Q121. Which project was launched with ₹100 crore to enhance natural rubber quality in India's North-East?
Ans: INROAD Project.

Q122. What is the projected GDP growth rate for India in FY25 as per CRISIL?
Ans: 6.7%.

Q123. Which platform was launched by Piyush Goyal to enhance cleantech value chains?
Ans: Bharat Cleantech Platform.

Q124. Where was the Sri Sri Radha Madanmohanji Temple, Asia's second-largest ISKCON temple, inaugurated?
Ans: Navi Mumbai.

Q125. What is the name of the app launched by DoT to curb telecom fraud?
Ans: Sanchar Saathi App.

Q126. What milestone anniversary did the India Meteorological Department (IMD) celebrate in January 2025?
Ans: 150 Years.

Q127. Which festival in Tamil Nadu began with bull-taming events in January 2025?
Ans: Avaniyapuram Jallikattu.

Q128. What is the name of the app launched on Army Day 2025 to boost battlefield tourism?
Ans: Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan App.

Q129. Which international committee did India join to strengthen the use of Big Data for SDGs?
Ans: UN Big Data Committee.

Q130. What is the expected annual growth rate of India's F&B export industry over the next five years?
Ans: 14-15%.

Q131. What was the retail inflation rate in India in December 2024?
Ans: 5.22%.

Q132. What is the name of the cold-weather apparel developed by DRDO?
Ans: HIMKAVACH.

Q133. Which Indian state integrated with Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY in January 2025?
Ans: Odisha.

Q134. What is the record low exchange rate of the rupee against the US dollar in January 2025?
Ans: ₹86/USD.

Q135. Which initiative was launched in Assam for inland waterway safety?
Ans: National River Traffic & Navigation System (NRT&NS).

Q136. Who was appointed the Chairperson of the AFI Athletes Commission in 2025?
Ans: Anju Bobby George.

Q137. Which countries declared 2026 as a 'Dual Year' focusing on culture and AI?
Ans: India and Spain.

Q138. What is the name of the ₹75,000 crore energy and cement expansion plan announced by Adani?
Ans: Adani Investment in Chhattisgarh.

Q139. What is the new appointment process for Election Commissioners under the revised act?
Ans: CEC and Other ECs Act, 2023.

Q140. Which Indian beaches received Blue Flag certification for sustainability?
Ans: Kappad and Chal beaches.

Q141. Which regional center was announced in J&K for climate resilience in January 2025?
Ans: Srinagar Meteorology Centre.

Q142. What is the projected factory output growth rate for November 2024?
Ans: 5.2%.

Q143. Which Hindu festival on January 14, 2025, marks the Sun's transition to Capricorn?
Ans: Makar Sankranti.

Q144. Who is India's fastest ODI century scorer in women's cricket as of January 2025?
Ans: Smriti Mandhana.

Q145. Which Indian Railways innovation achieved a benchmark in green energy technology?
Ans: Hydrogen fuel-run train engine.

Q146. What is the total direct tax collection of India by January 2025?
Ans: ₹16.90 lakh crore.

Q147. Which organization developed space docking technology in January 2025?
Ans: ISRO.

Q148. What is the world's most powerful reusable rocket launched by Blue Origin?
Ans: New Glenn.

Q149. Which app was launched for Maha Kumbh 2025 by Uttar Pradesh?
Ans: Kumbhvani FM.

Q150. What is the name of the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup's host city?
Ans: New Delhi.

Q151. What benefit does SECL's Post-Retirement Benefit Cell under 'Mission Sambandh' provide?
Ans: Welfare support for retired employees.

Q152. What is India's projected economy rank by 2026 as per PHDCCI?
Ans: 4th largest in the world.

Q153. Who received the Honorary Citizen Award from Singapore in January 2025?
Ans: Tarun Das.

Q154. What is the new pension amount for Odisha's Emergency detainees announced in 2025?
Ans: ₹20,000 monthly.

Q155. What is the inflation rate in December 2024 due to manufacturing and fuel costs?
Ans: 2.37%.

Q156. Which post-harvest festival was celebrated by the Zeliangrong community in Manipur?
Ans: Gaan-Ngai Festival.

Q157. What record did Djokovic achieve at the Australian Open 2025?
Ans: 430 Grand Slam matches.

Q158. What significant event was launched at the Bharat Climate Forum 2025?
Ans: Bharat Cleantech Platform.

Q159. Which river's historic buildings in Hyderabad were recognized on the 2025 World Monuments Watch?
Ans: Musi River.

Q160. What did PM Modi discuss in the first 'Mann Ki Baat' of 2025?
Ans: Constitution, democracy, space tech, and human-animal harmony.

Q161. What is the 'Entity Locker' launched by the Government of India?
Ans: A digital platform for efficient management and verification of business documents, inspired by DigiLocker.

Q162. Which company unveiled India's first eVTOL air taxi prototype called 'Shunya'?
Ans: Sarla Aviation.

Q163. Who was appointed as the Neutral Expert for the Indus Waters Treaty dispute?
Ans: A World Bank-appointed expert.

Q164. Which country has India partnered with for geothermal energy development?
Ans: Iceland.

Q165. What is the main goal of the NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025?
Ans: To evaluate the fiscal health of 18 Indian states for policy reforms.

Q166. Where was the two-day consultation on AI RAM held in January 2025?
Ans: Bangalore.

Q167. Who was elected as the new President of ICSI in 2025?
Ans: Dhananjay Shukla.

Q168. What new sustainable initiative was introduced by India in January 2025 for rubber production?
Ans: Indian Sustainable Natural Rubber (iSNR).

Q169. Which social media platform temporarily shut down in the U.S. due to a national security law?
Ans: TikTok.

Q170. Who was sworn in as the 47th President of the U.S. on January 20, 2025?
Ans: Donald Trump.

Q171. Which two countries signed a 20-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty in January 2025?
Ans: Russia and Iran.

Q172. Which country built the world's longest tunnel, the Tianshan Shengli Tunnel?
Ans: China.

Q173. Who became the first Indian-American Hindu Second Lady of the United States?
Ans: Usha Vance.

Q174. Which U.S. executive order on birthright citizenship was temporarily blocked by a Seattle-based judge?
Ans: Trump's executive order on birthright citizenship.

Q175. Which country withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement in January 2025?
Ans: United States.

Q176. Which glacier in Nepal is expected to vanish by the 2040s due to climate change?
Ans: Yala Glacier.

Q177. Which country was granted partner status in BRICS in January 2025?
Ans: Nigeria.

Q178. What did Donald Trump announce related to cryptocurrency in January 2025?
Ans: He formed a Cryptocurrency Working Group.

Q179. What major renaming took place in the Gulf of Mexico under Trump's administration?
Ans: Gulf of Mexico was renamed Gulf of America.

Q180. Which Indian product received a GI tag from PM Modi in January 2025?
Ans: Virgin Coconut Oil from Nicobar district.

Q181. Which northeastern state celebrated its Statehood Day on January 21, 2025?
Ans: Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura.

Q182. Which festival in Andhra Pradesh emphasizes biodiversity conservation?
Ans: Flamingo Festival.

Q183. What scheme did the Chhattisgarh CM launch to aid landless agricultural laborers?
Ans: Rs 10,000 annually for 7.5 lakh landless agricultural laborers.

Q184. Which state celebrated its 54th Statehood Day on January 25, 2025?
Ans: Himachal Pradesh.

Q185. What GDP growth is projected for India in 2025-26 by the CII?
Ans: 7%.

Q186. How much Mudra Loan was disbursed in Q3 FY25?
Ans: ₹3.39 lakh crore.

Q187. Which bank's expansion was approved by RBI with 20 new branches?
Ans: HSBC India.

Q188. What is the new series that RBI mandates for transactional calls?
Ans: '1600xx'.

Q189. What new system was launched by Rajnath Singh to enhance Indian Army's situational awareness?
Ans: SANJAY Battlefield Surveillance System.

Q190. Which state launched its own disaster early warning systems in January 2025?
Ans: Kerala.

Q191. What digital innovation was introduced by CSIR in Mumbai?
Ans: Mega Innovation Complex.

Q192. Which platform launched 'PB Advantage' health insurance initiative?
Ans: Policybazaar.ae.

Q193. Which Indian IT company topped the Brand Finance 2025 rankings?
Ans: Accenture.

Q194. What major data infrastructure project is Reliance building in Gujarat?
Ans: The world's largest data center in Jamnagar.

Q195. Where was India's sixth astronomical observatory inaugurated in January 2025?
Ans: Panchet Hill, West Bengal.

Q196. Which Indian state will host the FIDE Chess World Cup in 2025?
Ans: India.

Q197. Which Indian city is hosting the first-ever Kho Kho World Cup in 2025?
Ans: New Delhi.

Q198. Who won the men's singles title at the India Open 2025 badminton tournament?
Ans: Viktor Axelsen.

Q199. What event is celebrated as National Tourism Day 2025 in India?
Ans: Tourism for Inclusive Growth.

Q200. What is the theme for National Voters' Day 2025?
Ans: "Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure."

Q201. What book did Amitabh Kant release about India's G20 presidency?
Ans: "How India Scaled Mt G20."

Q202. Who passed away at the age of 84, a Manchester United and Scotland legend?
Ans: Denis Law.

Q203. What rare sculpture was discovered in Karnataka's Udupi district?
Ans: Umamaheshwara metal sculpture.

Q204. What major event will take place at the New Delhi World Book Fair in February 2025?
Ans: A literary confluence celebrating over five decades of legacy.

Q205. Which state celebrated the first anniversary of the Pran Pratishtha at Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir?
Ans: Ayodhya.

Q206. Who was appointed as the new Director General of CRPF?
Ans: Gyanendra Pratap Singh.

Q207. What financial scheme helps empower rural families in India?
Ans: SVAMITVA Scheme.

Q208. What international event is scheduled from February 1-9, 2025, in New Delhi?
Ans: World Book Fair 2025.

Q209. Which Indian state has launched the SVAMITVA scheme property cards?
Ans: Uttar Pradesh.

Q210. What military operation was launched by BSF to secure India-Pakistan border during fog?
Ans: Operation Sard Hawa.

Q211. What initiative is being celebrated under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme in 2025?
Ans: 10 years of promoting girl child welfare.

Q212. Who became the first Indian-American Hindu Second Lady of the U.S. in 2025?
Ans: Usha Vance.

Q213. What significant project will Trump announce to support AI infrastructure in 2025?
Ans: Stargate AI Project.

Q214. Which Indian state is implementing localized disaster early warning systems?
Ans: Kerala.

Q215. What event celebrates the legacy of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on January 23, 2025?
Ans: Parakram Diwas.

Q216. What is the theme of International Day of Education 2025?
Ans: AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation.

Q217. Which state marked its 76th Foundation Day in January 2025?
Ans: Uttar Pradesh.

Q218. Who inaugurated the country's first astronomical observatory in Eastern India?
Ans: India.

Q219. Who became the Chief Justice of Bombay High Court in 2025?
Ans: Justice Alok Aradhe.

Q220. What new feature did RBI introduce for bank licensing in 2025?
Ans: Standing External Advisory Committee.

Q221. What project did CII project for India's GDP growth for FY 2025-26?
Ans: 7%.

Q222. What did the Ministry of Finance launch to track fiscal health of states?
Ans: Fiscal Health Index (FHI).

Q223. What significant announcement did Trump make regarding cryptocurrency?
Ans: Formation of a working group.

Q224. Which new banking operation did RBI approve in 2025?
Ans: Skydo as a Payment Aggregator.

Q225. Which Indian state is promoting Virgin Coconut Oil through a GI tag?
Ans: Nicobar District in Andaman.

Q226. What unique metal sculpture was discovered in Karnataka's Udupi district?
Ans: Umamaheshwara sculpture.
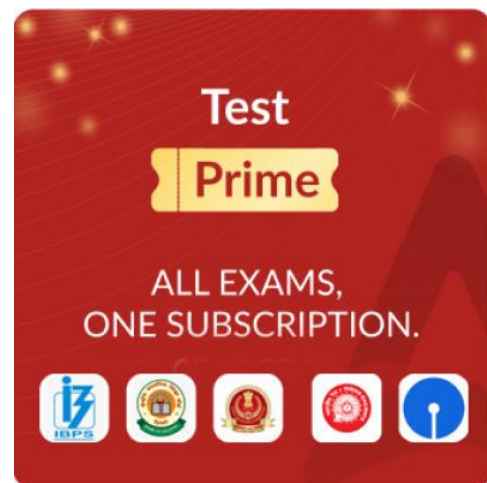
Q227. Which organization won the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar in 2025?
Ans: INCOIS.

Q228. What is the theme for National Voters' Day 2025 in India?
Ans: "Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure."

Q229. Which state launched the 'Digi Vidya' digital classrooms initiative in 2025?
Ans: Jharkhand.

Q230. What award was given to David Beckham and Diane von Furstenberg at WEF 2025?
Ans: WEF Crystal Award.

Q231. Who won the Men's singles at the India Open 2025?
Ans: Viktor Axelsen.

Q232. Who received India's highest civilian honor Bharat Ratna in 2025?
Ans: Chaudhary Charan Singh.

Q233. Who was elected President of the United Nations General Assembly in 2025?
Ans: Dennis Francis.

Q234. Who is the first to sign an agreement to support sustainable agriculture in Assam?
Ans: GreenTech.

Q235. Which Indian company is the first to export electric vehicles to the UK?
Ans: Tata Motors.

Q236. Which city hosted the 2025 National Chess Championship?
Ans: New Delhi.

Q237. What did Google launch in India to benefit farmers?
Ans: AI-driven farming app.

Q238. What new technology was introduced by Google to combat data breaches?
Ans: Chrome OS 4.0.

Q239. Which cities became India's first Wetland Cities under the Ramsar Convention?
Ans: Indore and Udaipur became India's first Wetland Cities under the Ramsar Convention.

Q240. What is India's target for GI tags by 2030 as set by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal?
Ans: India aims to reach 10,000 GI tags by 2030, with 605 already issued.

Q241. According to the new study, when did the Iron Age begin in Tamil Nadu?
Ans: The study suggests Iron Age in Tamil Nadu began as early as 3345 BCE.

Q242. What is the annual cap set by IRDAI on senior citizens' health premium hike?
Ans: IRDAI has capped senior citizens' health premium hike at 10% annually.

Q243. How many new Ramsar Wetlands did India add recently?
Ans: India added 4 new Ramsar Wetlands, taking the total to 89.

Q244. What is the name of Indian Railways' new SuperApp?
Ans: Indian Railways launched 'SwaRail' SuperApp.

Q245. Which temple in Vrindavan received FCRA approval for foreign donations?
Ans: Banke Bihari Temple in Vrindavan secured FCRA approval.

Q246. What unique initiative was launched for Chinar trees in Kashmir?
Ans: J&K Forest Research Institute launched geo-tagging for Chinar trees.

Q247. When is Mahakumbh 2025 scheduled to take place?
Ans: Mahakumbh 2025 is scheduled from January 13 to February 26, 2025.

Q248. Which Chinese AI startup topped the U.S. App Store surpassing ChatGPT?
Ans: DeepSeek AI topped the U.S. App Store with its R1 reasoning model.

Q249. What percentage of votes did Alexander Lukashenko secure in his seventh term election?
Ans: Alexander Lukashenko secured 87% votes in the controversial election.

Q250. Which African nation became the first to eliminate Onchocerciasis?
Ans: Niger became the first African nation to eliminate Onchocerciasis (river blindness).

Q251. Who was appointed as Executive Director of Dhanlaxmi Bank?
Ans: P. Suriaraj was appointed as Executive Director of Dhanlaxmi Bank.

Q252. What is the interest rate set by RBI on GOI Floating Rate Bonds 2035?
Ans: RBI set 6.66% interest rate on GOI Floating Rate Bonds 2035.

Q253. Which fintech became India's first to adopt CBDC (e-Rupee)?
Ans: CRED became India's first fintech to adopt CBDC.

Q254. What is the projected GDP growth rate in Economic Survey 2025?
Ans: India's GDP growth is pegged at 6.4% in Economic Survey 2025.

Q255. **What is the new income tax exemption limit announced in Budget 2025-26?**
Ans: No tax on income up to ₹12 lakh, with ₹12.75 lakh exemption for salaried individuals.

Q256. **Who was appointed as Vedanta's first-ever CEO?**
Ans: Deshnee Naidoo was appointed as Vedanta's first-ever CEO.

Q257. **Until when has Hisashi Takeuchi's term been extended as Maruti Suzuki's MD & CEO?**
Ans: Hisashi Takeuchi's term has been extended until March 31, 2028.

Q258. **Which consumer protection body is investigating Ola and Uber's differential pricing?**
Ans: CCPA (Central Consumer Protection Authority) is investigating the differential pricing.

Q259. **What status did India receive in the Eurodrone Programme?**
Ans: India became an Observer State in the Eurodrone Programme.

Q260. **Who won the 9th Johor International Open Chess Tournament?**
Ans: Indian Grandmaster Iniyan Panneerselvam won the tournament.

Q261. **Who was named ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year?**
Ans: Smriti Mandhana was named ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year.

Q262. **Who won the Australian Open 2025?**
Ans: Jannik Sinner defended his title by defeating Alexander Zverev.

Q263. **Which team won the inaugural Women's Hockey India League?**
Ans: Odisha Warriors won the inaugural Women's Hockey India League.

Q264. **Who became India's highest T20 run-scorer as wicket-keeper?**
Ans: Dinesh Karthik became India's highest T20 run-scorer as wicket-keeper with 7,451 runs.

Q265. **Who will be the first Indian astronaut to command a private space mission?**
Ans: Shubhanshu Shukla will pilot Axiom-4 to ISS.

Q266. **What is BIMTECH's new campus blockchain currency called?**
Ans: BIMTECH launched BIMCOIN as India's first campus blockchain currency.

Q267. **What is the new record for spacewalk set by Sunita Williams?**
Ans: Sunita Williams set a new spacewalk record of 62 hours 6 minutes.

Q268. **What is the theme of World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day 2025?**
Ans: The theme is "Unite, Act, and Eliminate NTDs".

Q269. **How much funds were allocated for healthcare in Budget 2025?**
Ans: Healthcare received ₹98,311 Crore in Budget 2025.

Q270. **Who was honored with the Padma Shri for revolutionizing apple farming?**
Ans: Hariman Sharma received Padma Shri for developing HRMN-99 apple variety.

Q271. **Which Indian short film was nominated for the 97th Academy Awards?**
Ans: 'Anuja' was nominated for Best Live Action Short Film category.

Q272. **What is the total budget allocation in Union Budget 2025-26?**
Ans: Union Budget 2025-26 allocated ₹50.65 Lakh Crore.

Q273. **How much capital infusion was approved for IFCI?**
Ans: Government approved ₹500 Crore infusion for IFCI.

Q274. **What are India's current forex reserves according to the news?**
Ans: Forex reserves declined to $625.87 billion.

Q275. **Who won the ICC ODI Cricketer Award from Afghanistan?**
Ans: Azmatullah Omarzai won the ICC ODI Cricketer Award.

Q276. **Which state topped the Khelo India Winter Games?**
Ans: Ladakh topped the Khelo India Winter Games.

Q277. **What is the name of SEBI's new digital repository launched on Republic Day 2025?**
Ans: SEBI launched 'Dharohar – Milestones in the Indian Securities Market'.

Q278. **What does the UAE declare 2025 as?**
Ans: UAE declared 2025 as the "Year of Community".

Q279. **Who was appointed as India's Ambassador to Israel?**
Ans: Jitender Pal Singh was appointed as India's Ambassador to Israel.

Q280. **Which bank adopted Clari5's system for cybercrime complaint handling?**
Ans: Punjab National Bank adopted Clari5's system.

Q281. **What is the name of SEBI's new portal for technical glitches?**
Ans: SEBI launched iSPOT (Integrated SEBI Portal for Technical Glitches).

Q282. Which state will host the 23rd National Para Athletics Championship 2025?
Ans: Tamil Nadu will host the championship.

Q283. Who resigned as ICC CEO before Champions Trophy 2025?
Ans: Geoff Allardice resigned as ICC CEO.

Q284. How many MoUs did India sign with Indonesia during President Subianto's visit? Ans. India signed 5 MoUs with Indonesia.

Q285. What is the theme of International Customs Day 2025?
Ans: The theme is "Efficiency, Security, and Prosperity."

Q286. When is Indian Newspaper Day celebrated?
Ans: Indian Newspaper Day is celebrated on January 29.

Q287. Who won the ICC Women's Championship?
Ans: Australia won their third consecutive ICC Women's Championship title.

Q288. What is the size of the MSME Credit Guarantee Scheme launched by the government?
Ans: Government launched ₹100 Crore MSME Credit Guarantee Scheme.

Q289. Which Indian sculptor passed away at 76?
Ans: Sculptor Latika Katt passed away at 76.

Q290. What is the name of Haryana's new app for sanitary napkin distribution?
Ans: Haryana launched 'Samman Sanjeevani' App.

Q291. How many countries are now part of GPAP?
Ans: Global Plastic Action Partnership expanded to 25 countries.

Q292. Which olympian and dentist passed away at 94?
Ans: Greg Bell, Olympic Long Jump Gold Medallist, passed away at 94.

Q293. What is the depth target for India's first human submersible in 2025?
Ans: The submersible aims for 500m depth in 2025.

Q294. When was the 160th Birth Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai celebrated?
Ans: The anniversary was celebrated as part of January 2025 news.

Q295. What is X (formerly Twitter) planning to launch?
Ans: X is planning to launch X Money, a Visa-powered digital wallet.

Q296. Which award did Doordarshan receive for electoral campaigns?
Ans: Doordarshan was recognized for voter awareness series "Chunav Ka Parv Desh Ka Garv".

Q297. How many deaths occurred in the Maha Kumbh tragedy?
Ans: 30 people died and 60 were injured in the Prayagraj stampede.

Q298. What disease saw a surge in cases in Pune?
Ans: Guillain-Barré Syndrome cases surged in Pune.

Q299. Which festival did Kathmandu host for the first time?
Ans: Kathmandu hosted the first Pashmina Festival.

Q300. What is the name of Tata Steel's new initiative supporting the National Hydrogen Mission?
Ans: Tata Steel pioneered hydrogen-transport pipes.

Q301. Who won the Maharaja Hari Singh Award?
Ans: Manoj Sinha was honored with the award for reforms in Jammu and Kashmir.

Q302. What is the theme of the BRICS Youth Entrepreneurship Meet scheduled for March 2025?
Ans: The theme is "Youth Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Growth".

Q303. Which Australian cricketer joined the 10,000-run club in Test cricket?
Ans: Steve Smith became the 15th player to score 10,000+ Test runs.

Q304. What was declared as India's first Ramsar sites?
Ans: First-ever Ramsar sites were declared for Jharkhand & Sikkim.

Q305. How much disaster mitigation fund was allocated by the Centre?
Ans: Centre allocated ₹3,027 Crore for disaster mitigation.

Q306. Which state signed an MoU with Bhashini for multi-lingual governance?
Ans: Tripura signed the MoU with Bhashini.

Q307. What is the name of Odisha's women empowerment scheme?
Ans: Odisha launched the Subhadra Scheme.

Q308. Who received the BCCI Lifetime Achievement Award 2024?
Ans: Sachin Tendulkar received the BCCI Lifetime Achievement Award.

Q309. What is ISRO's achievement from Sriharikota?
Ans: ISRO successfully launched NVS-02, marking its 100th mission from Sriharikota.

Q310. Which banks were penalized by RBI for regulatory non-compliance?
Ans: RBI fined Canara Bank, Bank of India, and J&K Bank.

Q311. **What is JioSoundPay's new feature for small businesses?**

Ans: JioSoundPay launched free UPI payment feature.

Q312. **Who was given additional charge as DG of BCAS?**

Ans: Amrit Mohan Prasad was given additional charge.

Q313. **Which city hosted the Sci-Fi Science Film Festival?**

Ans: Goa CM inaugurated the Sci-Fi Science Film Festival.

Q314. **What is the focus of PM Modi's 'Utkarsh Odisha' conclave?**

Ans: The conclave focuses on boosting industrial growth.

Q315. **Who won the ICC Player of the Year Award from New Zealand?**

Ans: Melie Kerr won the ICC Player of the Year Award.

Q316. **Where will the 38th National Games be held?**

Ans: PM Modi inaugurated the 38th National Games in Dehradun.

Q317. **What is the new requirement for UPI transaction IDs from Feb 1, 2025?**

Ans: UPI transaction IDs must be alphanumeric with no special characters allowed.

Q318. **When is International Day of Clean Energy observed?**

Ans: International Day of Clean Energy is observed on January 26.