

# MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE

## JANUARY 2025



- Detailed release for all exams
- Static GK points included
- Category-wise Compilation
- Live Table of Content

## Contents

Important Days & themes .....	3
Appointments.....	11
Awards .....	19
Books .....	34
Obituaries.....	35
State.....	38
J&K .....	38
DELHI.....	38
HIMANCHAL PRADESH .....	39
UTTRAKHAND.....	39
PUNJAB.....	40
HARYANA .....	41
UTTAR PRADESH .....	41
MADHYA PRADESH .....	46
CHATTISGARH .....	46
WEST BENGAL .....	47
ODISHA.....	47
ASSAM.....	48
SIKKIM .....	49
ARUNANCHAL PRADESH .....	50
Manipur.....	51
MIZORAM.....	51
TRIPURA .....	52
RAJASTHAN .....	53
GUJRAT.....	53
MAHARASHTRA.....	54
KARNATAKA .....	55
Telangana .....	56
ANDHRA PRADESH .....	58
TAMIL NADU .....	58
KERALA.....	59
Defence .....	60
Sci & tech .....	66
Environment.....	74
Index/ report .....	81
National News .....	92
Finance.....	114
International News .....	115
Sports.....	128
Economic Survey.....	138

## Important Days & themes

DATE	DAY	THEME/ REMARK
1st January	DRDO Foundation Day	<p>DRDO is the R&amp;D wing of Ministry of Defence, Govt of India</p> <p>DRDO was formed in 1958 from the amalgamation of the then already functioning Technical Development Establishment (TDEs) of the Indian Army and the Directorate of Technical Development &amp; Production (DTDP) with the Defence Science Organisation (DSO).</p> <p>Chairman DRDO Dr Samir V Kamat</p> <p>India declared 2025 as the 'year of defence reforms' with an aim to transform the military into a technologically-advanced force</p>
1 <sup>st</sup> January	Global Family Day	Highlighting the vital link between world peace and strong familial bonds, the day encourages action-oriented efforts to resolve conflicts
3 <sup>rd</sup> January	International Mind Body Wellness Day	
4 <sup>th</sup> January	World Braille Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ celebrated since 2019, is observed to raise awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication</li> </ul> <p><b>What is Braille?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Braille is a tactile representation of alphabetic and numerical symbols using six dots to represent each letter and number, and even musical, mathematical and scientific symbols.</li> <li>▪ <b>Braille (named after its inventor in 19th century France, Louis Braille)</b> is used by blind and partially sighted people to read the same books and periodicals as those printed in a visual font.</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup> January	National Birds Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Bird Day, has American origins, to raise awareness about the value of birds in the ecosystem.</li> <li>▪ first celebration in 2002.</li> </ul>
6 <sup>th</sup> January	World Day of War Orphans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ to raise awareness about the struggles faced by children orphaned due to wars and conflicts.</li> <li>▪ World Orphans Day is declared by the Worldwide Organization for Charity (WOC) Previously known as the World Orphan Centre (WOC).</li> </ul>
8 <sup>th</sup> January	Earth's Rotations Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ January 8 is recognized as Earth Rotation Day every year.</li> <li>▪ marks the anniversary of French physicist Leon Foucault's 1851 proof that the Earth revolves on its axis.</li> </ul>

### 9 January - Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

- celebrated once in two years on 9th January
- The day was chosen to mark the return of Mahatma Gandhi to India on 9 January 1915 to India
- The first Pravasi Bhartiya Divas/Convention was organised in 2003 in New Delhi from 9-11 January 2003. flagship event of the Ministry of External Affairs
- It was organised annually but since 2015, it has been organised once every two years

- The 18th edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention is scheduled to be held from 8–10 January 2025 at Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- Theme - "Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat".
- The Pravasi Bhartiya Divas is celebrated on the recommendation of Dr. L.M. Singhvi's 'High-Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora'.
- Prime Minister will remotely flag-off the inaugural journey of the Pravasi Bharatiya Express, a special Tourist Train for the Indian diaspora,
- which will depart from the Nizamuddin Railway Station in Delhi and would travel to multiple destinations of touristic and religious importance in India for a period of three weeks.
- The Pravasi Bharatiya Express will be conducted under the Pravasi Teertha Darshan Yojana of the Ministry of External Affairs.
- The Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will be organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Odisha government.

#### Chief Guest of the 18th Pravasi/Youth Bharatiya Divas Convention

- The Chief Guest of the 18th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas Convention will be Christine Carla Kangaloo, President of Trinidad & Tobago.
- The Chief Guest of the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will be Dr. Dev Pragad, CEO of the American magazine Newsweek.

Date	Day	Remark
10 <sup>th</sup> January	World Hindi Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Also known as Vishwa Hindi Diwas</li> <li>▪ On 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1975, Indira Gandhi inaugurated the first World Hindi Conference in Nagpur.</li> <li>▪ Celebrated since January 10, 2006 by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs</li> <li>▪ first time Hindi was spoken in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1949.</li> <li>▪ Hindi Diwas is celebrated on September 14 annually.</li> </ul>
11 <sup>th</sup> January	National Human Trafficking Awareness Day	<p>In 2007, National Human Trafficking Awareness Day was announced by the US Senate to be celebrated on January 11.</p> <p>World Day Against Trafficking in Persons - 30 July</p> <p>Theme - Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking</p>

#### 12 January - National Youth Day

- Rashtriya Yuva Divas also known as Vivekanand Jayanti
- Every year since 1985, the Government of India observes January 12 as National Youth Day and the week commencing from that day, as National Youth Week.
- to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda
- The youth, defined as those within the age group of 15-29 years, make up nearly 40% of India's total population.
- This year, the annual National Youth Festival (NYF) on January 10-12 at Bharat Mandapam, will undergo a transformative reimagining as the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue.
- Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment formally inaugurated the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue on 11 January 2025.
- Swami Vivekananda (12 January 1863 – 4 July 1902), born Narendranath Datta was an Indian Hindu monk, philosopher, author, religious teacher, and the chief disciple of the Indian mystic Ramakrishna. He was a key figure in the introduction of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world

**15 January 2024 – 77<sup>th</sup> Indian Army Day**

- to remember the occasion when **General (later Field Marshal) KM Cariappa** took over the command of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief in 1949 and became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of Independent India.
- Pune is set to host the 77<sup>th</sup> Indian Army Day Parade for the first time on 15 January 2025.
- Traditionally held in Delhi, the parade began rotating to different cities in 2023, starting with Bengaluru, followed by Lucknow in 2024.
- **General KM Cariappa** was one of only two Indian Army leaders to be appointed to the position of **field marshal**.
- **Sam Manekshaw** was the first field marshal of the Indian Army, and was promoted on **1 January 1973**. The second was **Kodandera M. Cariappa**, who was promoted to the rank on **15 January 1986**.



- The Indian Army is driven by the **motto of Service before self**
- The Defence Ministry has declared **2025 as the “Year of Reforms,”**
- The Army is divided into six operational commands (field armies) and one training command, each under the command of a Lieutenant General, who has an equal status to the Vice-Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS), working under the control of Army HQ in New Delhi.
- **General Upendra Dwivedi** is the current General of the Indian Army or **Chief of the Army Staff**
- The current VCOAS is Lieutenant General N. S. Raja Subramani

**16 January - National Startup Day**

- Declared by PM Modi in 2022
- to mark the Startup India initiative launched by the government on **January 16, 2016**.
- With 1.59 lakh startups, India is now world's 3rd largest startup ecosystem (after US & China)
- **Startup Policy Forum (SPF)**, with the support of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Startup India, are launching flagship initiatives- **Startup Baithak** and **Startup Baatchet**, to commemorate National Startup Day 2025.
- The event scheduled for **January 15-16, 2025**, aims to foster collaboration among stakeholders and shape the future trajectory of India's innovation landscape.
- The **Startup Baithak** is a series of 12 exclusive, closed-door roundtables held over two days in Bharat Mandapam - and will witness participation from startups including Swiggy, Zerodha, Razorpay, CRED, Pine Labs, Groww, OYO, Practo, Dream11, MPL, CarDekho, Acko, Ixigo, MobiKwik, One Card, ProgCap, Digantara, BharatPe, Physics Wallah and Jupiter, amongst others.
- On the sidelines of Baithak, SPF will also host Startup **Baatchet**-an informal networking evening on **January 15, 2025**.

<b>19th January</b>	<b>National Disaster Response Force Raising Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is the world's largest rapid reaction force dedicated to disaster response.</b></li> <li>▪ NDRF was formed on January 19, 2006 under the <b>Disaster Management Act, 2005</b> with the purpose of a <b>specialised response to natural and man-made disasters</b></li> <li>▪ The Act designates the <b>Ministry of Home Affairs</b> as the nodal ministry for steering the overall national disaster management.</li> </ul>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Kokborok Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>On January 19th, the Indian State of Tripura observes Kokborok Day, also known as Tripuri Language Day, to foster the Kokborok language.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>The day honours the year 1979 when Kokborok became officially recognized for the first time.</b></li> <li>▪ In 1900, Thakur Radhamohan Debbarma spelt 'Kokborok' in a published grammar of the language.</li> </ul>
<b>20<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Penguin Awareness Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Every year on January 20, Penguin Awareness Day is observed</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Five species of penguin are found in Antarctica and it's no surprise that this massive frozen landmass has earned the nickname of 'the Land of the Penguin'</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Emperor Penguin is the largest of all the different kinds of penguin species.</b></li> </ul>

#### **23<sup>rd</sup> January Parakram Diwas 2025**

- To honour Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 128th birth anniversary on Jan 23
- a grand celebration is set to unfold from 23rd January to 25th January, 2025 at Barabati fort in the historic city of Cuttack, the birthplace of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

#### **About Subhas Chandra Bose**

- He was born on January 23, 1897, in Cuttack, Orissa.
- In 1923, Bose was elected the President of the All India Youth Congress and also the Secretary of Bengal State Congress.
- Bose then joined the Indian National Congress and actively participated in the Indian independence movement.
- Bose took over as the elected President of Indian National Congress in 1938 (Haripur) and stood for unqualified Swaraj (self-governance) and the use of force against the British which then combated against Mahatma Gandhi and his views.
- Bose was re-elected in 1939 (Tripuri) but soon resigned from the presidency and formed the All India Forward Bloc, aimed at unifying all the anti-British forces in India.
- In 1921, Bose took over the editorship of the newspaper 'Forward', founded by Chittaranjan Das's Swaraj Party.
- He reached Japanese-controlled Singapore from Germany in July 1943, issued from there his famous call, 'Delhi Chalo', and announced the formation of the Azad Hind Government and the Indian National Army on 21st October 1943.
- The INA was first formed under Mohan Singh and Japanese Major Iwaichi Fujiwara and comprised Indian prisoners of war of the British-Indian Army captured by Japan in the Malayan (present-day Malaysia) campaign and at Singapore.

<b>24<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>International Day of Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>The International Day of Education is celebrated on January 24 annually.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>The theme "AI and education: Preserving human agency in a world of automation".</b></li> <li>▪ Since 2018, the day has been authored by 59 member states.</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The resolution for the same was passed in the UN General Assembly on December 3, 2018.</li> <li>▪ The first International Day of Education was observed on January 24, 2019.</li> <li>▪ Meanwhile, India celebrates its <a href="#">National Education Day celebrated on November 11</a> to mark the birth anniversary of India's first Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.</li> </ul>
24 <sup>th</sup> January	National Girl Child Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>National Girl Child Day is observed on 24 January every year, with an aim to spread awareness about the challenges faced by girls in Indian Society.</b></li> <li>▪ National Girl Child Day was implemented for the first time by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2008</li> <li>▪ THEME: "Empowering Girls for a Bright Future."</li> <li>▪ launch of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao by the Prime Minister on 22 January 2015. Objective: Address the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and promote women's empowerment.</li> </ul>

#### 25<sup>TH</sup> January National Voters' Day

- The 15th National Voters' Day (NVD) will be celebrated across the country on 25th January.
- The Election Commission also celebrates 75 years of its dedicated service to the nation.
- This Year's Theme "**Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure"**
- The first copy of the ECI Coffee Table Book titled "**India Votes 2024: A saga of democracy**" will be presented to the Hon'ble President by Chief Election Commissioner Shri Rajiv Kumar.
- A short clip of the upcoming docu-drama series "**India Decides**" produced by Warner Bros Discovery will also be released
- An ECI publication "**Belief in the Ballot: Human stories shaping India's 2024 elections**" will also be presented to the Hon'ble President by the Commission.
- Since 2011, National Voters' Day has been observed annually on January 25 to commemorate the foundation day of the Election Commission of India, established on January 25, 1950,
- The Election Commission of India is a permanent and independent constitutional authority, established under Article 324 of the Indian Constitution.
- Primary role: ECI is responsible for conducting elections to the Parliament, state legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice President of India.
- It does not oversee elections for urban local bodies like municipalities and panchayats, which the State Election Commissions manage.

#### Constitutional provisions:

- Article 324 empowers the ECI to supervise, direct, and control the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of all elections to Parliament and state legislatures.
- Article 325 ensures no one is excluded from the electoral rolls based on religion, race, caste, or sex.
- Article 326 establishes adult suffrage (voting rights for all citizens aged 18 and above) as the basis for elections.
- Article 327 allows Parliament to make laws regarding elections to Parliament and state legislatures.
- Article 328 empowers state legislatures to make provisions related to elections within the state.
- Article 329 prohibits judicial interference in electoral matters.

#### 25th January National Tourism Day

- National Tourism Day, observed on 25th January every year, aims to spread awareness about the importance of the tourism sector in contributing to the growth of the country in terms of finance as well as culture and diversity.
- The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) also celebrates World Tourism Day on September 27 each year, aligning with global tourism trends.

- National Tourism Day origin can be traced back to the 1948 post-independence India era. The Ministry of Tourism took the initiative of promoting the tourism sector in order to improve economic growth and cultural diplomacy.

#### Tourism statistics of India as last updated on August 2024

- Foreign Tourist Arrivals: 6.36 Lakh
- Foreign Exchange Earnings: 20,006 Crore
- Indian Nationals' Departures: 27.01 Lakh

#### Top 5 States for Tourism in India

S.No	State	Key Highlights
1	Tamil Nadu	Among the top states with significant tourist footfall.
2	Uttar Pradesh	Renowned for cultural and heritage tourism.
3	Andhra Pradesh	Popular for its religious and coastal attractions.
4	Karnataka	Known for historical, wildlife, and natural sites.
5	Maharashtra	A combination of urban tourism and cultural heritage.

Date	Day	Remark
26 <sup>th</sup> January	Republic Day	The theme of the 2025 Republic Day tableaux was Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas.
26 <sup>th</sup> January	International Customs Day 2025	dedicated to the united efforts of Customs to support people and businesses Theme: Customs Delivering on its Commitment to Efficiency, Security, and Prosperity Instituted by the World Customs Organization (WCO) The WCO, originally known as the Customs Cooperation Council (CCC), was established in 1952. The inaugural session of the CCC was held on January 26, 1953, in Brussels, Belgium.
26 <sup>th</sup> January	International Day of Clean Energy 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>declared in 2023 by the UN General Assembly</li> <li>26 January is also the founding date of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), a global intergovernmental agency established in 2009 to support countries in their energy transitions</li> </ul>
27 January	National Geographic Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To honor the foundation of the National Geographic Society on January 27, 1888, in Washington, D.C., USA,</li> <li>It is one of the most renowned organizations in the fields of science, exploration, and environmental conservation.</li> </ul>
27 January	International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>also known as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.</li> <li>designated by the United Nations to mark the anniversary of the January 27, 1945, liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi concentration and death camp</li> </ul>
28 <sup>th</sup> January	International Data Privacy Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2006 Council of Europe initiated International Data Privacy Day, also known as Data Protection Day</li> <li>This date marks the anniversary of the opening for signature of the Council of Europe's "Convention 108," the first legally binding international instrument on data protection in 1981</li> <li>This day is now celebrated worldwide, under the name International Data Protection Day" or "Privacy Day</li> <li>January 27 – 31, 2025: Data Privacy Week</li> <li>Theme - Take control of your data</li> </ul>

29 <sup>th</sup> January	Indian Newspaper Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ commemorate the birth of the country's first-ever printed newspaper.</li> <li>▪ On January 29, 1780, Ireland-born James Augustus Hicky published the first edition of 'Hicky's Bengal Gazette', India's first newspaper.</li> <li>▪ The paper survived for just two years in India before being seized by the British administration in 1782</li> </ul>
30 <sup>th</sup> January	Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On this day in 1948 Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated in the Birla House in New Delhi by Nathuram Godse.</li> <li>▪ India observes Martyrs' Day by paying tribute to Mahatma Gandhi's Samadhi at Raj Ghat in Delhi</li> <li>▪ Martyr's Day also observed on March 23<sup>rd</sup> to remember the sacrifice of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru.</li> </ul>

- **Some of his literary works are as follows:**
  - Hind Swaraj, published in Gujarati in 1909.
  - He edited several newspapers which included
    - Harijan in Gujarati, in Hindi and the English language;
    - Indian Opinion, Young India, in English,
    - Navajivan, a Gujarati monthly.
  - Gandhi also wrote his autobiography, **The Story of My Experiments with Truth**.
  - His other autobiographies included: Satyagraha in South Africa, Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule.

Date	Day	Remark
30 January	World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ THEME : Unite. Act. Eliminate.</li> <li>▪ NTDs are a diverse group of 20 conditions/diseases that are mainly prevalent in tropical areas, where they thrive among people living in impoverished communities.</li> <li>▪ These include Guinea worm, Chikungunya, Dengue, Kala Azar (Visceral Leishmaniasis), and Elephantiasis (Lymphatic Filariasis), among others, and India is home to about 12 NTDs.</li> </ul>
30 <sup>th</sup> January	World Leprosy Day in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ World Leprosy Day is observed on the last Sunday of January, every year. In 2025, the World Leprosy Day is on 26 January.</li> <li>▪ In India, it is observed on 30 January every year, coinciding with the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.</li> <li>▪ Leprosy is a neglected tropical disease (NTD)</li> <li>▪ The theme for World Leprosy Day 2025 is "Unite. Act. Eliminate."</li> </ul>
31 <sup>st</sup> January	International Zebra Day	Now listed as "Near Threatened" on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Endangered Species.

### Important festivals

#### 13 January Lohri Festival

- Lohri is a popular Indian Punjabi folk festival primarily celebrated in the country's northern regions.
- Lohri is a festival that signifies the end of winter and the start of spring. The January sugarcane harvest is celebrated in the Lohri festival
- it is celebrated one night before Makar Sankranti festival



- Dulla Bhatti: The festival is associated with the legend of **Dulla Bhatti**, a local hero who rescued Punjabi girls from the Mughals. Folk songs about Dulla Bhatti are a part of the Lohri festival.
- It is commemorated by the **lighting of a holy bonfire**, which is considered as a symbol of fertility, auspiciousness, and good fortune, especially for new brides and newborn children.



### Sankranti, Bihu & Pongal

#### Makar Sankranti 2025 - January 14

- As the sun moves north, bringing longer days and warmer nights, India prepares to celebrate Makar Sankranti
- a significant shift in the astrological and agricultural cycles and is observed throughout India to worship Lord Surya, the Sun God when the sun enters Makara (**Capricorn**) from the Dhanu Rashi (**Sagittarius**).
- According to Hindu mythology, Sankranti was a divinity who slew the demon Sankarasur on the day after Makar Sankranti, also known as Karidin or Kinkrant. Similarly, Devi murdered the evil Kinkarasur.

#### Different Names of Sankranti Festival in Different States

- In UP and Gujarat, the festival is known as Uttarayan or Kicheri.
- In Odisha, it is called Makara Chaula
- In Bihar - Til Sakraat or Dahi Chura.
- Kerala – Makara vilakku.
- Karnataka - Suggi.
- Tamil Nadu - as Pongal
- In Maharashtra and Goa - Haldi Kumkum or Maghi Sankrant.
- In Himachal Pradesh - Magha Saaji.
- In Assam - Magh Bihu or Bhogali Bihu.
- In West Bengal - Poush Sankranti.



**Pongal 2025 :** Pongal, one of the most significant Hindu festivals of South India, especially in Tamil Nadu.

- The word Pongal means 'overflow' or 'boiling over'.
- Also known as **Thai Pongal**, the four-day occasion is observed in the month of Thai, when crops such as rice are harvested and people show their gratitude to the almighty and the generosity of the land.

- This year, Pongal will start on **January 14, 2025** and continue for four days, concluding on **January 17, 2025 (Friday)**.
- Tamilans celebrate the occasion by making **traditional designs known as kolams** in their homes
- Additionally, the traditional Pongal dish is made from newly harvested rice and is further offered to the Sun God.

#### The four days of Pongal

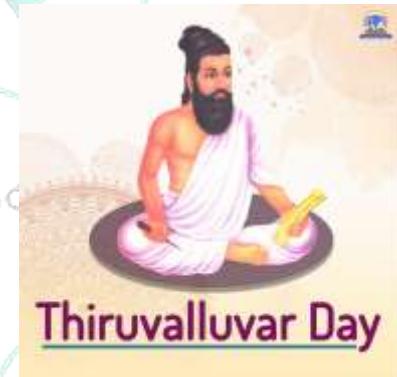
- Bhogi Pongal:** The first day of Pongal, when people burn old items and celebrate new possessions.
- Surya Pongal or Thai Pongal:** The second day of Pongal, when people worship the Sun God.
- Mattu Pongal:** The third day of Pongal, when people worship cattle.
- Kaanum Pongal:** The fourth day of Pongal, when people perform songs and dances, and exchange gifts

#### **Bihu:**

- People celebrate **Magh Bihu/Bhogali Bihu** (celebration of the harvest season).
- Bihu is the **main festival of Assam. It is celebrated three times a year:**
  - Rongali or Bohag Bihu** is observed in **April** (Assamese New Year and the onset of spring).
  - Kongali or Kati Bihu** observed in **October**
  - Bhogali or Magh Bihu** observed in **January** (festival of food).
- Festive food - pitha** (rice cake) and **larus** (traditional food made of rice, coconut) are prepared.
- The **Dimasa Kacharis tribe** is known to be the festival's first-known ancestors.
- Rituals**
  - Magh Bihu is celebrated over two days.**
  - The first day is known as **Uruka or Bihu eve.**
  - On this day, **Meiji (bonfire)** is burnt with people singing Bihu songs, beating Dhol, and celebrating with their loved ones.
  - The main Magh Bihu is observed the next day.

#### **Thiruvalluvar Day**

- usually observed either on **January 15 or 16** in Tamil Nadu and is a part of Pongal celebrations.
- Thiruvalluvar was a poet and philosopher, is **regarded as a cultural icon by Tamils.**
- He is fondly referred to as Valluvar by Tamils.
- Thiruvalluvar's primary work **Thirukkural contains 1330 couplets (kurals)** a collection of couplets on ethics, politics, economy and love.
- The text is divided into three parts with teachings on dharma, artha, and kama (virtue, wealth and love).



## Appointments

#### V Narayanan appointed as new ISRO chief

- V. Narayanan is set to succeed S. Somanath as the next chairman of ISRO, and also as the secretary of the Department of Space.
- Dr V Narayanan is currently the director of Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), Thiruvananthapuram; he will take over as **ISRO chief on January 14.**
- Joined the space agency in 1984
- Dr Narayanan has **worked towards developing key technologies** used in the launch vehicles of today, including the workhorse **PSLV** and the country's heaviest **LVM3.**
- A modified LVM3 rocket will be used in the **upcoming Gaganyaan mission** to carry the astronauts to space.
- An alumnus of the Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur.
- Dr. Narayanan has been heading the ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) since January 2018.
- He was the Project Director for the **C25 Cryogenic Project** of the **GSLV Mk III vehicle.**



- As project director, Dr Narayanan and his team conceived, designed, and developed the cryogenic propulsion systems still used in LVM3. With this, India became the sixth country in the world to have the technology.
- Chairman of the National Expert Committee constituted to study the reasons for the hard landing of Chandrayaan-2.
- He has also finalised the Propulsion Road Map of ISRO for the next 20 years (2017-2037)

#### ISRO STATIC

- **Establishment of ISRO:** ISRO was established on **August 15, 1969**, with headquarters in **Bengaluru**, to replace INCOSPAR with a broader mandate to harness space technology.
- **Establishment of INCOSPAR:** Recognising the need for space research, it was established in 1962 under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) at the suggestion of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai.
- **Vikram Sarabhai** served as the **Chairman of the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR)** from 1962 to 1969 and later served as the **first chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** from 1969 to 1971.

#### Key Centres of ISRO

ISRO Centres	Specification
Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram	Building of Launch Vehicles
U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), Bengaluru	Designing and Development of Satellites
Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota	Integration and launching of satellites
Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), Valiamala and Bengaluru	Development of liquid stages including cryogenic stage
Space Applications Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad	Sensors for Communication and Remote Sensing satellites
National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad	Remote Sensing satellite data reception processing and dissemination

#### New Project director for LVM3 vehicle at VSSC

- Victor Joseph T. appointed as the new project director of the GSLV-MKIII (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mk III) Project at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram.
- The GSLV Mk-III vehicle is now known as the **LVM3**.
- He replaces Beena A.P.

Basic details of LVM3	
Category	- Medium to heavy-lift <b>launch vehicle</b>
Payload Capacity	- GTO (Geosynchronous Transfer Orbits): 4,000 kg - LEO (Low Earth Orbits): 8,000 kg

#### Important LVM3 Missions

LVM3 M1 / Chandrayaan-2 Mission	- Launch Date: July 22, 2019 - Payload: <b>Chandrayaan-2</b> - Remarks: India's second lunar mission, including an orbiter, lander, and rover.
LVM3 M2 / OneWeb India-1 Mission	- Launch Date: October 23, 2022 - Payload: OneWeb Gen-1 satellites - Remarks: <b>India's first commercial launch of the LVM3.</b>
LVM3 M4 / Chandrayaan-3 Moon Mission	- Launch Date: July 14, 2023 - Payload: <b>Chandrayaan-3</b> - Remarks: India's third lunar mission, aimed at exploring the Moon's surface

### Air Commodore Debakinandan Sahu Takes Over As Air Officer Commanding, Base Repair Depot Tughlakabad

- He took over the command from Air Commodore Rishi Seth.



### Faiz Ahmed Kidwai Appointed as DGCA Director General; Ashutosh Agnihotri is new FCI chairman

- Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
- Currently posted as additional secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
- **Ashutosh Agnihotri has been appointed as the chairman and managing director of the Food Corporation of India.**
- Agnihotri is currently posted as additional secretary, Department of Home Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Kamal Kishore Soan has been appointed as the Additional Secretary and Mission Director of the Jal Jeevan Mission**, Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.

**Senior IAS Officer Faiz Ahmed Kidwai Appointed as DGCA Director General**



### Finance Secretary Shri Tuhin Kanta Pandey appointed Secretary, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance

- Tuhin Kanta Pandey has been appointed as Secretary, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.
- **He will continue to hold the designation of Finance Secretary.**



### Justice Upadhyay new chief justice of Delhi High Court

- **Was serving as Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court**, Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyay appointed as the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court.
- **Justice Vibhu Bakhrus is currently serving as acting Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court** after Justice Manmohan was elevated to the Supreme Court.
- **Justice Alok Adarsh**, Chief Justice of Telangana High Court was posted as the **Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court**.
- **Justice Sujoy Paul** appointed as new **Chief Justice of Telangana High Court**



### Keshavamurthy elected president of Urological Society of India



### Nripendra Mishra reappointed Chairperson of PM Museum & Library Society

- The Prime Ministers' Museum & Library (PMML) society and executive council have been reconstituted with former Principal Secretary to Prime Minister, Nripendra Mishra, getting another five year term as the organisation's chairperson.
- Its term expired on January 13, 2025, the Ministry of Culture, in an order issued on the same day, notified the reconstitution of the body for a five-year term.
- There have been several new entrants at the premier institution's society — including former Union Minister Smriti Irani, former NITI Aayog Vice-chairman Rajiv Kumar, retired Army General Syed Ata Hasnain, filmmaker Shekhar Kapur and Sanskar Bharati's Vasudev Kamath.
- The key decision-making body of PMML — helmed by Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) as its president, and Defence Minister [Rajnath Singh](#) as vice-president — has also been expanded to now have 34 members, instead of 29 earlier.



- the term of the members nominated to the society and the executive council of PMML shall be for a period of five years or until further orders, whichever is earlier
- The Prime Minister's Museum and Library Society was established by the Government of India on 1 April 1966 to manage the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, now known as the Prime Minister's Museum and Library.
- It is located in the historic Teen Murti complex, New Delhi.
- It was formerly the residence of the Commander in Chief of India.
- In August 1948 it became the official residence of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India and remained so until his death.
- The Prime Minister's Museum dedicated to the 15 Prime Ministers of India was opened to the public on 21 April 2022 .
- This is the first formal notification for the new society after the name of the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML) was changed to PMML in 2023.

#### Nidhi Khare Gets Additional Charge as MNRE Secretary

- Nidhi Khare, secretary of Department of Consumers Affairs, a 1992-batch IAS officer, has been given the additional charge of secretary of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- Prashant Kumar Singh, secretary MNRE, was repatriated to Manipur to serve as the chief secretary.
- Singh had taken charge as secretary MNRE in October



#### Vineet Joshi Takes Charge as Secretary of Higher Education

- Shri Vineet Joshi assumed charge as Secretary, Department of Higher Education in Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.
- Before this appointment, he served as the Chief Secretary of Manipur.
- He has held several prominent positions in the education sector, including Director-General of the National Testing Agency (NTA), Chairman of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Education.



#### IPS officer Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal of T.N. cadre posted to Border Security Force

- Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal, 1994-Batch IPS officer belonging to the Tamil Nadu cadre will be posted as Additional Director-General of Police, BSF, for a period of four years.
- Mr. Aggarwal served in the Central Bureau of Investigation as its Joint Director in Chandigarh.
- He is the recipient of the President Police Medal for Distinguished Service and Police Medal for Meritorious Service.
- It is one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) of India and was raised in December 1965.
- It was raised in the wake of the 1965 War to ensure the security of the borders of India.
- It is the only CAPF which has its own Water Wing, Air Wing and other ancillary units.
- The Force Headquarters is in New Delhi.
- It works under the administrative control of Ministry of Home Affairs.



#### THE SEVEN CENTRAL ARMED POLICE FORCES



#### Gyanendra Pratap Singh Appointed as CRPF Director General

- Assam police chief Gyanendra Pratap Singh has been appointed Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

- Mr. Singh is a 1991 batch Indian Police Service officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre.
- He will serve as the CRPF chief until further orders or until his superannuation on January 31, 2027.
- The new CRPF DG has previously served in the special protection group (SPG) and the national investigation agency (NIA).
- Last month, the ministry of home affairs (MHA) issued an order assigning the additional charge of CRPF DG to Vitul Kumar following the retirement of incumbent Anish Dayal Singh on December 31.
- The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is the premier central police force of the Union of India for internal security.
- It functions under the authority of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of the Government of India.
- Originally constituted as the **Crown Representative Police in 1939**, it is one of the oldest Central para-military forces (now termed as Central Armed Police Force).
- It became the Central Reserve Police Force on enactment of the **CRPF Act** on 28th December 1949.



#### Justice Arun Mishra: New Ombudsman of BCCI

- Justice Arun Mishra, a former Supreme Court judge, has been appointed as the Ombudsman and Ethics Officer of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- He served in the apex court from July 7, 2014, to September 2, 2020 before being appointed as the chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on June 2, 2021, a position he held until June 1, 2024.
- Appointed as the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court on November 26, 2010. He was later appointed as the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court on December 14, 2012.



#### ICSI elects Dhananjay Shukla as president

- The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) on Sunday appointed Dhananjay Shukla as the president and Pawan G Chandak as the vice president for this year.
- Dhananjay has also served as the vice president of the ICSI for the year 2024.



CS Pawan G Chandak  
Vice President, The ICSI



CS Dhananjay Shukla  
President, The ICSI

#### Sanjiv Ranjan Appointed as Secretary General of Indian Ocean Rim Association

- The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is an inter-governmental organisation formed in 1997 to foster regional economic cooperation.
- The IORA Secretariat is based in Mauritius and is headed by a fixed-term Secretary-General.
- IORA has 23 member states – India, Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.
- It comprises 12 dialogue partners – China, Egypt, the European Union, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, South Korea, the UK and the US. IORA became an observer to the UN General Assembly and the African Union in 2015.



**Bhuvnesh Kumar takes charge as UIDAI CEO**

- IAS officer Bhuvnesh Kumar took charge as the CEO of the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)**, which administers Aadhaar, on **January 1, 2025**.
- Mr. Kumar is **additional secretary** at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (**MEITY**), a post he will continue to hold after this appointment.
- Mr. Kumar succeeds Amit Agrawal**, who was also MEITY additional secretary prior to his June 2023 appointment.



**Bhuvnesh Kumar**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Unique Identification Authority of India

**Manish Singhal Appointed Secretary General of ASSOCHAM**

- Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)** - an apex business chamber
- had earlier worked as **Deputy Secretary General** of The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (**FICCI**).
- He had also worked with various Indian transnational companies, including Tata Motors, Eicher (Volvo), Tata Auto Comp Systems, Moser Baer India and BEML to name a few.
- Singhal succeeds Deepak Sood**, who recently after a five-year stint stepped down to pursue other interests.



**Manish Singhal** appointed as Secretary General of **ASSOCHAM**

**Bharati Kulkarni is the new chief of ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition**

- Physician-scientist Bharati Kulkarni took over as the new director of ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (**NIN**) on January 1, 2025.

**Jitender Pal Singh Appointed as India's New Ambassador to Israel**

- Singh is currently serving as Joint Secretary, in charge of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.
- Capital: Jerusalem
- Currency: New shekel



**SENIOR DIPLOMAT JITENDER PAL SINGH APPOINTED AS INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL**

**Punjab National Bank and Indian Bank Appoint New MDs and CEOs**

- Punjab National Bank announced that the government has approved the appointment of [Canara Bank](#) Executive Director Ashok Chandra as the managing director and CEO of PNB, for a period of three years.
- Binod Kumar ceased to be the executive director of PNB upon his [appointment](#) as managing director & chief executive officer (MD & CEO) of [Indian Bank](#).

**Indian Bank**

- The Bank was incorporated on March 5, 1907 with an Authorized Capital of Rs 20 lakhs and commenced its business on August 15, 1907.
- In the year 1907, the Indian Bank Ltd. had the tree 'Banyan' as a part of its emblem denoting an all-around progress, growth (far and wide) and an ever-increasing prosperity.
- On 1 April 2020 Indian bank and Allahabad bank merged. The

**About Bank of Baroda Bank**

- The bank was founded by the Maharaja of Baroda, Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III on 20 July 1908.
- The bank, along with 13 other major commercial banks of India, was nationalised on 19 July 1969, by the Government of India and has been designated as a profit-making public sector undertaking (PSU).

**LinkedIn appoints Deepak Agarwal as chief AI officer**

- LinkedIn has appointed Deepak Agarwal as their new chief AI officer.
- previously served as the chief AI officer and VP of consumer and trust engineering at lifestyle social media platform Pinterest, confirmed the news on LinkedIn.

**Angel One has announced the appointment of Ambarish Kenghe as its group chief executive officer. Kenghe will assume the role in March 2025****IDBI Bank's board approves re-appointment of Rakesh Sharma as MD & CEO**

- for three years with effect from March 19, 2025.
- Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI)

**Alok Kumar Agarwal Appointed CEO of Zurich Kotak General Insurance**

- Zurich Kotak General Insurance has confirmed the appointment of Alok Kumar Agarwal as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the company.
- Following the board's approval, Agarwal assumed charge on 1 January 2025, succeeding Suresh Agarwal.

**Vedanta Resources Names Deshnee Naidoo as First CEO**

- Vedanta Resources Ltd (VRL), the parent firm of Mumbai-based mining conglomerate Vedanta Ltd, announced the appointment of Deshnee Naidoo as its first Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- Vedanta Resources Limited is a diversified mining company headquartered in London, United Kingdom.
- Vedanta Resources Ltd is demerging its businesses to unlock significant value for stakeholders.



**Maruti Suzuki Re-Appoints Hisashi Takeuchi as MD and CEO**

- Maruti Suzuki India Ltd board has approved the reappointment of Hisashi Takeuchi as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer for a further period of three years with effect from April 1, 2025.

**P. Suriaraj takes charge as executive director of Dhanlaxmi Bank**

- P. Suriaraj has taken charge as executive director of the Dhanlaxmi Bank.
- He was appointed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as executive director of the Bank for a period of three years.
- Dhanlaxmi Bank Ltd. was incorporated in 1927 at Thrissur, Kerala

**Neeraj Parakh Appointed as CEO and Executive Director of Reliance Power**

- Reliance Power appoints Neeraj Parakh as CEO and Executive Director for a three-year term, effective January 20, 2025.

**Ayushmann Khurrana to be ambassador for FICCI Frames**

- FICCI Frames, a media and entertainment convention, has announced Ayushmann Khurrana as the ambassador for its 25th anniversary celebration.
- Industry body Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has selected RISE: Redefining Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence as the theme for the convention this year.

**Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)**

- FICCI is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation established in 1927.
- It is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India



Federation of Indian Chambers  
of Commerce and Industry

**PV Sindhu Partners with PUMA India**

- PV Sindhu, the two-time Olympic medallist and badminton icon, has teamed up with PUMA India in a multi-year partnership, marking the brand's official entry into the badminton scene.
- brand's global roster of elite athletes, including cricketers Harmanpreet Kaur and Mohammed Shami, Olympians Sarabjot Singh and MC Mary Kom, as well as international stars like Usain Bolt and Neymar Jr



## Awards

### Padma Awards for year 2025 announced

- President has approved conferment of **139 Padma Awards** including 1 duo case (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one)
- The list comprises **7 Padma Vibhushan, 19 Padma Bhushan** and **113 Padma Shri** Awards.
- **23** of the awardees are **women**
- **10** persons from the category of **Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI**
- **13** Posthumous awardees.



### About Padma Awards

- Padma Awards - one of the highest civilian Awards of the country, are **conferred in three categories**, namely, **Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri**
- The awards are **announced on the eve of Republic Day** every year.
- These Awards are **conferred by the President of India** at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around **March/ April** every year.
- Padma Awards were **instituted in the year 1954**
- Interruption(s) during the years 1978 and 1979 and 1993 to 1997.

### Padma Vibhushan (7):

- Former Chief Justice of India Justice (retired) **Jagdish Singh Khehar**, who gave a dissenting opinion among the Supreme Court Bench that outlawed triple talaq in 2017
- Gastroenterologist **D. Nageshwara Reddy**
- Kathak dancer **Kumudini Rajnikant Lakhia**
- violinist **Lakshminarayana Subramaniam**
- Iconic writer **M.T. Vasudevan Nair**
- Japan's Suzuki Motor leader **Osamu Suzuki**
- Bhojpuri and Maithili singer **Sharda Sinha**



### Padma Vibhushan (7)

S.No	Name	Field	State/Country
1.	Shri Duvvur Nageshwar Reddy	Medicine	Telangana
2.	Justice (Retd.) Shri Jagdish Singh Khehar	Public Affairs	Chandigarh
3.	Smt. Kumudini Rajnikant Lakhia	Art	Gujarat
4.	Shri Lakshminarayana Subramaniam	Art	Karnataka
5.	Shri M. T. Vasudevan Nair ( <b>Posthumous</b> )	Literature and Education	Kerala
6.	Shri Osamu Suzuki ( <b>Posthumous</b> )	Trade and Industry	Japan
7.	Smt. Sharda Sinha ( <b>Posthumous</b> )	Art	Bihar

### Prominent Padma Bhushan :

- Economist **Bibek Debroy** (posthumously)
- ghazal singer **Pankaj Udhas** (posthumously)
- former Maharashtra Chief Minister **Manohar Joshi** (posthumously)
- former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister **Sushil Kumar Modi** (posthumously)
- Filmmaker **Shekhar Kapur**
- double Olympic bronze medal-winning hockey player **P.R. Sreejesh**
- actor **Anant Nag**
- Tamil star **Ajith Kumar**
- Assam's folk culture exponent **Jatin Goswami**

**Padma Bhushan (19)**

SN	Name	Field	State/Country
1.	Shri A Surya Prakash	Literature and Education-Journalism	Karnataka
2.	Shri Anant Nag	Art	Karnataka
3.	Shri Bibek Debroy ( <b>Posthumous</b> )	Literature and Education	NCT Delhi
4.	Shri Jatin Goswami	Art	Assam
5.	Shri Jose Chacko Periappuram	Medicine	Kerala
6.	Shri Kailash Nath Dikshit	Others-Archaeology	NCT Delhi
7.	Shri Manohar Joshi ( <b>Posthumous</b> )	Public Affairs	Maharashtra
8.	Shri Nalli Kuppuswami Chetti	Trade and Industry	Tamil Nadu
9.	Shri Nandamuri Balakrishna	Art	Andhra Pradesh
10.	Shri P R Sreejesh	Sports	Kerala
11.	Shri Pankaj Patel	Trade and Industry	Gujarat
12.	Shri Pankaj Udhas ( <b>Posthumous</b> )	Art	Maharashtra
13.	Shri Rambahadur Rai	Literature and Education-Journalism	Uttar Pradesh
14.	Sadhvi Ritambhara	Social Work	Uttar Pradesh
15.	Shri S Ajith Kumar	Art	Tamil Nadu
16.	Shri Shekhar Kapur	Art	Maharashtra
17.	Ms. Shobana Chandrakumar	Art	Tamil Nadu
18.	Shri Sushil Kumar Modi ( <b>Posthumous</b> )	Public Affairs	Bihar
19.	Shri Vinod Dham	Science and Engineering	United States of America

**Prominent Padma Shri :**

- recently-retired cricket star **Ravichandran Ashwin**
- Legendary Indian footballer **I. M. Vijayan**
- India's first Paralympic gold medal-winning archer **Harvinder Singh**
- Para athletics coach **Satyapal Singh**
- singer **Arijit Singh**,
- veteran actor **Ashok Laxman Saraf**,
- singer **Jaspinder Narula**,
- Grammy-winning musician **Ricky Kej**
- Ram Mandir architect **Chandrakant Sompura**

**Padma Shri (113)**

SN	Name	Field	State/Country
1.	Shri Adwaita Charan Gadanayak	Art	Odisha
2.	Shri Achyut Ramchandra Palav	Art	Maharashtra
3.	Shri Ajay V Bhatt	Science and Engineering	United States of America
4.	Shri Anil Kumar Boro	Literature and Education	Assam
5.	<b>Shri Arijit Singh</b>	Art	<b>West Bengal</b>
6.	Smt. Arundhati Bhattacharya	Trade and Industry	Maharashtra
7.	Shri Arunoday Saha	Literature and Education	Tripura
8.	Shri Arvind Sharma	Literature and Education	Canada
9.	Shri Ashok Kumar Mahapatra	Medicine	Odisha
10.	Shri Ashok Laxman Saraf	Art	Maharashtra
11.	Shri Ashutosh Sharma	Science and Engineering	Uttar Pradesh
12.	Smt. Ashwini Bhide Deshpande	Art	Maharashtra
13.	Shri Baijnath Maharaj	Others-Spiritualism	Rajasthan
14.	Shri Barry Godfray John	Art	NCT Delhi
15.	Smt. Begam Batool	Art	Rajasthan

16.	Shri Bharat Gupt	Art	NCT Delhi
17.	Shri Bheru Singh Chouhan	Art	Madhya Pradesh
18.	Shri Bhim Singh Bhavesh	Social Work	Bihar
19.	Smt. Bhimavva Doddabalappa Shillekyathara	Art	Karnataka
20.	Shri Budhendra Kumar Jain	Medicine	Madhya Pradesh
21.	Shri C S Vaidyanathan	Public Affairs	NCT Delhi
22.	Shri Chaitram Deochand Pawar	Social Work	Maharashtra
23.	Shri Chandrakant Sheth (Posthumous)	Literature and Education	Gujarat
24.	Shri Chandrakant Sompura	Others-Architecture	Gujarat
25.	Shri Chetan E Chitnis	Science and Engineering	France
26.	Shri David R Syiemlieh	Literature and Education	Meghalaya
27.	Shri Durga Charan Ranbir	Art	Odisha
28.	Shri Farooq Ahmad Mir	Art	Jammu And Kashmir
29.	Shri Ganeshwar Shastri Dravid	Literature and Education	Uttar Pradesh
30.	Smt. Gita Upadhyay	Literature and Education	Assam
31.	Shri Gokul Chandra Das	Art	West Bengal
32.	Shri Guruvayur Dorai	Art	Tamil Nadu
33.	Shri Harchandan Singh Bhatty	Art	Madhya Pradesh
34.	Shri Hariman Sharma	Others-Agriculture	Himachal Pradesh
35.	Shri Harjinder Singh Srinagar Wale	Art	Punjab
36.	Shri Harvinder Singh	Sports	Haryana
37.	Shri Hassan Raghu	Art	Karnataka
38.	Shri Hemant Kumar	Medicine	Bihar
39.	Shri Hriday Narayan Dixit	Literature and Education	Uttar Pradesh
40.	Shri Hugh and Colleen Gantzer(Posthumous)(Duo)*	Literature and Education-Journalism	Uttarakhand
41.	Shri Inivalappil Mani Vijayan	Sports	Kerala
42.	Shri Jagadish Joshi	Literature and Education	Madhya Pradesh
43.	Smt. Jaspinder Narula	Art	Maharashtra
44.	Shri Jonas Masetti	Others-Spiritualism	Brazil
45.	Shri Joynacharan Bathari	Art	Assam
46.	Smt. Jumde Yomgam Gamlin	Social Work	Arunachal Pradesh
47.	Shri K. Damodaran	Others-Culinary	Tamil Nadu
48.	Shri K L Krishna	Literature and Education	Andhra Pradesh
49.	Smt. K Omanakutty Amma	Art	Kerala
50.	Shri Kishore Kunal (Posthumous)	Civil Service	Bihar
51.	Shri L Hangthing	Others-Agriculture	Nagaland
52.	Shri Lakshmi Pathy Ramasubbaiyer	Literature and Education-Journalism	Tamil Nadu
53.	Shri Lalit Kumar Mangotra	Literature and Education	Jammu And Kashmir
54.	Shri Lama Lobzang (Posthumous)	Others-Spiritualism	Ladakh
55.	Smt. Libia Lobo Sardesai	Social Work	Goa
56.	Shri M D Srinivas	Science and Engineering	Tamil Nadu
57.	Shri Madugula Nagaphani Sarma	Art	Andhra Pradesh
58.	Shri Mahabir Nayak	Art	Jharkhand
59.	Smt. Mamata Shankar	Art	West Bengal
60.	Shri Manda Krishna Madiga	Public Affairs	Telangana
61.	Shri Maruti Bhujangrao Chitampalli	Literature and Education	Maharashtra
62.	Shri Miriyala Apparao (Posthumous)	Art	Andhra Pradesh

63.	Shri Nagendra Nath Roy	Literature and Education	West Bengal
64.	Shri Narayan (Bhulai Bhai) (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Uttar Pradesh
65.	Shri Naren Gurung	Art	Sikkim
66.	Smt. Neerja Bhatla	Medicine	NCT Delhi
67.	Smt. Nirmala Devi	Art	Bihar
68.	Shri Nitin Nohria	Literature and Education	United States of America
69.	Shri Onkar Singh Pahwa	Trade and Industry	Punjab
70.	Shri P Datchanamoorthy	Art	Puducherry
71.	Shri Pandi Ram Mandavi	Art	Chhattisgarh
72.	Shri Parmar Lavjibhai Nagjibhai	Art	Gujarat
73.	Shri Pawan Goenka	Trade and Industry	West Bengal
74.	Shri Prashanth Prakash	Trade and Industry	Karnataka
75.	Smt. Pratibha Satpathy	Literature and Education	Odisha
76.	Shri Purisai Kannappa Sambandan	Art	Tamil Nadu
77.	Shri R Ashwin	Sports	Tamil Nadu
78.	Shri R G Chandramogan	Trade and Industry	Tamil Nadu
79.	Smt. Radha Bahin Bhatt	Social Work	Uttarakhand
80.	Shri Radhakrishnan Devasenapathy	Art	Tamil Nadu
81.	Shri Ramdarash Mishra	Literature and Education	NCT Delhi
82.	Shri Ranendra Bhanu Majumdar	Art	Maharashtra
83.	Shri Ratan Kumar Parimoo	Art	Gujarat
84.	Shri Reba Kanta Mahanta	Art	Assam
85.	Shri Renthlei Lalrawna	Literature and Education	Mizoram
86.	Shri Ricky Gyan Kej	Art	Karnataka
87.	Shri Sajjan Bhajanka	Trade and Industry	West Bengal
88.	Smt. Sally Holkar	Trade and Industry	Madhya Pradesh
89.	Shri Sant Ram Deswal	Literature and Education	Haryana
90.	Shri Satyapal Singh	Sports	Uttar Pradesh
91.	Shri Seeni Viswanathan	Literature and Education	Tamil Nadu
92.	Shri Sethuraman Panchanathan	Science and Engineering	United States of America
93.	Smt. Sheikha Shaikha Ali Al-Jaber Al-Sabah	Medicine	Kuwait
94.	Shri Sheen Kaaf Nizam (Shiv Kishan Bissa)	Literature and Education	Rajasthan
95.	Shri Shyam Bihari Agrawal	Art	Uttar Pradesh
96.	Smt. Soniya Nityanand	Medicine	Uttar Pradesh
97.	Shri Stephen Knapp	Literature and Education	United States of America
98.	Shri Subhash Khetulal Sharma	Others-Agriculture	Maharashtra
99.	Shri Suresh Harilal Soni	Social Work	Gujarat
100.	Shri Surinder Kumar Vasal	Science and Engineering	Delhi
101.	Shri Swami Pradiptananda (Kartik Maharaj)	Others-Spiritualism	West Bengal
102.	Shri Syed Ainul Hasan	Literature and Education	Uttar Pradesh
103.	Shri Tejendra Narayan Majumdar	Art	West Bengal
104.	Smt. Thiyam Suryamukhi Devi	Art	Manipur
105.	Shri Tushar Durgeshbhai Shukla	Literature and Education	Gujarat
106.	Shri Vadiraj Raghawendracharya Panchamukhi	Literature and Education	Andhra Pradesh
107.	Shri Vasudeo Kamath	Art	Maharashtra

108.	Shri Velu Aasaan	Art	Tamil Nadu
109.	Shri Venkappa Ambaji Sugatekar	Art	Karnataka
110.	Shri Vijay Nityanand Surishwar Ji Maharaj	Others-Spiritualism	Bihar
111.	Smt. Vijayalakshmi Deshamane	Medicine	Karnataka
112.	Shri Vilas Dangre	Medicine	Maharashtra
113.	Shri Vinayak Lohani	Social Work	West Bengal

### President Murmu to confer National Sports Awards 2024

The Khel Ratna is India's highest sporting honour in the National Sports

Awards given annually by India's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

Khel Ratna ceremony to be held on January 17 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan

S. No.	Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
1.	Shri Gukesh D	Chess
2.	Shri Harmanpreet Singh	Hockey
3.	Shri Praveen Kumar	Para-Athletics
4.	Ms. Manu Bhaker	Shooting



- Olympic medallists **Manu Bhaker, Harmanpreet Singh**, chess world champion **Gukesh D** and para-athlete **Praveen Kumar** have been named recipients of the prestigious Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna
- **Harmanpreet Singh** (Hockey Team Captain) led the Indian hockey team to its second consecutive **bronze medal at the Olympics at Paris 2024**.
- **Manu Bhaker** became the **first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal in shooting** (bronze at Paris 2024 Olympics in the women's 10m air pistol event).
  - She is also the **first athlete from independent India to win two medals at a single Olympic Games** (bronze in the 10m air pistol mixed team event with Sarabjot Singh)
- **Gukesh, 18**, was crowned the **2024 world chess champion in Singapore**, becoming the **youngest world chess champion** and only the **second Indian after Viswanathan Anand** to win the title.
- Para-athlete **Praveen Kumar** secured gold in the **men's high jump T64** at the **Paris Paralympics 2024** with a record jump of **2.08 meters, setting a new Asian record**.

### Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award:

- The Khel Ratna Award was **instituted in 1991–1992**.
- given for outstanding performances in sports spanning over a **period of 4 years**
- It was **formerly known as Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna**.
- In **2021 it got renamed** after Major Dhyan Chand
- It carries a cash prize of **Rs 25 lakh**, a medal and a certificate of honour.
- **first recipient in 1991-92** : Viswanathan Anand (Chess)
- **First woman winner** - Karnam Malleswari (Olympic bronze winning weightlifter) in 1994-95

### 32 Arjuna Awards

Arjuna Awards	
For outstanding performance in Sports & Games 2024	
Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
Jyothi Yarraji	Athletics
Annu Rani	Athletics
Nitu	Boxing
Saweeaty	Boxing
Vantika Agrawal	Chess
Salima Tete	Hockey
Abhishek	Hockey
Sanjay	Hockey
Jarmanpreet Singh	Hockey
Sukhjeet Singh	Hockey
Rakesh Kumar	Para-Archery
Preeti Pal	Para-Athletics
Jeevanji Deepthi	Para-Athletics

Arjuna Awards	
For outstanding performance in Sports & Games 2024	
Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
Ajeet Singh	Para-Athletics
Sachin Sarjerao Khilari	Para-Athletics
Dharambir	Para-Athletics
Pranav Soorma	Para-Athletics
it Hokato Sema	Para-Athletics
Simran	Para-Athletics
Navdeep	Para-Athletics
Nitesh Kumar	Para-Badminton
Thulasimathi Murugesan	Para-Badminton
Nithya Sri Sumathy Sivan	Para-Badminton
Manisha Ramadas	Para-Badminton
Kapil Parmar	Para-Judo
Mona Agarwal	Para-Shooting

Arjuna Awards	
For outstanding performance in Sports & Games 2024	
Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
Rubina Francis	Para-Shooting
Swapnil Suresh Kusale	Shooting
Sarabjot Singh	Shooting
Abhay Singh	Squash
Sajan Prakash	Swimming
Aman	Wrestling

**Arjuna Award (India's 2<sup>nd</sup> highest sporting honour):**

- It was **established in 1961** to recognize outstanding achievements in national sporting events.
- It is given for **good performance over a period of the last four years** and showing qualities of leadership, sportsmanship and a sense of discipline.
- This award carries a cash prize of Rs 15 lakh, a bronze statue of Arjun and a certificate of appreciation.

S.No	Name	Sport Discipline
1	Jyothi Yarraj	Athletics
2	Annu Rani	Athletics
3	Nitu Ghangas	Boxing
4	Saweety Boora	Boxing
5	Vantika Agarwal	Chess
6	<b>Salima Tete</b>	Hockey
7	Abhishek	Hockey
8	Sanjay	Hockey
9	Harmanpreet Singh	Hockey
10	Sukhjeet Singh	Hockey
11	Rakesh Kumar	Para-Archery
12	Preeti Pal	Para-Athletics
13	Jeevanji Deepthi	Para-Athletics
14	Ajeet Singh	Para-Athletics
15	Sachin Sarjerao Khilari	Para-Athletics
16	Dharambir	Para-Athletics
S.No	Name	Sport Discipline
17	Pranav Soorma	Para-Athletics
18	H Hokato Sema	Para-Athletics
19	Simran	Para-Athletics
20	Navdeep Singh	Para-Athletics
21	Nitesh Kumar	Para-Badminton
22	Thulasimathi Murugesan	Para-Badminton
23	Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan	Para-Badminton
24	Manisha Ramadass	Para-Badminton
25	Kapil Parmar	Para-Judo
26	Mona Agarwal	Para-Shooting
27	Rubina Francis	Para-Shooting
28	Swapnil Kusale	Shooting
29	Sarabjot Singh	Shooting
30	Abhay Singh	Squash
31	Sajan Prakash	Swimming
32	Aman Sehrawat	Wrestling

**Arjuna Award (Lifetime) Achievement Awardees**

S. No.	Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
1.	Shri Sucha Singh	Athletics
2.	Shri Murlikant Rajaram Petkar	Para-Swimming

**Dronacharya Award for Outstanding Coaches in Sports and Games 2024****Regular Category:**

S. No.	Name of the Coach	Discipline
1.	Shri Subhash Rana	Para-Shooting
2.	Ms. Deepali Deshpande	Shooting

3.	Shri Sandeep Sangwan	Hockey
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**Lifetime Category:**

S. No.	Name of the Coach	Discipline
1.	Shri S Muralidharan	Badminton
2.	Shri Armando Agnelo Colaco	Football

**Dronacharya Award:**

- It was established in 1985 by the Government of India to recognize excellence in sports related training.
- It is given to coaches for doing excellent and commendable work and enabling players to excel in international events.
- It carries a cash prize of Rs 15 lakh, a bronze statue of Dronacharya and a certificate of appreciation.

**Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar**

- Physical Education Foundation of India

**Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2024:**

S. No.	Name of University	
1	Chandigarh University	Overall winner University
2	Lovely Professional University, (PB)	1 <sup>st</sup> runner up University
3	Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar	2 <sup>nd</sup> runner up University

**Best Tableau Awards in Republic Day Parade 2025**

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been awarded the Best Tableau from Central Ministries/Departments based on the theme "Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh", commemorating the 150th birth anniversary year of Bhagwan Birsa Munda.
- The central theme, "Jal, Jungle, Jameen"
- Top 3 tableaux from states and union territories:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> - Uttar Pradesh's tableau, theme - Mahakumbh 2025 - Swarnim Bharat Virasat aur Vikas
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> - Tripura's tableau, theme - Eternal Reverence: The worship of 14 Deities in Tripura - Kharchi Puja
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> - tableau from Andhra Pradesh, theme - Etikoppaka Bommalu- Eco-Friendly Wooden Toys
- Best marching contingent best among the three services - Jammu and Kashmir Rifles
- The best marching contingent among the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and other auxiliary forces was the Delhi Police team.

**ONLINE polling – Popular Choice awards**

- In addition, an online poll was conducted on the MyGov portal from January 26 to 28 for citizens to vote for their favourite tableau and marching contingents in the 'Popular Choice' category:
- Top 3 state tableau:
  - Gujarat (Swarnim Bharat: Virasat Aur Vikas)
  - Uttar Pradesh (Mahakumbh 2025)
  - Uttarakhand (Cultural Heritage and Adventure Sports)
- The 'Popular Choice' award for the best marching contingent went to the Signals contingent.

- CRPF marching contingent emerged as the best among the CAPFs and other auxiliary forces in the popular choice.
- among the central ministries and departments - **Ministry of Women and Child Development**.

### Gallantry Awards to 93 Armed Forces & Central Armed Police Forces personnel

- The President of India and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces **Droupadi Murmu** has approved gallantry awards for 93 personnel from the **Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces**, including 11 posthumously, on the eve of the 76th Republic Day.
- the gallantry awards include 2 Kirti Chakras (one posthumous), 14 Shaurya Chakras (three posthumous), 1 Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry), 66 Sena Medals (seven posthumous), 2 Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry), and 8 Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry).
- **Kirti Chakra** (second-highest peace-time gallantry award) – for counter-terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir and were to:
  - Major Manjit Kumar of the Punjab Regiment and with 22 Rashtriya Rifles (RR)
  - Naik Dilwar Khan (posthumously) from the Artillery Regiment and with 28 RR
- **Shaurya Chakra**, the third-highest gallantry award, has been awarded to 14 security personnel.

#### Wartime Highest Gallantry Awards:

<u>Param Vir Chakra</u>	: India's highest military decoration
<u>Maha Vir Chakra</u>	: The second highest war time gallantry award
<u>Vir Chakra</u>	: Country's third-highest wartime gallantry award

#### Peacetime Highest Gallantry Awards:

<u>Ashoka Chakra</u>	: The highest military award during peacetime
<u>Kirti Chakra</u>	: The second highest peacetime gallantry award
<u>Shaurya Chakra</u>	: The third highest peacetime gallantry award

#### Other Awards:

1. Sena Medal
2. Nao Sena Medal
3. Vayu Sena Medal

#### Order of precedence

- The Param Vir Chakra
- The Ashoka Chakra
- The Mahavir Chakra
- The Kirti Chakra
- The Vir Chakra
- The Shaurya Chakra



The President has also approved **305 defence decorations to the Armed Forces and other personnel**.

1. These include 30 Param Vishisht Seva Medals
2. 5 Uttam Yudh Seva Medals
3. 57 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals
4. 10 Yudh Seva Medals
5. 44 Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty)
6. 8 Nao Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty)
7. 15 Vayu Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty)
8. 4 Bar to Vishisht Seva Medals
9. 132 Vishisht Seva Medals.

**Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award 2025**

- President Droupadi Murmu conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award to the 27 recipient at the 18th edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention in Bhubaneshwar Odisha on 10 January 2025.
- The 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention was held in Bhubaneswar on 8-10th January 2025.
- Since 2003, 9th January has been observed as Pravasi Divas in India to mark the return of Mahatma Gandhi to India on this day in 1915 from South Africa.
- The Ministry of External Affairs organises the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention and since 2015 it has been organised after every two years.
- Theme - "Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat".

**Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards**

- The government of India instituted the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman to honour Non-Resident Indians(NRI), Persons of India Origin(PIO), and institutions /organisations established by them for their exemplary achievements in India or abroad.
- The winner of the award is selected by a Jury-cum-Awards committee.
- The committee is headed by the Vice-President of India and the Minister for External Affairs is the vice-chairman of the committee.
- The award is conferred by the President of India on the last day of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention.

**Joe Biden honours Hillary Clinton, George Soros with Presidential Medal of Freedom**

- US President Joe Biden recognised the contributions of 19 public figures in politics, entertainment, sports and more through a ceremony at the White House for awarding the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
- The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the United States' highest civilian honour, often given in recognition of a body of work over a person's lifetime.
- The winners included former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former basketball player Earvin "Magic" Johnson and actor Michael J. Fox., footballer Lionel Messi, primatologist Jane Goodall, Hungarian-American investor & philanthropist George Soros
- The medal itself has a white star over a red pentagon, surrounded by five gold eagles. At its centre is a blue circle with 13 gold stars.

**'All We Imagine as Light', Payal Kapadia miss out at Golden Globes 2025**

- The Golden Globes 2025 held at Beverly Hills, California
- Hosted by noted comedian Nikki Glaser, 82nd Golden Globes mark the first time a woman is solo-hosting the show.
- Payal Kapadia lost the Best Director award to Brady Corbet for The Brutalist.
- Emilia Perez wins Best Motion Picture – Non-English Language. India's All We Imagine As Light was also nominated in the same category.
- Best film – drama - WINNER: The Brutalist
- Best film - musical or comedy - WINNER: Emilia Pérez
- Best non-English language film- WINNER: Emilia Pérez
- Best animated film - WINNER: Flow
- Best director - WINNER: Brady Corbet, The Brutalist
- Best actress – drama - WINNER: Fernanda Torres, I'm Still Here
- Best actor – drama- WINNER: Adrien Brody, The Brutalist
- Best supporting actress- WINNER: Zoe Saldaña, Emilia Pérez



- Best supporting actor - WINNER: Kieran Culkin, *A Real Pain*
- Best TV series – drama - WINNER: *Shōgun*
- The **Golden Globe Awards** are presented for excellence in both international film and television. It is an annual award ceremony held since 1944
- The **Foreign Language category**, introduced in 1959. V. Shantaram's **1957 Hindi film Do Aankhen Barah Haath** first winner of Samuel Goldwyn International Award from India (1959)
- In 2023 Rajamouli's RRR song "Natu Naatu," composed by M. M. Keeravani and written by Chandrabose, won the **Golden Globe for Best Original Song**



#### JIFF 2025 to Honour Yash Chopra and Shyam Benegal

Celebrated filmmakers Yash Chopra and Shyam Benegal will be honoured at the upcoming edition of the Jaipur International Film Festival (JIFF) 2025, set to be held in the Rajasthan capital between January 17 and 21.

While **Yash Chopra will be bestowed the Outstanding Lifetime Achievement Award**, a tribute will be paid to Benegal, who died late last year.



#### Sister Inah Canabarro Becomes World's Oldest Person.

- Sister Inah Canabarro believed to have become the world's oldest living person at nearly 117 following the recent death of a woman from Japan - **Tomiko Itooka**.
- Ms. Canabarro was born on June 8, 1908

#### Tarun Das Honored with Singapore 'Honorary Citizen Award'

- President of Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratnam bestowed the highest honour of the city-state on Tarun Das, the former director general of the Confederation of the Indian Industry (CII).
- The Honorary Citizen award, instituted in 2003, is given for "outstanding contribution by a non-Singaporean to the country's growth and development"
- Mr. Das is the second Indian to receive the honour with the late **Ratan Tata** being the only other Indian recipient of the award before this.
- Capital: Singapore (city-state)
- Currency: Singapore dollar
- Singapore is **India's largest trade partner in ASEAN**; it's India's 6th largest trade partner (2023-24).
- India signed **Direct Tax Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)** with Singapore in 2016 to check tax evasion.
- **Bilateral exercises** by the three services: Exercise Agni Warrior (Army), Exercise SIMBEX (Navy) and Air Force Exercise Joint Military Training (JMT).
- India was one of the first countries to recognize Singapore in 1965.



Singapore awards Honorary Citizen title to former CII head Tarun Das



#### Infosys Prize 2024 honours six researchers under 40

- The Infosys Science Foundation (ISF) celebrated outstanding achievements in research and innovation by awarding the **Infosys Prize 2024** to six scholars during a felicitation ceremony.
- The Infosys Science Foundation (ISF) established the award in 2009. The award includes a gold medal, a citation, and a cash prize of \$100,000.
- The 2024 Infosys Prize winners across six disciplines are:
- Arun Chandrasekhar: Economics



- **Shyam Gollakota:** Engineering and Computer Science
- **Mahmood Kooria:** Humanities and Social Sciences
- **Siddhesh Kamat:** Life Sciences
- **Neena Gupta:** Mathematical Sciences
- **Vedika Khemani:** Physical Sciences

#### Kiren Rijiju Confers 34<sup>th</sup> National Youth Parliament Awards

- The Prize Distribution Function of the 34<sup>th</sup> National Youth Parliament Competition, 2023-24 for Kendriya Vidyalayas was held here at GMC Balayogi Auditorium, Parliament Library Building, Parliament House Complex, New Delhi.
- The students of **PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya , IIT, Kharagpur, (Kolkata Region, East Zone)** which stood first
- Kiren Rijiju - Union Minister for Minority Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs
- **PM SHRI, or Prime Minister's Schools for Rising India**, is a centrally sponsored scheme by the Government of India.
- This initiative is intended to develop more than 14500 PM SHRI Schools managed by Central Government/State/UT Government/local bodies including KVS and NVS



#### Mridangist TV Gopalakrishnan honoured with RK Srikantan Trust Award

- His book, *Your Voice* encompassing both ancient Vedic literature and modern scientific studies of the singing voice
- Gopalakrishnan, a **Padma Bhushan recipient**



#### Prize Distribution for 25<sup>th</sup> National Youth Parliament Competition of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas

- **Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Chandrapur, Maharashtra (Pune Region), won first place** in the 25th National Youth Parliament Competition, 2023-24 for Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas

#### Andhra Pradesh official bags Prime Minister's award for excellence

- Nishant Kumar, Director of Excise and Prohibition, Manglagiri, and former District Collector of Parvathipuram, has been awarded the prestigious Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration for 2023.
- This accolade recognises his exemplary leadership in implementing the PRISM 10 (Project to Reduce Infant Mortality Rate Below 10) initiative during his tenure from 2022 to 2024 in Parvathipuram.
- The award, recognised under the 'Innovation District' category

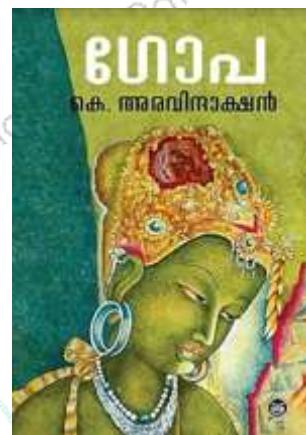


#### Activist who opposed Kudankulam nuclear plant among 2025 Nuclear-Free Future Awards laureates

- The 2025 Nuclear-Free Future Awards will honour S.P. Udayakumar, a key figure in resistance to the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tirunelveli district.
- Founded in 1998 by Claus Biegert,
- The Nuclear-Free Future Awards celebrate those working to rid the world of nuclear weapons, power, and uranium mining.
- Laureates chosen by an international jury of peers. Mr. Udayakumar, who will receive the Resistance Award, spearheaded the 2011 grassroots movement that opposed the construction of the plant in Tamil Nadu, India.
- Márcia Gomes de Oliveira and Norbert Suchanek from Brazil - receive the Education Award for founding the International Uranium Film Festival.
- Edwick Madzimure of Zimbabwe, - The Solution Award



- Honorary Lifetime Achievement Awards will be given to anti-nuclear activist Joanna Macy and the late Klee Benally - worked to address the environmental and health effects of uranium mining on Native American communities.
- The awards ceremony will take place on March 4 at The Great Hall at Cooper Union in New York City.



### Odakkuzhal Award for K. Aravindakshan's novel

- Gopa*, a novel authored by K. Aravindakshan, has won the Odakkuzhal Award for 2024, instituted by Guruvayoorappan Trust.
- The award, which carries a cash prize of ₹30,000 and a citation, will be presented on February 2, 2025 at a function to be held at the Mahakavi G. Auditorium.
- Samastha Kerala Sahitya Parishad president and writer C. Radhakrishnan will present the award.

### WBFJA Awards: Aparna Sen Honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award

- Eminent director Aparna Sen was honoured with the 'Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award' at the annual award ceremony of West Bengal Film Journalists Association (WBFJA) for her contributions to Indian cinema.
- 'Manik Babur Megh' win Best Bengali Film, with Chandan Sen receiving Best Actor (Male) for his role in the film.
- Srijit Mukherji and Debaloy Bhattacharya jointly won Best Director for 'Badami Haynar Kabale'
- 'Padatik,' while Mukherji's 'Oti Uttam' earned Special Recognition for Technical Innovation
- Actor Rituparna Sengupta was named Best Actor (Female) for 'Ajogya'
- Abhinandan Banerjee won Most Promising Director for 'Manik Babur Megh'
- 'Khadaan' received the Most Popular Film award, and its star Dev was named Most Popular Actor
- Anjan Dutt was given the 'Best Screenplay' crown for 'Chalchitra Ekhon'



### Raman Research Institute faculty honored with the Gates-Cambridge Impact Prize 2025

- Professor Urbasi Sinha, faculty in the Light and Matter Physics theme at the Raman Research Institute (RRI), was honored with the Gates-Cambridge Impact Prize 2025 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation at Cambridge, UK.
- Prof. Sinha is among the eight winners of Gates-Cambridge's Impact Prize to celebrate its 25th anniversary
- She was awarded the prestigious Rashtriya Vigyan Yuva Puraskar by the Government of India. She is also a recipient of the Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Photonic Quantum Science and Technologies, University of Calgary, Canada.
- She has played a leading role in the creation of the Open Quantum Institute (OQI), first of its kind multi-stakeholder institution, launched at CERN in March 2024.



### Para-athlete Jeevanji Deepthi to receive Governor's Award for Excellence

- Para-athlete and Arjuna awardee Jeevanji Deepthi, environmental activist Dusharla Sathyanarayana, Arikapudi Raghu in the field of Divyanjan welfare, and P.B.Krishna Bharathi and M. Pandu Ranga Rao, jointly in the field of culture, will receive the Governor's Award for Excellence this year.



- Governor of Telangana
- The awards will be presented by Governor Jishnu Dev Varma during the 76th Republic Day
- The Governor's Award for Excellence, an initiative to recognise outstanding contributions in the fields of environment protection, Divyangjan (persons with disability) welfare, sports and games, and culture, are instituted for the first time by Raj Bhavan.
- The awards under the same categories for organisations are: Dhruvansh NGO for environment protection, L.V. Prasad Eye Institute (Divyangjan welfare), Aditya Mehta Foundation (sports and games), and Samskruti Foundation (culture).
- Five of the total eight awards went to Hyderabad-based individuals and organisations.



### **INCOIS Honored with Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2025**

**Puraskar-2025**

- The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2025, in the Institutional Category, for its excellent work in Disaster Management.
- The Government of India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has instituted an annual award known as Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar
- to recognize and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organizations in India in the field of disaster management.
- The award is announced every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.
- The award carries a cash prize of Rs. 51 lakh and a certificate in case of an institution and Rs. 5 lakh and a certificate in case of an individual.
- Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) was established in 1999, Hyderabad, Telangana.
- The INCOIS is integral to India's disaster management strategy, specializing in early alerts for ocean-related hazards.
- It established the Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC) which provides tsunami alerts within 10 minutes, serving India and 28 Indian Ocean countries. It has been recognized by UNESCO as a top Tsunami Service Provider.
- INCOIS has developed the Search and Rescue Aided Tool (SARAT) to assist the Indian Coast Guard, Navy and Coastal Security Police, in locating individuals or objects lost at sea.
- INCOIS has also established the SynOPS visualization platform which integrates real-time data to strengthen response coordination during extreme events.
- The INCOIS received the Geospatial World Excellence in Maritime Services Award in 2024 and the Disaster Risk Reduction Excellence Award in 2021.

**INCOIS**



### **Sri Ramakrishna Math wins Spirit of Mylapore Award 2025**

- Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, has been honoured with the Spirit of Mylapore Award 2025 by Sundaram Finance Ltd.
- The award recognises the Math's contributions to the cultural, educational, and healthcare landscape of Mylapore for over 125 years.
- Founded in 1897, Ramakrishna Math is a spiritual and community hub in Mylapore, known for its wide-ranging impact on education, healthcare, and social service.
- This award, established in 2009, honours institutions and individuals who have made significant contributions to Mylapore's heritage. Past recipients include Rayar's Mess, The Sanskrit College, and Vijaya Stores.

### Doordarshan Wins ECI Media Award for Voter Awareness

- Doordarshan has been honoured with the award in the **Electronic Media category** for its **comprehensive campaign on Voter Awareness and Education**.
- Doordarshan has been recognised for its coverage, including the “**Chunav Ka Parv Desh Ka Garv**” series during the **Lok Sabha Elections 2024**.
- Doordarshan Director-General Kanchan Prasad received the honour from President Droupadi Murmu
- Doordarshan is one of two divisions of **Prasar Bharati** (other being akshvani).
- **Prasar Bharati is a statutory autonomous body** (under the **Prasar Bharati Act, 1997**). It is the Public Service Broadcaster of the country.
- The signature Doordarshan tune was composed by sitar virtuoso **Pandit Ravi Shankar** and the master shehnai player **Ustad Ali Ahmed Hussain Khan** and was aired for the first time on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1976.
- Doordarshan was first aired on September 15, 1959.
- The first broadcast was inaugurated by the then President of India, **Shri Rajendra Prasad**.



**Doordarshan honoured with ECI Media Award**

The President has also approved awards for personnel involved in various operations:

- Operation Rakshak
- Operation Snow Leopard;
- Operation Hifazat;
- Operation Sahayta;
- Operation Rhino;
- Operation Meghdoot;
- Operation Gurihajan;
- Operation Mulkhyama;
- Operation Reconnaissance;
- Operation Zokhawthar;
- Operation Falcon;
- Operation CAS Evacuation;
- Operation Sankalp

The President also approved the President's Tatrakshak Medal and Tatrakshak Medal to 8 Coast Guard personnel.

### President approves conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards-2024 on 49 persons

- 49 Padaks include:
- Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak to 17,
- Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak to 09 and
- Jeevan Raksha Padak to 23 persons.
- Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards are given to a person for meritorious act of **human nature in saving the life of a person**.

### Super 100 winners of Veer Gatha 4.0 felicitated

- The fourth edition of **veer gatha** (tales of valour) competition, which aims to educate school students about the **bravery and sacrifices of the country's gallantry award winners**
- The **100 winners** from them, which includes 66 girls, were felicitated by Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** and Minister of Education **Dharmendra Pradhan**
- Each winner was presented with a **cash prize of ₹10,000, a medal, and a certificate**. prizes to the winners of the national school band competition.



### NCC Directorate Karnataka and Goa bags Prime Minister Banner and Trophy at Republic Day Camp 2025

- The NCC Directorate Karnataka and Goa contingent has won the **Prime Minister Banner and Trophy** during the recently concluded **Republic Day Camp 2025 (RDC-2025)** in New Delhi.
- The Prime Minister's Banner and Trophy is awarded for consistently performing well in a plethora of NCC activities over the year



**T.M. Krishna conferred Sangita Kalanidhi title**

- Renowned Carnatic musician T.M. Krishna was conferred the title of **Sangita Kalanidhi 2024** at the 98th conference and concerts — Sadas, the traditional oriental convocation — of **The Music Academy in Chennai**.
- The title of Sangita Kalanidhi conferred by the Music Academy Madras is the **highest accolade in the field of Carnatic music**. The Sangita Kalanidhi title was **instituted in 1942**.

**Sai Paranjpye to Receive Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award**

- Veteran director-writer Sai Paranjpye will receive the Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award at the Ajanta-Ellora International Film Festival (AIFF) 2025.
- The **10th edition** of the film gala is scheduled **to be held in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar from January 15 to January 19**.
- The **four-time National Award winner** will receive a Padmapani memento, a letter of honour and a **monetary reward of Rs 2 lakh**.
- Paranjpye, who **twice served as the Chairperson of Children's Film Society of India (CFSI)**, was awarded the **Padma Bhushan in 2006**.

**Odia Poet Prativa Satpathy to Receive Gangadhar National Award**

- Noted Odia poet Prativa Satpathy will be conferred the **Gangadhar National Award for Poetry 2023** by the Sambalpur University on its 58th foundation day on January 5.
- **Satpathy, a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award**, came into prominence in the 1960s with '**Sesha Janha**'.
- The award carries a citation, shawl and cash prize of Rs 1,00,000.

**Anuja" nominated for Best Short film category of Oscars 2025**

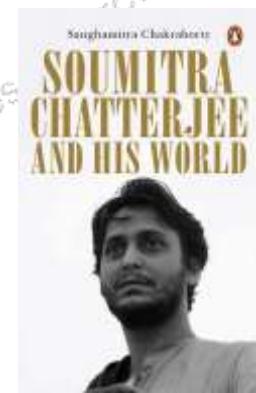
- Anuja, a short film about two sisters struggling to find joy and opportunity in a world intent on their exploitation and exclusion, has secured a nomination for Best Live Action Short at the 97th Academy Awards.
- Written and directed by Adam J Graves, Anuja showcases the struggles of young girls in pursuit of education.
- The film produced in collaboration with Mira Nair's Salaam Baalak Trust
- Priyanka Chopra Jonas has come on board as one of its executive producers.
- This marks Guneet Monga's third Oscar nomination, following the success of The Elephant Whisperers and Period: End of Sentence, both of which won Academy Awards.
- The 97th Oscars, hosted by Conan O'Brien, will take place at the Dolby Theatre on March 2.



## Books

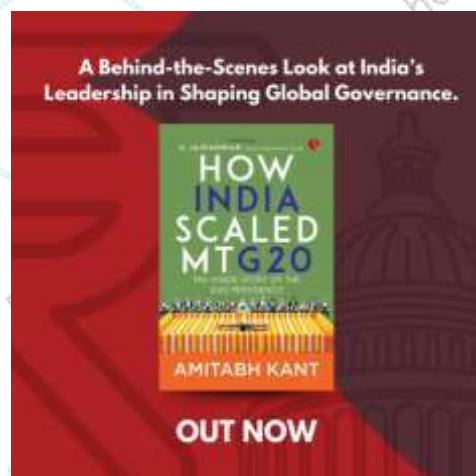
### A new biography, Soumitra Chatterjee and His World (Vintage)

- By journalist Sanghamitra Chakraborty, aims to fill the gap, and presents Chatterjee in all his myriad selves.
- **Soumitra Chatterjee** - versatile actor, poet, artist, theatreperson



### How India scaled Mt G20: The inside story of the G20 Presidency - Book by Amitabh Kant

- Author: Amitabh Kant
- Amitabh Kant is **India's G20 Sherpa**.
- He has **served as the CEO** of National Institution for Transforming India (**NITI**) Aayog



### India's G2O Presidency 2023

- India hosted the **G20 Leaders' Summit 2023** for the **first time** in history - in **September 2023**
- **Theme of India's G20 presidency:** "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or "One Earth - One Family - One Future".

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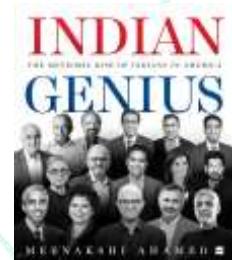
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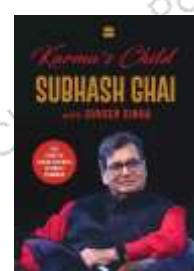
### Indian Genius: The Meteoric Rise of Indians in America

- Author - Meenakshi Ahamed



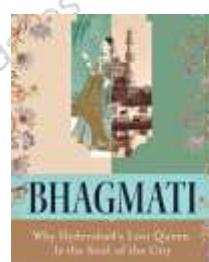
### Karma's Child : The story of Indian Cinema's ultimate showman

- Book by Subhash Ghai and Suveen Sinha



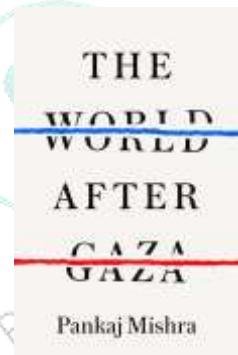
### 'Bhagmati: Why Hyderabad's Lost Queen Is the Soul of the City' book by Moupia Basu

- Legend has it that the Purana Pul (or the old bridge) in Hyderabad's Old City was built in 1578 by Ibrahim Qutb Shah after his son Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah crossed river Musi, in turbulent conditions, to meet his lady love Bhagmati.
- Basu presents both documented history and oral folklore about the construction of the 600-feet long Purana Pul that stands 54-feet above the Musi river bed, the founding of Bhagnagar in Bhagmati's honour



**Pankaj Mishra's latest book, 'The World After Gaza',**

- Published by Juggernaut Books.
- Examines how Israel and its supporters instrumentalised the memory of the Holocaust to justify its actions and silence criticism.

**Manisha Pande's book reveals middle class India as a driver of change**

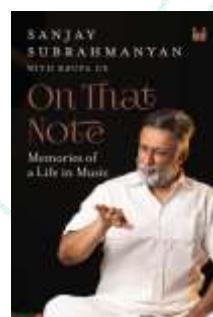
- Book name : Middle Class India: Driving Change in the 21st Century
- Author: Manisha Pande
- Publisher: Aleph Book Company

**The Tamils: A portrait of a community**

- The book authored by Nirmala Lakshman, Chairperson, The Hindu Group.
- the first copy received by V Vedachalam, an epigraphist, archaeologist and historian.
- The book traces the remarkable journey of the people of this land, starting from the Stone Age (1.7 million years ago) all the way to the epic Sangam era (300 BCE to 300 CE), whose literature highlights the influential role of dynasties like the Pallavas, Pandiyas, Cholas and Cheras, and the thriving Jain community of that time.
- The book also examines the evolution and spread of Tamil culture through the Bhakti movement, and the arrival of Christianity and Islam.

**HM Amit Shah presided over book release event for 'Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh: Through the Ages'**

- Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation, Amit Shah, presided over a book release function on 2nd January 2025 in New Delhi as the Chief Guest.
- Union Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan was the Guest of Honour.
- The book, titled 'Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh: Through the Ages' seeks to present the story of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh.
- Published in Hindi and English, this book is the result of collaborative efforts of the National Book Trust, India, and the Indian Council of Historical Research.

**On that note: Carnatic vocalist Sanjay Subrahmanyam's autobiography**

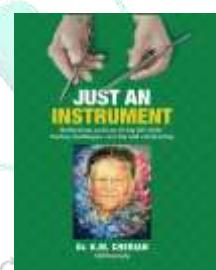
- On that note, an autobiographical portrait of Sanjay Subrahmanyam.

**Obituaries****Singer P. Jayachandran passes away**

- sang over 16,000 songs in Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, and Hindi.
- His contributions were recognised with numerous prestigious awards, including the J.C. Daniel Award and the Kalaimamani Award
- He won the national award, five Kerala State awards, and four Tamil Nadu State awards.

**Famous cardiologist Dr Cherian passes away**

- India's preeminent cardiac surgeon K.M. Cherian- performed India's first coronary bypass surgery in 1975
- his autobiography - *Just an Instrument* launched virtually at the Kerala Literary Fest.
- founder of Frontier Lifeline hospital in Chennai



- His name engraved on one of the stones at Greece's Kos Island — the **birthplace of Hippocrates** who is considered to be the **father of modern medicine**
- Awarded the **Padma Shree** in 1991.

### Wing Commander (Retd) Dr. K. Ramchand Passes Away

- **Founder and Director of Centre for Air Borne Systems (CABS), DRDO, Bengaluru**
- Principal author of the book "**The Incredible Journey of the Indian AWACS**"
- Ramchand lead the team at DRDO for the indigenous **design and development of the AEW&C aircraft**.
- **Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft** are radar systems that detect and track threats, and direct friendly forces. They can detect aircraft, ships, missiles, and vehicles.
- The aircraft was **inducted into the IAF in 2017** and was flown during the **air strike on Balakot in 2019**, providing critical air cover to Mirage 2000 fighter jets.
- A recipient of the "**Distinguished Alumni Award**" of IISc



### Renowned Sculptor Latika Katt Passes Away at 76

- India's most prolific sculptors who worked in multiple media for over five decades, using everything from terracotta and papier-mâché to stone and bronze.
- She made the 20-ft bronze sculpture of Jawaharlal Nehru at the Jawahar Bhawan in Delhi



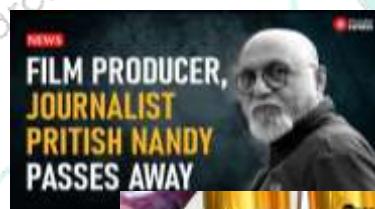
### Demise of army veteran, Hav Baldev Singh (Retd)

- Veteran soldier Havildar Baldev Singh (retd), who **fought four wars against Pakistan**, passed away in his hometown Naushera in J&K's Rajouri district
- His service spanned multiple wars, including the 1961, 1962, 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan wars



### Pritish Nandy passes away at 73

- ▶ Indian poet, journalist, film producer and former parliamentarian Pritish Nandy has passed away
- ▶ Nandy was conferred the **Padma Shri** in 1977 for his contributions to Indian literature. He was conferred the Karamveer Puraskar in 2008.
- ▶ He served as the **editor of The Times Of India till 1991**.
- ▶ In 1996, Pritish opened India's first cyber cafe.
- ▶ He represented Maharashtra, being elected to the **Rajya Sabha** on a Shiv Sena ticket.



### World's Oldest Person, Tomiko Itooka, Dies at 116 Years

- Tomiko Itooka, a Japanese woman **recognised by Guinness World Records as the world's oldest person**, has passed away. She was **116 years old**.

### Renowned Kannada writer Norbert D'Souza passes away

- popularly known as Dr Na D'Souza

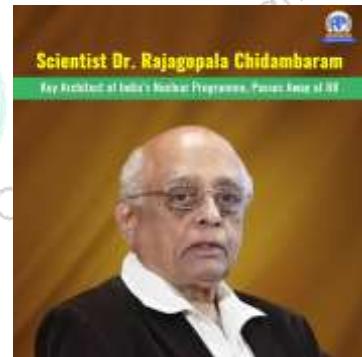


### Costas Simitis, former Greek Prime Minister and socialist leader, dies

- The architect of the country's joining the common European currency, the euro.

### Senior scientist Rajagopala Chidambaram passes away

- A former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and involved with both of India's nuclear tests, in 1974 and in 1998
- In 1974, he was part of an operation, code named 'Smiling Buddha', which carried out amidst great secrecy a "peaceful nuclear test" at Pokhran, Rajasthan
- On May 11, 1998, as the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, he led a similar operation, again at Pokhran, called Operation Shakti.
- He was also the longest serving Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) to the Indian government from 2002-2018.
- recipient of the Padma Shri (1975) and Padma Vibushan (1999),
- contributed significantly to condensed matter physics, nuclear energy, and strategic technologies



### 'Mr. Baseball' Bob Uecker, Brewers announcer, dies at 90

- Bob Uecker, who parlayed a forgettable playing career into a punch line for movie and TV appearances as "Mr. Baseball" and a Hall of Fame broadcasting tenure, has died. He was 90.
- He won a World Series ring with St. Louis in 1964 and also played for Atlanta and Philadelphia.
- Uecker was honored by the Hall of Fame with the Ford C. Frick award in 2003



### 'Twin Peaks' creator and filmmaker David Lynch dies at 78

- David Lynch, the American filmmaker, writer and artist who scored best director Oscar nominations for "Blue Velvet," "The Elephant Man" and "Mulholland Drive" and co-created the groundbreaking TV series "Twin Peaks," has died at age 78
- He received an honorary Academy Award in 2019 for his lifetime achievements



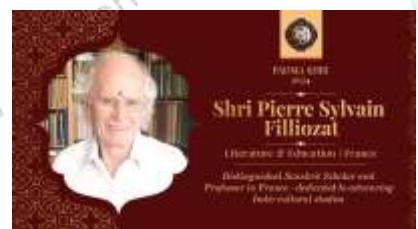
### Demise of Padma Awardee Dr KS Manilal

- Dr. K.S. Manilal, the esteemed botanist who brought the ancient botanical treasure Hortus Malabaricus to the modern world
- dedicated around 35 years of his life to researching, translating, and annotating Hortus Malabaricus, a 17th-century Latin manuscript compiled by Dutch Governor Hendrik Adrian van Rheedee.
- His translations of the monumental work were published in English in 2003 and in Malayalam in 2008.
- His studies led to the discovery of 19 new plant species, with four species being named in his honour.
- He was the founding president of the Indian Association for Angiosperm Taxonomy (IAAT) in 1989
- He also served as president of the Botanical Society of India in 1999 and treasurer from 1984 to 1986.
- He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2020 for his exceptional contributions to botany.
- His international accolades include the Officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau award from the Netherlands, presented by Queen Beatrix in 2012, making him the first Asian to receive this honour.



### French Sanskrit Scholar and Padma Shri awardee, Dr. Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat passed away

- A noted Art Historian and Epigraphist and a recipient of the Kannada Rajyotsava Award
- Padma Shri in 2024
- Certificate of Honour for Sanskrit received from the President of India in 2014



### Agnes Keleti, legendary gymnast

#### & world's oldest Olympic champion, dies at 103

- The Hungarian 10-time Olympic medallist and Holocaust survivor

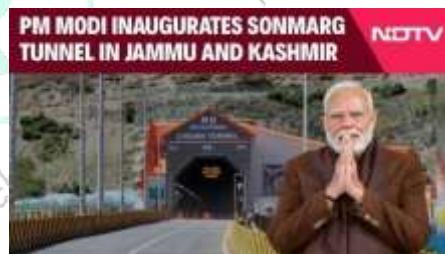


## State

### J&K

#### PM Modi inaugurates Sonamarg Tunnel in J&K

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, inaugurated the strategic Z-Morh tunnel in Sonamarg area in the Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- CM Omar Abdullah and LG Manoj Sinha, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari are also present.
- The tunnel has been renamed Sonamarg tunnel, after the famous tourist resort that will have round-the-year connectivity .
- Overseen by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL),
- Initially started by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in 2012, NHIDCL taking over and retendering the contract in 2019.
- The name “Z-Morh” derives from the Z-shaped roadway that existed before the tunnel’s construction, which was situated at an elevation of over 8,500 feet and was susceptible to snow avalanches during winter,
- Concurrently, the construction of the Zoji-la Tunnel—linking Sonamarg in Kashmir to Dras in Ladakh—is in progress, with completion slated for December 2026.



Location and significance:

- The Z-Morh Tunnel is Positioned at an altitude exceeding 8,650 feet, the tunnel will enhance connectivity between Srinagar and Sonamarg while providing safe access to the strategically important Ladakh region.
- The Sonamarg Tunnel project, spanning approximately 12 km, boasts a construction cost exceeding Rs 2,700 crore, which includes the main tunnel of 6.4 km

### DELHI

#### What is ‘Pujari Granthi Samman’ Scheme?

- The Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana, a scheme promising a monthly honorarium of Rs 18,000 for all temple priests and gurdwara granthis in Delhi if AAP returns to power in the upcoming Assembly elections.
- The scheme has not been passed by the Delhi Cabinet.

#### Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025

- at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- The week-long event, running from January 4 to 9,
- Themed “Building a Resilient Rural India for a Viksit Bharat 2047”
- motto “गांव बढ़े, तो देश बढ़े”
- aims to enhance rural infrastructure, create self-reliant economies, and foster innovation within rural communities. Its objectives include promoting economic stability and financial security among rural populations, with a special focus on North-East India



#### PM Modi inaugurates Namo Bharat corridor in Delhi

- Delhi gets its first Namo Bharat connectivity.
- Prime Minister inaugurated the 13 km stretch of Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Namo Bharat corridor between Sahibabad and New Ashok Nagar, worth around Rs 4,600 crore.

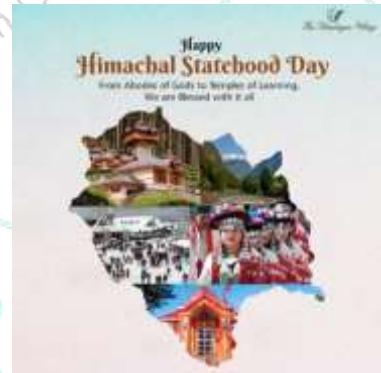


- Prime Minister laid the **foundation stone of 26.5 km Rithala - Kundli section of Delhi Metro Phase-IV**
- This corridor will connect Rithala in Delhi to Nathupur (Kundli) in Haryana, significantly enhancing connectivity in the North-Western parts of **Delhi and Haryana**.
- Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for the **new state-of-the-art building for the Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI) at Rohini, New Delhi**

## HIMANCHAL PRADESH

**25<sup>th</sup> January - Himachal Pradesh Statehood Day**

- Himachal Pradesh was officially declared a state on **25<sup>th</sup> January 1971**, becoming the 18th state of India.



### Ramsar Sites in Himachal Pradesh:

- **Chandertal Wetland** (Lahaul Spiti)
- **Pong Dam Lake** (Kangra)
- **Renuka Wetland** (Sirmaur)

### National Park of Himachal Pradesh

Great Himalayan National Park
Pin Valley National Park
Inderkilla National Park
Khirganga National Park
Col. Sherjung Simbalbara National Park

CM – Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu Governor – Shiv Pratap Shukla



**Himachal cabinet gives nod to rename Himachal Pradesh Institute of Public Administration after Dr. Manmohan Singh**

- Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu gave approval to rename **Himachal Pradesh Institute of Public Administration (HIPA)** as **Dr. Manmohan Singh Himachal Pradesh Institute of Public Administration**.

## UTTRAKHAND

### Uttarakhand Rolls Out Uniform Civil Code

- The Uttarakhand State Government rolled out the Uniform Civil Code in the state, almost a year after the **Uttarakhand Assembly passed the Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2024**.
- UCC is for all residents of the State, **except the Scheduled Tribes and natives who have migrated out of the State**
- **Online registration of marriages, divorce and live-in relationships mandatory**; govt launches new portal; people can also upload their will
- also launched the rules manual for the UCC and a **portal for applications** under the new rules in Dehradun.
- Became the **second state** in the country, and the **first to do so in independent India**, to implement a Uniform Civil Code (UCC).
- **Goa continued with its Portuguese Civil Code of 1867** when it became part of India in 1961. Then it was a Union Territory.
- **Article 44 of the Indian Constitution** - state shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a **uniform civil code** throughout the territory of India.
- For Uttarakhand UCC, Retired Supreme Court judge **Ranjana Prakash Desai** was appointed as the **chairperson of expert committee to draft the UCC** – submitted on February 2, 2024



- After legislative approval and President's assent, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami declared 27th January, 2025 as the official implementation date.

#### Key highlights of Uttarakhand's UCC

- **Banned Practices:** Prohibits halala, iddat, and talaq from Muslim Personal Law.
- **Equal Rights for Women:** Ensures equal property and inheritance rights.
- **Mandatory Online Registrations:** Marriage, divorce, and live-in relationships must be registered on the government portal [ucc.uk.gov.in](http://ucc.uk.gov.in).
- **Marriage Laws**
  - Legal marriage age: 21 years for men and 18 years for women.
  - Mandatory marriage registration.
  - Prohibits polygamy, child marriage, and triple talaq.
- **Inheritance and Property Rights**
  - Equal inheritance rights for sons and daughters.
  - Recognizes children of live-in couples as "legitimate," granting them equal inheritance rights.
- **Live-in relationships**
  - to be **registered within one month**  
If only one partner applies to **end the relationship**, the **registrar** will accept it only on the basis of **confirmation from the other**
  - If the **woman becomes pregnant during the live-in**, then it is mandatory to inform the government within **30 days of the birth of the child**.
  - The UCC also mandates that a **landlord cannot deny house** to any couple whose live-in registration is done.

#### Uttarakhand's Soapstone Mining Crisis Escalates

The Uttarakhand High Court has criticized authorities for unregulated soapstone mining in Bageshwar district, which currently has over 160 mines.

#### About

- **Soapstone, also known as steatite**, is a **soft metamorphic rock** composed primarily of talc with varying amounts of chlorite, dolomite, and magnesite.
- Its **smooth, soapy texture and heat-resistant properties** make it a versatile material.
- **Industrial Uses:** Soapstone is widely used in industries for **making sculptures, countertops, sinks, and tiles** due to its durability and aesthetic appeal.
- **Heat Resistance:** It is used in stoves, fireplaces, and laboratory countertops because of its excellent heat resistance.
- **Cosmetics and Paper:** Ground soapstone serves as a filler in **paper, cosmetics, and paints**.
- **Traditional Uses:** In India, **soapstone is used for making utensils, handicrafts, and idols**.



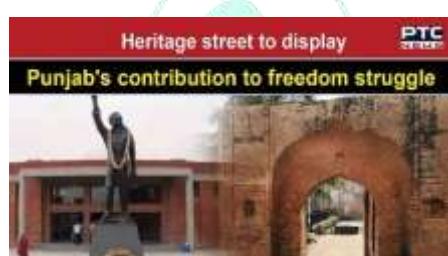
#### Availability in India

- **Rajasthan:** The largest producer, particularly in the Udaipur, Dungarpur, and Bhilwara regions.
- **Uttarakhand:** Notable deposits in Bageshwar, Pithoragarh, and Almora districts.
- **Tamil Nadu and Karnataka:** Smaller reserves also exist.
- Soapstone mining involves extracting talc-rich rock from open-pit or underground mines.

#### PUNJAB

Punjab to construct heritage street at Shaheed Bhagat Singh's native village

- Khatkar Kalan, a village just outside Banga town in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district of Punjab, which is famous for the memorial of Bhagat Singh, is being developed as an iconic tourist destination of global standards.



- This development is being done as part of the **Special Assistance to States / Union Territories for Capital Investment (SASCI) scheme**, under which the Government of India has approved **40 projects across 23 states** to develop them as **iconic tourist centres of global standards**.
- The street will connect museum of Bhagat Singh to his ancestral home.

## HARYANA

**International Saraswati Mahotsav begins at Pehowa in Kurukshetra, Haryana**

- Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini inaugurated the **seven-day' International Saraswati Mahotsav' 2025** at **Pehowa Saraswati Tirth** in the **Kurukshetra district** of Haryana on 29 January 2025.
- The Mahotsav will **continue till 4th February 2025**, during which various seminars, cultural events, and **Saras mela** will be held.
- Adi Badri, also known as Sri Sarasvati Udgam Tirath



## Blinkit Launches 10-Minute Ambulance Service in Gurgaon

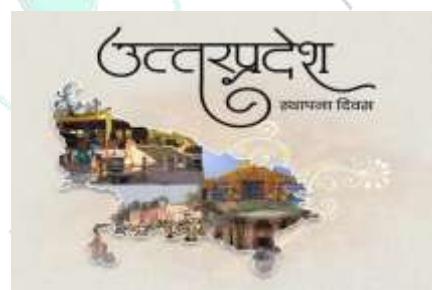
- Zomato-owned quick commerce platform **Blinkit** has announced a 10-minute ambulance delivery service, as the firm looks to expand beyond grocery and print out deliveries.



## UTTAR PRADESH

**Uttar Pradesh foundation day**

- On 24 January 1950, the United Provinces was renamed as Uttar Pradesh
- The theme for this year's foundation day is 'Development and Heritage: Uttar Pradesh on the Path to Progress' (Vikas aur Virasat: Pragati Path Par Uttar Pradesh)
- The initiative to celebrate 'Uttar Pradesh Day' was taken by the then Governor Ram Naik and this event has been celebrated for three days every year since 2018.
- State Animal Of Uttar Pradesh – Barasingha
- State Bird Of Uttar Pradesh – Sarus Crane
- State Fish Of Uttar Pradesh – Chital
- State Tree Of Uttar Pradesh – Ashoka
- Chief Minister : Yogi Adityanath
- Governor : Anandiben Patel
- The state government will confer the 'Uttar Pradesh Gaurav Samman' award on six individuals from the fields of music, agriculture and education during the state foundation day



**The awardees include :**

- Krishnakant Shukla from Varanasi (physics, musician, poet);
  - Himanshu Gupta from Vrindavan, Mathura (entrepreneur-environmentalist);
  - Manish Verma from Kanpur (agriculture-Dalit entrepreneur);
  - Krishna Yadav from Bulandshahr (woman entrepreneur);
  - Colonel Subhash Deshwal from Bulandshahr (agriculture-entrepreneur);
  - Dr Jai Singh from Bahraich (banana production).
- Each recipient will be given a cash award of Rs 11 lakh, a certificate of appreciation, and a shawl.

**UP to promote Maha Kumbh 2025 at International Tourism Fair in Spain**

- In a major initiative to position **Uttar Pradesh as a leading global tourism destination**, the Yogi government is set to showcase the state's tourism offerings at the **international tourism trade fairs** to be held at **Madrid in Spain and at Berlin in Germany**.
- During these global events, **Mahakumbh-2025**, set to be held in **Prayagraj between January 13 and February 26**



### Kumbha Mela (static)

Kumbh Mela is celebrated 4 times over 12 years, on these four banks:

1. The Shipra at Ujjain in **Madhya Pradesh**
2. The Ganges at Haridwar in **Uttarakhand**
3. The Godavari at Nashik in **Maharashtra**
4. At the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati at Prayagraj (Formerly Allahabad) in **Uttar Pradesh**.



### Frequency of Kumbh Mela

1. Kumbh Mela, which is held every third year in each of the four places mentioned above.
  2. Ardh Kumbh Mela takes place every 6th year in rotation between Haridwar and Prayagraj.
  3. Purna Kumbh Mela happens every 12th year at four Kumbh Mela sites.
  4. Maha Kumbh Mela occurs every 144 years after completing the 12 Purna Mela.
- It has been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (2017).



### Maha Kumbh Mela begins in Prayagraj with Amrit Snan

- 45-day Maha Kumbh from **13<sup>th</sup> January to 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025**,
- **biggest gathering of human beings in the world**, starting
- with the '**Shahi Snan**' on **Paush Purnima at the Sangam**, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and mystical Saraswati rivers.
- **Shahi Snan (Royal Bath)**: Procession of **saints and Akharas (spiritual orders)** performing ceremonial baths. Also known as '**Rajyogi Snan**', it signifies the start of the Maha Kumbh Mela.
- The word '**Kumbh**' comes from the root '**kumbhak**' (the sacred pitcher of elixir of immortality).

This gathering takes place at 4 different places, namely:

- In **Haridwar**, on the banks of the **Ganges**.
- In **Ujjain**, on the banks of **Shipra**.
- In **Nashik**, on the banks of **Godavari** (**Dakshin Ganga**).
- In **Prayagraj**, at the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical invisible **Saraswati**.

### Different Types of Kumbh:

- The Kumbh Mela is celebrated **4 times over a course of 12 years**.
- At **Haridwar and Prayagraj**, **Ardh-Kumbh** Mela is held **every 6th year**.
- The **Maha Kumbh Mela** is celebrated **at Prayag after 144 years** (after 12 'Purna Kumbh Melas').
- **Maagh Kumbh** is celebrated **every year** in the month of **Maagh (Jan-Feb)** in Prayagraj.
- **Background:** The Maha Kumbh Mela, transcribed by **Adi Shankaracharya**, originates from the Puranas, describing gods and demons battling for the sacred pitcher of Amrit, with Lord Vishnu (as Mohini) securing it from demons.
- **Ancient Origins:** During the **Maurya** and **Gupta** periods (**4<sup>th</sup> century BCE to 6<sup>th</sup> century CE**), the Kumbh Mela began as smaller gatherings of pilgrims from across the Indian subcontinent.
  - Harshavardhana king of the Pushyabhuti dynasty started the organisation of the **Kumbh fair** at Prayagraj.
  - Akbar promoted religious tolerance and granted Naga Sadhus the honour of leading the royal entry to the Mela in 1565.
  - In the 19th century, James Prinsep chronicled its ritualistic practices and socio-religious dynamics.
  - recognized by **UNESCO** in 2017 as an **intangible cultural heritage of humanity** for its enduring ancient traditions.

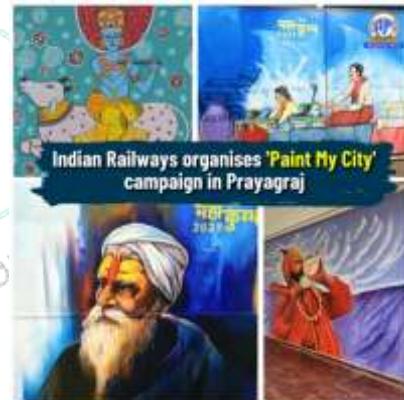
### Akharas can be categorised based on their favoured deity.

- **Shaiva Akharas:** Worship Lord Shiva in various forms.
- **Vaishnava Akharas:** Worship Lord Vishnu in various forms.
- **Udaseen Akharas:** Founded by Chandra Dev (son of **Guru Nanak**, the first Sikh Guru).

- Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat inaugurated Kalagram this at Mahakumbh Nagar in Prayagraj - which will showcase the rich and vibrant culture of the country.

### Indian railways organises 'Paint My City' campaign in Prayagraj

- Prayagraj's railway stations have been transformed into centres highlighting Indian art and heritage.
- The walls now feature artworks that depict themes such as the Ramayana, Krishna Leela, Lord Buddha, Shiva Bhakti, Ganga Aarti, and women empowerment.



### Bhashini Platform Enhances Multilingual Accessibility for Devotees at Mahakumbh in Prayagraj

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has integrated its Bhashini language translation platform to provide multilingual support at the Maha Kumbh 2025, held from January 13 to February 26.
- This initiative aims to ensure seamless communication and greater accessibility for millions of pilgrims attending the world's largest spiritual event.
- Bhashini's 'Digital Lost & Found Solution' is a key feature, enabling visitors to register lost or found items using voice inputs in their native languages, with real-time text and voice translations simplifying interactions.
- A multilingual chatbot further assists pilgrims with queries and navigation through kiosks, while instructions and guidelines are translated into local languages, ensuring a user-friendly experience.
- The platform also enhances communication between pilgrims and police officers, breaking down language barriers for a smoother experience.
- In collaboration with the UP Police, Bhashini's CONVERSE feature supports communication with the 112 emergency helpline, with officers trained to assist devotees in overcoming language challenges.

### Netra Kumbh: Special attention given to healthcare at Mahakumbh to combat vision impairment

- Netra Kumbh (Eye Camp):** is an eye care program that takes place during the **Maha Kumbh Mela**. It aims to provide free eye care services to millions of people, including **pilgrims and local residents**.
- Over 500 doctors from more than 150 hospitals** aim to treat **five lakh (500,000) eye patients**.
- The camp plans to distribute **three lakh (300,000) free spectacles** and perform **50,000 cataract surgeries**.
- Dant Kumbh (Dental Camp):** For the first time, a 'Dant Kumbh' will be organized **by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)**.
- Gyan Kumbh (Knowledge Confluence):** The **Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas** is organizing the 'Gyan Mahakumbh' in bringing together over a thousand prominent **educators, university vice-chancellors, education ministers, and secretaries** from both central and state governments.
- Green Kumbh Initiative:** **Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas** and the **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS)** environmental activities have launched the '**Ek Thaila, Ek Thali**' (**One Bag, One Plate**) initiative.
- Vidya Kumbh: Children from laborer families - Free books, pens, and other educational materials will be distributed**



### Maha Kumbh 2025: World's First Mahamrityunjaya Yantra Installed in Prayagraj

- The world's first 52-foot-long, 52-foot-wide and 52-foot-tall 'Mahamrityunjaya Yantra' has been installed at Tapovan Ashram in Jhansi Havelis in Prayagraj, the land of Maha Kumbh.
- Mahamrityunjaya (victory to death) Yantra makes one healthy and courageous by freeing him from the fear of death, disease and danger.
- The Mahamrityunjaya Yantra was created in 52 days at a cost of Rs 4 crore.



- A total of 151 'acharyas' are chanting 'Mahamrityunjaya Mantra' sitting under this Yantra since Makar Sankranti on January 14.
- These saints are consecrating 11,11,111 Rudrakshas.
- These Rudrakshas will be sent by post to the devotees, who visit Maha Kumbh, free of cost.
- Mahamrityunjaya Mantra consists of 52 letters, which are actually the 52 energy centres in the country.

### ISKCON and Adani Group Collaborate to Serve Meals at Maha Kumbh Mela

- Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani joined hands with the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) to serve meals to devotees at the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj.
- The collaboration is part of the Mahaprasad Seva initiative, which will run throughout the Mela, till February 26, 2025.
- In addition to the Mahaprasad Seva, the initiative will also distribute five lakh copies of the Geeta Saar to devotees, further enhancing the spiritual experience of the attendees.



### Ram Katha museum in Ayodhya

- The Ayodhya Ram Mandir was inaugurated on January 22, 2024 and the trust is celebrating the first anniversary of the pran pratishtha ceremony on January 11, as per the Hindu calendar.
- Ram Katha Museum is under plans, which will be housed at the erstwhile sangralaya (archives) building, 4 kilometres from the temple site.
- The museum, which will also showcase the findings from archaeological excavations to offer "concrete evidence of the temple's ancient roots".
- It will span over 40,000 square feet and become the second-largest attraction in Ayodhya once completed.
- While the state government owns the building, the temple trust will fund the project, which is estimated to be completed in the next two years.
- Spanning three floors – lower ground, ground, and first – the museum will be organised into 26 sections, each offering a unique perspective on the life and legacy of Lord Ram.

### Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to Inaugurate All India Radio's Special 'Kumbhvani' Channel and 'Kumbh Mangal' dhwani at Prayagraj

- Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, will inaugurate All India Radio's special Kumbhvani Channel (FM 103.5 MHz), dedicated to Mahakumbh 2025.
- The live updates broadcast by KumbhVani will be especially beneficial for those who are unable to attend the Kumbh in Prayagraj.
- The Chief Minister will also launch the Kumbh Mangal Dhwani.



### Uttar Pradesh to Privatise Two Power Distribution Companies

- The Uttar Pradesh government has initiated steps toward privatizing or forming Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for two of its loss-making electricity distribution companies (discoms):
- Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (DVVNL) and Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (PVVNL).

### Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launches Kashi Tamil Sangamam 3.0, KTS Portal

- Union Minister for Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, launched the registration portal for the 3rd edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS).
- KTS 3.0 will be held from 15<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (10-day-long event ).
- Kashi Tamil Sangamam is an annual programme started in 2022 by the Govt. of India, to celebrate, reaffirm and rediscover the age-old links between Tamil Nadu and Kashi – two of the country's most important and ancient seats of learning.



This year, the government has decided to bring around 1000 delegates from Tamil Nadu under five categories/groups:

- (i) Students, Teachers, and Writers
- (ii) Farmers and Artisans (Vishwakarma Categories)
- (iii) Professionals and Small Entrepreneurs
- (iv) Women (SHG, Mudra Loan beneficiaries)
- (v) Start-up, Innovation, Edu-Tech, Research
- Kashi Tamil Sangamam is being organized by the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India in collaboration with other ministries including Culture, Textiles, Railways, Tourism, Food Processing, I&B etc. and the Govt. of UP.

### **Google Cloud & UP Partner to Launch Open Network for Agriculture Signed between Uttar Pradesh and Google Cloud (India)**

- The UP government has signed an MoU with Google Cloud (India) to launch the Gemini-powered and Beacon-enabled Uttar Pradesh Open Network for Agriculture.
- one-stop access to advisory services, credit, mechanization, and market connectivity for selling their produce.
- Farmers will also gain real-time, accurate information on microclimates and market prices



### **What is Sanskriti Utsava?**

- The Uttar Pradesh government will organize "Sanskriti Utsava" to commemorate the state's foundation day "Uttar Pradesh Diwas" between January 2 to January 26, 2025.
- The Sanskriti Utsava will commemorate 'Uttar Pradesh Diwas.'
- The event's theme is 'Uttar Pradesh Parv – Hamari Sanskriti-Hamari Pehchaan.'

### **About Uttar Pradesh Statehood Day**

- On 24th January 1950, the United Provinces was officially renamed Uttar Pradesh.
- The initiative to celebrate UP Day was introduced by Governor Ram Naik.
- Since 2018, UP Day has been celebrated as a three-day event, highlighting the state's history, culture, and achievements.



### **Dhanauri Wetland Notification**

- **Context:** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Uttar Pradesh government to provide a detailed status report within four weeks regarding the notification of the Dhanauri Wetland, near the Jewar airport, as a wetland.
- **Location:** Situated in Dhanauri village near Dankaur in Gautam Buddha Nagar district, Uttar Pradesh.
- **River Association:** Though primarily a standalone wetland, it forms part of the Yamuna River basin ecosystem.
- **Features and Uniqueness:**
  - Home to 217 bird species, including 150 Sarus Cranes, the state bird of Uttar Pradesh.
  - Recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by BirdLife International.
  - During peak migratory seasons (November-March), it hosts up to 50,000 waterfowl.
  - Documented by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) for its ecological significance.



### **What is a Ramsar Site?**

- A Ramsar Site is a wetland designated for international importance under the Ramsar Convention of 1971, a global treaty for wetland conservation and sustainable use.

- Wetlands chosen as Ramsar sites meet criteria based on their ecological, biodiversity, or cultural significance.

### Who Declares Wetlands?

- State Governments notify wetlands under their jurisdiction for conservation measures.

### **Uttar Pradesh's Unveils Aerospace and Defence Policy 2024**

- The Uttar Pradesh government approved a new Aerospace and Defence Unit policy to attract Rs 50,000 crore of investments and generate jobs for 1 lakh people.
- The state cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Prayagraj also approved an FDI policy among 10 key proposals aimed at accelerating the state's development
- Under this policy, the state government will offer up to 80 per cent subsidy on land to the foreign firms investing in the state.
- The Ministry of Defence has set an ambitious target to double the country's A&D production to USD 25 billion and exports to USD 5 billion by 2025-26.
- By 2047, the A&D manufacturing sector is expected to contribute 25 per cent to the nation's GDP.
- The Cabinet also approved the subsidy payment to UPSIDA (UP State Industrial Development Authority) for the land allotted to M/s Ashok Leyland Ltd.
- As part of this initiative, Rs 250 crore has been approved as a capital subsidy for Triveni Engineering and Industries Ltd in Moradabad, and Rs 10,749 crore as SGST reimbursement for Gallant Ispat Ltd. in Mirzapur.



### **MADHYA PRADESH**

#### **PARTH Yojana: Preparing Youth for Recruitment in Security Services**

- Madhya Pradesh has launched an innovative scheme called **PARTH Yojana (Police Army Recruitment Training & Hunar)** to prepare its youth both physically and mentally for careers in the Indian Army, police, paramilitary forces, and other such services.
- Under this scheme, candidates will receive comprehensive pre-recruitment training, which includes physical fitness preparation, written examination coaching (focusing on subjects like general knowledge, mathematics, and English), and personality development guidance.
- Training centers will be established at divisional levels, and the entire program will be overseen by district sports and youth welfare officers.
- Support will also come from rural youth coordinators and departmental employees.
- A key component of the PARTH Yojana is the development of the MPYP (Madhya Pradesh Youth Platform) Portal, which aims to bring all young individuals in the state onto a unified digital platform.
- This portal is designed to connect youth with opportunities in skill development, career guidance, and employment.



### **World's largest 3D rangoli created in Bhopal for Swami Vivekananda's Birth anniversary**

- In Madhya Pradesh, a unique rangoli has been made at Shaurya Smarak in Bhopal on Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary and National Youth Day, enters Golden Book of World Records as the world's largest 3D rangoli.
- This rangoli depicting a picture of Swami Vivekananda has been made in 18 thousand square feet area.
- Indore artist Shikha Sharma Joshi and her team took 48 hours to make this 3D rangoli.



### **CHATTISGARH**

#### **Chhattisgarh first state to link forest ecosystem with Green GDP**

- The moves aimed to highlight the direct link between significant environmental contributions of forests like clean air, water conservation, biodiversity and the state's economic progress.

### What is Green GDP?

- Green GDP is an economic indicator that aims to measure the true economic performance of a country while considering the environmental impact of economic activity.
- It's calculated by **subtracting the costs of resource depletion and environmental degradation from a country's traditional GDP**.
- It is also known as environmentally adjusted domestic product.

## WEST BENGAL

### Gangasagar Mela

- Gangasagar is the **confluence of the Hooghly River and the Bay of Bengal** in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district.
- the fair is held every year on **Makar Sankranti**. People gather to take a sacred dip in the confluence of **River Ganga and the Bay of Bengal** and visit the Kapilmuni's ashram located on the Gangasagar.
- Popularly regarded as the **second largest Pilgrimage gathering**, after Kumbha
- **Chief Minister announced** to construct a 5-km-long **Gangasagar Setu across the Muriganga river to connect the mainland to Sagar Island**



### Kolkata's 'boi mela': India's oldest book fair inspired by the Frankfurt tradition

- The *boi mela*, or book fair, holds a uniquely special place in the hearts of Bengalis.
- India's first-ever book fair was held in 1918 at College Street in Calcutta,. This historic event was organized by the National Council of Education (NCE) as part of its mission to promote the Swadeshi Movement
- Organised by the National Council of Education (NCE),

**Kolkata's 'Boi Mela': India's First Book Fair, Inspired by the Frankfurt Tradition!**

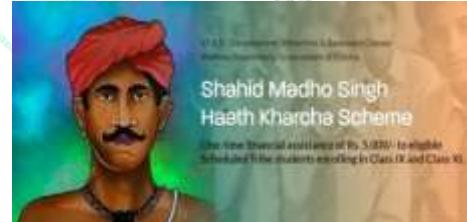


Held first in 1918, Kolkata's iconic book fair draws inspiration from the Frankfurt tradition, evolving into a grand celebration of literature and culture over the years.

## ODISHA

### Shahid Madho Singh Haath Kharcha Scheme Launched in Odisha

- Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi inaugurated the **11-day famous Adi Mela**, and launched the **Shahid Madho Singh Haath Kharcha Scheme**.
- The scheme provides a **one-time incentive of ₹5,000 for ST students enrolling in Class IX and Class XI**.
- It is designed to **encourage higher enrolment** and completion rates for secondary and higher secondary education.
- The financial support is exclusively available for ST students attending **government or government-aided schools**, and with an **annual family income not exceeding ₹2,50,000**.
- Madho Singh was a prominent figure in India's independence movement. He was born around 1786 in Ghess, Bargarh district.
- During the First War of Indian Independence in **1857**, **Madho Singh emerged as a key leader of tribal resistance in Odisha**



### Odisha Declares Unseasonal Rain a Natural Calamity

- Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi declared the **unseasonal rain in December** last year a natural calamity.
- **farmers who have lost 33 per cent or more crops due to the unseasonal rain, would be provided assistance** as per the provisions in the relief code from the state disaster response fund (SDRF).



### Odisha becomes the 34th state to implement Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana scheme

- Odisha became the 34th state to implement the **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)** after the National Health Authority (NHA) of the Union Ministry of Health entered into a

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Odisha.

- The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (**AB PM-JAY**) will be implemented in convergence with the existing **Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana (GJAY)** in Odisha.
- It will provide a **cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per annum** with additional **Rs 5 lakh for women members**.
- **AB PM-JAY** is not only the **world's largest health coverage scheme** fully financed by the government but also the **fastest to be implemented since conception**.
- The scheme is fully digitized and covers approximately 45% of India's population
- Launched on **23rd September, 2018** in Ranchi, Jharkhand, it offers a sum insured of **Rs.5 lakh per family for secondary care and tertiary care**.
- Health Benefit Packages covers **surgery, medical and day care treatments, cost of medicines and diagnostics**.
- It is an **entitlement-based scheme** targeting families identified through the latest Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 data.
- The **National Health Authority (NHA)** allows States/UTs to use non-SECC beneficiary family databases for tagging against leftover SECC families.



#### Funding:

- The funding for the scheme is shared – **60:40** for all states and UTs with their own legislature, **90:10** in Northeast states and Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal and Uttarakhand and **100% Central funding** for UTs without legislature.

#### Nodal Agency: National Health Authority (NHA)

- The State Health Agency (SHA) is the apex body of the State Government responsible for the implementation of AB PM-JAY in the State.

## ASSAM

### Assam govt launches initiative to evaluate performance of government schools' students

- The Assam government launched the first phase of its flagship education evaluation programme, **Gunotsav 2025**
- the exercise is aimed at evaluating the performance of nearly 14.11 lakh students of the state.
- The theme of 'Gunotsav 2025' is "Ensuring Quality Education".
- It will be conducted in three phases, with the first phase covering 11 districts from January 6 to 9, the second phase in 14 districts from January 17 to 22, and the third phase in 10 districts from February 5 to 8.



**Oil & Gas Exploration Approved Near Assam's Gibbon Sanctuary**

### Controversial Drilling Approved in Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary

- The Centre's wildlife panel has approved a proposal to carry out oil and gas exploration in the eco-sensitive zone of the Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam's Jorhat district.
- The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL), chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, approved the proposal by Vedanta Group's Cairn Oil and Gas
- exploration at the site would only be for identifying hydrocarbon reserves. Any extraction, if reserves were discovered, would be carried out from outside the ESZ.
- The **Hoolock gibbon, India's only ape species**, is found in the Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary
- It also contains Northeastern India's only nocturnal primate—the **Bengal slow loris**.
- **River:** The **Bhogdoi River** creates a waterlogged region dominated by semi-hydrophytic plants along the border of the sanctuary.

### Dibrugarh as Assam's second capital

- On Republic Day this year, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced that Eastern Assam's Dibrugarh will be developed as "the second capital" of Assam.
- He also announced an urbanisation push in Dibrugarh, including the construction of an expressway to shorten travel time between the town and Guwahati.
- The construction work for a permanent Assembly building in Dibrugarh will start on January 25, 2026
- a session of the Assembly in Dibrugarh every year from 2027
- Five of the six communities seeking Scheduled Tribe status, including the Adivasis and Ahoms, dominate the eastern part of the State



### Why Dibrugarh?

- One of the popular regional distinctions drawn in Assam is between Upper Assam 'Ujoni' (the eastern part of the state in the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra) and Lower Assam 'Namoni' (further downstream of the Brahmaputra, which extends towards the state's border with Bangladesh).
- Upper Assam and is identified as the heartland of "indigenous Assamese" culture and identity. It was both the seat of the Ahom kingdom and the tea industry - home to different ethnic Assamese groups
- The state's power centre Guwahati, is located in Lower Assam, the region from where Himanta Biswa Sarma hails.



### SIKKIM

#### Centre launches country's first organic fish cluster in Sikkim

- The Union Minister, Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh inaugurated and laid the foundation for 50 key projects worth Rs. 50 crores under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in Guwahati, Assam.
- The projects, announced during the North Eastern Region State Meet-2025, covers all North Eastern Region (NER) states, except Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.
- Launched the Organic Fisheries Cluster in Soreng District of Sikkim, being First of Its Kind in India, for development of organic fisheries and aquaculture in Sikkim
- National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) is a key stakeholder in developing the fisheries and aquaculture organic cluster in Sikkim.
- NABARD is a development bank focussing primarily on the rural sector of the country. It is the apex banking institution to provide finance for Agriculture and rural development.
- Its headquarter is located in Mumbai
- It is responsible for the development of the small industries, cottage industries, and any other such village or rural projects.
- It is a statutory body established in 1982 under Parliamentary act-National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act, 1981.



#### Soreng District in Sikkim becomes India's 1st organic fisheries cluster

- Union Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh launched the country's first organic fisheries cluster in Sikkim.
- The project aims to sell antibiotic, chemical, and pesticide free organic fish in eco-conscious markets across the globe.



## ARUNANCHAL PRADESH

### Arunachal Pradesh's Religious Conversion Act Revival

- The Arunachal Pradesh government is taking steps to implement the **Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 1978**, by framing rules for its enforcement, nearly 46 years after its enactment.
- Since it was enacted in 1978, successive governments have not framed the rules for its implementation, because of which it has **laid dormant for nearly five decades**.
- The move aims to address concerns related to **forceful conversions in the state**.
- The **Christian population in Arunachal Pradesh increased from 0.79% in 1971 to 30.26% in 2011**, making Christianity the largest religion in the state.



The **Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 1978** was introduced to prohibit forceful religious conversions.

- The **Act was introduced** (in 1978) during a period of **rapid social and cultural changes** in Arunachal Pradesh, aiming to safeguard the traditional religious practices of indigenous communities from external influence or coercion.

### Key Highlights :

- **Definition of Indigenous Faiths:** The Act explicitly recognizes indigenous faiths as religions, beliefs, customs, and observances practiced by the native communities of Arunachal Pradesh. These include:
  - **Buddhism:** As practiced among the tribal groups such as **Monpas, Membas, Sherdukpens, Khambas, Khamptis, and Singphos**.
  - **Nature Worship:** Particularly the **worship of Donyi-Polo** (means "Sun and Moon") practiced by several communities in the state.
    - **Donyi-Polo** is an indigenous religion of the Tani and other Sino-Tibetan peoples of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam in Northeast India.
  - **Vaishnavism:** As practiced by the **Noctes and Akas**.
- **Punishment for Violation:** The **Act prescribes a punishment of up to 2 years of imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs. 10,000** for individuals found guilty of forcibly converting others or attempting to do so.
- **Mandatory Reporting:** The Act mandates that **any act of religious conversion be reported to the Deputy Commissioner (DC)** of the respective district.

### State-Level Anti-Conversion Laws

- **Odisha (1967):** It became the **first state to pass a law restricting religious conversions**, prohibiting conversions through force or fraudulent means.
- **Madhya Pradesh (1968):** Introduced the **Madhya Pradesh Dharma Swatantraya Adhiniyam**, mandating that any conversion activities be reported to the District Magistrate, with penalties for non-compliance.
- **Other States:** Several other states, including **Gujarat (2003), Chhattisgarh (2000 and 2006), Rajasthan (2006 and 2008), Himachal Pradesh (2006 and 2019), Tamil Nadu (2002-2004), Jharkhand (2017), Uttarakhand (2018), Uttar Pradesh (2021), and Haryana (2022)**, have enacted similar laws prohibiting various forms of religious conversions.

### Constitutional Provisions Related to Religious Belief

- **Article 25:** ensures the freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice, and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality, and health.
  - It permits the state to regulate secular activities related to religious practice
- **Article 26:** grants every religious denomination the right to manage its religious affairs, subject to considerations of public order, morality, and health.
- **Articles 27-30:** Safeguard the freedom to contribute financially to religious practices, manage religious affairs, and establish and administer educational institutions for religious purposes.

### **Arunachal Pradesh Deputy CM Chowna Mein Inaugurates Parshuram Kund Mela 2025**

- a prominent spiritual event on Makar Sankranti, often referred to as the "**Kumbh of the Northeast**" - banks of the Lohit River.

- development work being carried out under the **Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASAD)** scheme.

### Pangsau Pass Festival 2025

The Pangsau Pass International Festival (PPIF) 2025, held in Arunachal Pradesh.



#### Location and Altitude:

- **Pangsau Pass (Pan Saung Pass)** is located on the India-Myanmar border at an altitude of **3,727 feet (1,136 meters)**.
- It lies on the **crest of the Patkai Hills** and is part of the famous **Leleo Road (Stilwell Road)**.
- It is named after the Myanmar village **Pangsau**, located 2 km east of the pass.
- The pass serves as one of the easiest routes into Myanmar from the Assam plains.
- India's **easternmost point**, **Chaukan Pass**, lies northeast of Pangsau Pass in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district.
- **13th Century**: Used by the Ahoms, a Shan tribe, to enter Assam.
- 



#### World War II:

- The **Stilwell Road (Leleo Road)** was constructed to connect British India to Nationalist China to support their fight against Japanese forces.
- Pangsau Pass, nicknamed "**Hell Pass**", was the first major obstacle on the route due to steep gradients and muddy terrain.
- The Stilwell Road connected **Leleo (Assam)** to Pangsau Pass, covering a distance of **61 km (38 mi)**.

#### Pangsau Pass Winter Festival:

- Held annually since **2007** in Nampong, Arunachal Pradesh, during the 3rd week of January.
- Promotes cultural exchange between **Northeast India and Myanmar**.
- Features folk dances (Bihu, Bamboo dance, Tangsa Rongrand War dance), arts, crafts, ethnic foods, and traditional sports, showcasing the culture of the **Tangsa Naga tribe** and other local communities.

## Manipur

### Gaan Ngai festival commemorates end of harvest season in Manipur

- The Gaan Ngai festival commemorating the end of the harvest season by the Kabui/Rongmei Naga community celebrated in Manipur



## MIZORAM

### India Welcomes Its First Generation Beta Baby

- The baby, named **Frankie Remruatdika Zadeng**, is recognized as India's first child from the so-called **Generation Beta, born in Aizawl, Mizoram**
- **Generation Beta**, a term denoting children **born between 2025 and 2039**
- They will grow up in a world with **advanced artificial intelligence (AI)**
- The term "**Generation Beta**" was coined by Australian futurist **Mark McCrindle** to describe the demographic cohort succeeding **Generation Alpha (2010-2024)**.
- **Generation Z - Born between 1995 and 2009**, they are also known as the **iGeneration** because they grew up with the iPhone
- **Millennials**- Also known as **Generation Y**, they were born **between 1980 and 1994**. They were the first generation to come of age in the new millennium



- Generation X** - Born between **1965 and 1980**, they grew up during a time of economic uncertainty and cultural upheaval
- Baby Boomers** - Born between **1946 and 1964**, this generation experienced the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the moon landing

## TRIPURA

21 January - Tripura, Manipur, and Meghalaya Foundation Day

<b>Manipur Statehood Year</b>	1972
<b>Tripura, Statehood Year</b>	1972
<b>Meghalaya Statehood Year</b>	1972
<b>Constitutional Amendment</b>	States were formed under the 27th Constitutional Amendment Act.
<b>Key Legislation</b>	North Eastern Areas Reorganisation Act, 1971.
<b>Pre-Statehood Status of Manipur</b>	Union Territory (merged with India in 1949).
<b>Pre-Statehood Status of Tripura,</b>	Union Territory (merged with India in 1949).
<b>Pre-Statehood Status of Meghalaya</b>	In 1947 the rulers of the Garo and Khasi region acceded to the newly independent country of India. Autonomous State within Assam (granted autonomy in 1969).

### Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura Statehood Day



### About Manipur

- Capital: Imphal
- State Bird: Nongyeen
- State Animal: Sangai
- State Game: Manipuri Polo
- State Flower: Shirui Lily
- CM: Nongthombam Biren Singh
- Governor: Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla



### About Meghalaya

- State Animal – Clouded Leopard
- State Bird of Meghalaya – Common Hill Myna
- State Tree of Meghalaya – Gmelina arborea
- State Flower of Meghalaya – Lady's slipper orchid
- Chief minister : Conrad Sangma
- Governor : C. H. Vijayashankar



### Kokborok Language Protests

**NEWS:** Members of the Twipra Students' Federation (TSF) were detained for protesting at the Tripura Assembly entrance, demanding the inclusion of the Roman script for Kokborok (a Sino-Tibetan language) in textbooks and official work.

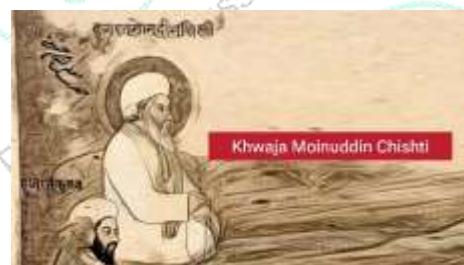


- Kokborok, is the mother tongue of the **Borok people (Tripuris)** and tribal communities in Tripura, including **Debbarma, Reang, Jamatia**, and others.
- "Kok-Borok" combines Kok (language) and Borok (man), meaning "the language of man" or "the language of the Borok people."
- **Script and Writing:** Kokborok originally used the **Koloma script** but now lacks a native script and is written in **Bengali script**.
- **Historical Roots:** Existed since at least the 1st century AD. **Rajratnakar**, a chronicle of Tripuri kings, was initially written in Kokborok and Koloma script by **Durlobendra Chontai**.
- **Recognition:** Kokborok was recognised as the **official language of Tripura in 1979** (spoken by 23.97% of Tripura's population (2011 Census)), second only to **Bengali**.
- **Use of Roman Script:** Kokborok, favored by tribal groups, has been written in **Roman script for decades**. Two commissions, led by **Shyama Charan Tripura and Pabitra Sarkar**, supported Roman, while the government preferred Bengali.
  - Tribal organizations oppose **Bengali** or **Devanagari scripts**, fearing cultural imposition and identity disruption.

## RAJASTHAN

### Annual Urs of Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Hasan Chishti in Ajmer

- Recently, the Prime Minister presented a 'chadar' to Minorities Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju to offer at the Ajmer Sharif Dargah of Sufi Saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti on the occasion of 'Urs'.
- The Urs festival is an **annual festival** held at **Ajmer in Rajasthan** which **commemorates the death anniversary of Sufi saint Moinuddin Chishti**.
- **Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti:** Moinuddin Hasan Chishti was born in Sijistan (modern-day Sistan) in Iran in 1141-42 CE.
- After **Muhammad Ghori** had already defeated Prithviraj Chauhan in the **Second Battle of Tarain (1192)** and established his rule in Delhi, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti started living and preaching in Ajmer.
- His shrine in Ajmer has been visited by rulers like **Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Sher Shah Suri, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, Dara Shukoh and Aurangzeb**.
- **Chishti Order was founded** in India by Khwaja Moin-Uddin Chishti, that emphasised the **doctrine of the unity of being with God**
- They **rejected all material goods** as distractions
- He was a **major figure in spreading the mystical form of Islam (sufism)** in the Indian subcontinent.
- He brought together people from different castes, communities, and races. His followers emulated his dictum of "Sulh-i-Kul" (Peace with all)
- The **Chishty teachings were carried forward** and popularized by **disciples** of Khwaja Moin-Uddin Chishti like **Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Fareeduddin Ganj-e-Shakar, Nizam udin Auliya** and Naseeruddin Charagh.



## GUJRAT

### Gujarat govt approves creation of new district named Vav-Tharad

- The **Gujarat government approved the bifurcation of Banaskantha district** to create a new district.
- The **new Vav-Tharad district will have its headquarters in Tharad town**.
- With the formation of this new district, the number of **districts in Gujarat will reach 34**.
- Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.
- At 14, Banaskantha district includes the highest number of talukas in Gujarat and is the **second largest district area-wise**.
- The Vav-Tharad district will be created from 8 out of these 14 talukas



- the new Vav-Tharad district will comprise eight talukas and four municipalities, the new Banaskantha district will have six talukas and two municipalities.

### Archaeological Experiential Museum Launched in Vadnagar

- The Union Ministry of Culture and State Government of Gujarat, inaugurated a state-of-the-art museum and archaeological interpretation centre in Vadnagar.
- The town's architectural legacy, including the Kirti Toran, Hatkeshwar Mahadev Temple, and Sharmistha Lake, and the presence of various religious traditions.



### The museum complex will feature three main structures:

- The Main Museum Building:** Housing a comprehensive collection of artifacts and interactive exhibits.
- A 50-meter Connecting Bridge:** Linking the museum building to the excavation site.
- A Permanent Structure over the Excavation Site:** Providing visitors with a safe and informative view of the archaeological remains.



Gujarat International Kite Festival 2025 organised by Gujarat Tourism Department from January 11 to 14.

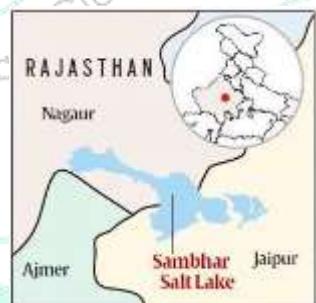
### Sambhar Festival 2025

- The Sambhar Festival, a vibrant celebration of culture, adventure, and heritage at the famous Sambhar Lake in Rajasthan.
- This **5-day festival (January 24 to January 28, 2025)**, organized by the Rajasthan Tourism Department and District Administration



### About Sambhar Lake:

- It is the **largest inland saltwater lake** in India.
- It is located in the **districts of Nagaur and Jaipur** in Rajasthan.
- surrounded on all sides by the Aravalli hills.**
- It was designated as a **Ramsar site** in the year 1990.
- Several migrating birds visit the waterbody during the winter.
- The wetland is one the **most important wintering area for flamingoes in India outside the Rann of Kachchh.**



## MAHARASHTRA

### Maharashtra FDA Allows Homeopathic Practitioners to Prescribe Allopathic Medicine

- The Maharashtra Food & Drugs Administration has, in a recent directive, allowed homeopathic practitioners, who have completed a certificate course in modern pharmacology, to prescribe allopathic medications.
- In June 2014, the Maharashtra government had changed the definition of 'registered medical practitioner',
- by amending the Maharashtra Medical Council Act, 1965, to include homeopathic practitioners who had completed a certificate course in modern pharmacology that was recognised by the State government.



### 10<sup>th</sup> Ajanta-Ellora International Film Festival begins in Maharashtra

- January 15-19 at Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, Maharashtra
- Filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker has appointed as the **honorary chairman** for the **10th Ajanta-Ellora International Film Festival (AIFF)**.



- Following the inauguration, the **opening film**, "Little Jaffna", a highly acclaimed French and Tamil language film, will be screened
- Sai Paranjpye to receive the Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award**
- Padma Bhushan award in 2006**
- The prestigious award carries a cash prize of INR 2,00,000/-, **Golden Padmapani Trophy, Shawl** for his/her outstanding contribution to cinema



### Pollution in the Pavana river

The National Green Tribunal recently directed the state-appointed rejuvenation committee to convene a meeting of stakeholders to set a new timeline for implementing the action plan that would tackle pollution in the Pavana river.

#### About Pavana River:

- It is situated in the west of Maharashtra state, in the Pune District.
- The river is a notable river crossing Pune city and divides Pune City and the Pimpri-Chinchwad area.
- Origin:** It originates from the Western Ghats, about 6 km south of Lonavala.
- confluence with the Mula River near Pune city.**
  - Mula River, which later merges with the Mutha River, forming the Mula-Mutha River, ultimately drains into the Bhima River (largest tributary of the Krishna River).
- A dam is built on this river at Pavana Nagar, called the "**Pavana Nagar Dam**".  
  - It provides drinking water to Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad.



### KARNATAKA

#### Karnataka Forest Department launches 'Garudakshi' online FIR system to curb wildlife crimes

- The Karnataka Forest Department has launched the 'Garudakshi' online FIR system to curb forest encroachments, illegal tree-felling, poaching, and unauthorised entry into forest areas.
- developed in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust of India**
- Previously, FIRs were manually recorded on paper using carbon copies
- The system will be implemented on a pilot basis in the Bengaluru Urban, Bhadravathi, Sirsi and Male Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary divisions.

#### First case of HMPV detected in Bengaluru

- An 8-month-old baby in Bengaluru has been detected with Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV), first case in India
- Delhi Govt has issued advisory for Human MetaPneumoVirus (HMPV)** and other respiratory viruses.
- As part of the recommendations, **hospitals have been instructed to promptly report Influenza-like Illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI)** cases through the IHIP Portal.
- The recommendations come in the wake of **reports of increased respiratory illnesses in China**.



#### About Human Metapneumovirus:

- It is a **respiratory virus** that causes **mild infections** similar to that caused by a **common cold**.
- It was **first identified by scientists in 2001** which belongs to the **Pneumoviridae family**, of which respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), measles and mumps are also members.
- It is **generally seen in winter and early spring**.
- Children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems are more susceptible** to the infection and to developing complications from it.

### Signs and symptoms

- Symptoms can resemble those caused by a common cold. They include a cough, runny or blocked nose, sore, throat, fever and wheezing.
- The estimated incubation period is three to six days.
- In most people, the illness goes away on its own within a few days, with rest and supportive care at home.
- In a few people however, complications such as bronchitis or pneumonia may arise, requiring medical care.

### Transmission

- It spreads through contact with an infected person or touching objects that have the virus on them.
- **Treatment:** There is no vaccine and there is no specific antiviral to treat HMPV. Most people require over-the-counter medications to relieve fever and pain, possibly with a decongestant. Antibiotics will not work for HMPV.

### BMCRI to Set Up South India's First Infectious Disease Research Lab

- Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI) will host the Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) first Infectious Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (IRDL) in south India.
- This will be a part of seven proposed IRDLs being set up across the country.



### Ancient Umamaheshwara metal sculpture found at Taggunje in Udupi district of Karnataka

- A Umamaheshwara metal sculpture, which was probably made in the 17th century in the 12th century style, has been found at Taggunje in Ajri village of Kundapura taluk in Udupi district of Karnataka.
- Made of five metals, it is a rare combination of Shaiva-Shaktha and Naga cult,
- two lines written on the surface of the platform.
- The first line reads Murthy Saakshi, which means 'on the witness of this idol'.
- The second line says 'G 3 ke ra Shu 14', which means gold of 3 gadhyanas was used in preparing this idol, and it contains 14% gold
- The writing is in Kannada with script of the 17th century.
- The Umamaheshwara cult was founded by Soma Sharma of Gujarat in the 10th-11th century.
- Within no time, it became popular in the Indian sub-continent.
- It was influenced by Vajrayana Buddhism, and love is its central theme.



### Telangana

#### SS Rajamouli unveils India's first Dolby certified post-production facility at Nagarjuna's Annapurna Studios

- Hyderabad, Telangana
- Launched in collaboration with Dolby, the facility aims to redefine the audio-visual standards of Indian filmmaking, with an intention to ensure cinematic experiences that meet global benchmarks.
- Rajamouli's Academy-award-winning RRR—special footage of which was also played at the grand event—was the first-ever Indian film to release in Dolby Cinema

### Nagoba Jatara

- Nagoba Jatara is a tribal festival held in Kespur village, Adilabad district, Telangana.
- This year from January 28 to February 4
- Nagoba, the serpent deity.



- Tribal people from Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Karnataka, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh belonging to the **Mesaram clan of Gond tribe** offer prayers at the festival.
- The **Gusadi Dance performance** by dancers from the **Gond tribe** is a major special attraction of the event.
- It is the **second biggest tribal festival in India**, after the Medharam Jathara (**Sammakka Saralamma Jatara**), held in Telangana itself.

**VisionNxt: India's 1st AI, EI fashion forecasting platform launched at NIFT's**

#### **40th Foundation Day in Hyderabad**

- The National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) celebrated its 40th Foundation Day, with an event showcasing VisionNxt, a fashion forecasting platform driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emotional Intelligence (EI).
- Developed under the Ministry of Textiles, VisionNxt offers research and trend insights tailored to the diverse needs of India's fashion and retail sectors.



#### **Tamirabharani – Karumeniyar – Nambiyar River Linking Scheme**

- Chief Minister M.K. Stalin will inaugurate the much-awaited Tamirabharani – Karumeniyar – Nambiyar River linking scheme, which has been implemented at a cost of ₹900 crore benefiting over 15,000 acres of lands in rain-shadow regions in Nanguneri, Thisaiyanvilai and Sattankulam areas in Tamil Nadu.
- The river linking project connects Tamirabharani, Karumeniyar, and Nambiyar rivers.
- It involves constructing a 73-km-long flood carrier channel.
- The goal is to redirect surplus water from the Tamirabharani to arid regions in Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts.
- A new barrage will be constructed 6.4 km downstream to facilitate further water diversion. This will enhance the canal system, making it more efficient for irrigation purposes.
- The Thamiraparani is the only perennial (continuous flow of water) river in Tamil Nadu.
- This is the shortest river in the state, the Thamirabarani starts in Pothigai hills of the Western Ghats in the Ambasamudram taluk,
- flows through Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts and empties at Korkai into the Gulf of Mannar (Bay of Bengal).



**Telangana ₹12,000 Scheme for Landless Farmers**

#### **Telangana farmers to receive ₹12,000 per acre annually of agricultural land under Rythu Bharosa scheme**

- Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy
- Farmers in Telangana will receive ₹12,000 per acre annually under the Rythu Bharosa scheme**, an increase from the current ₹10,000
- Further, **families of landless farm labourers will receive a similar amount annually** under the newly introduced Indiramma Atmeeya Bharosa scheme
- Schemes will start on 26th January, 2025
- The **Rythu Bharosa scheme is not applicable to non-agricultural lands** (mining, hills, real estate ventures, roads, lands used for residential, industrial, and commercial purposes, lands converted as Nala and the lands acquired by the government for various projects).



**Telangana celebrates Kanuma with cattle worship, processions, rural sports**



- In Telangana, people celebrated **Kanuma, the cattle festival** with traditional fervour and joy **on the third day of the Sankranti festival**. It is also celebrated in Andhra Pradesh.
- Rural people worship cattle and agricultural tools on this occasion
- A significant highlight of this festival is the **bullfight and betting on the cattle**, known as **Pasuvula Panduga**.
- A similar bullfight festival, **Jalikattu**, is celebrated in Tamil Nadu.

## ANDHRA PRADESH

**PM Modi inaugurated, lay foundation stone of projects worth over ₹2 lakh cr in Andhra Pradesh**

- He will lay the **foundation stone** for **NTPC Green Energy Limited's Green Hydrogen Hub Project at Pudimadaka** near Visakhapatnam.
- This will be the **first Green Hydrogen Hub under the National Green Hydrogen Mission**.
- foundation stone laying of South Coast Railway Headquarters at Visakhapatnam



## Flamingo Festival 2025 Concludes in Andhra Pradesh

- The Flamingo Festival 2025 in Andhra Pradesh, celebrating the arrival of migratory birds, particularly flamingos, to Pulicat Lake and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary.
- An annual event celebrating the arrival of migratory birds, focusing on flamingos, to Pulicat Lake and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary.
- Locations: Spread across five key sites Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary, Atakanithippa, BV Palem (Pulicat Lake), Government Junior College in Sullurpet, and Sri City.



## TAMIL NADU

**Tamil Nadu CM announced \$1 million prize for deciphering Indus Valley Script**

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister **M.K. Stalin** on Sunday announced a **\$1 million prize for experts or organisations** that succeed in deciphering the scripts of the Indus Valley Civilisation for everyone to understand.
- The Chief Minister also announced a **₹2-crore grant for setting up a chair** in the name of noted archaeologist and epigraphist **Irvatham Mahadevan** to continue the **research on the Indus Valley Civilisation** at the Chennai-based Roja Muthiah Library.
- Indus Valley civilization is the **earliest known urban culture of the northwestern regions of the Indian subcontinent**. It is one of the world's three earliest civilizations **alongwith Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt**.
- Harappa was the first excavated site** therefore, it is **also called Harappan culture**.
- It was in **1924** that **John Marshall** discovered the **existence of an ancient civilization in the Indus Valley**.



MK Stalin announces \$1 million prize for decoding Indus Valley script

## Thatchankurichi Hosts First Jallikattu of 2025

The rural town of Thatchankurichi in **Pudukkottai district** played host to **Tamil Nadu's** first jallikattu event of 2025, marking the beginning of the bull-taming festival season in the State

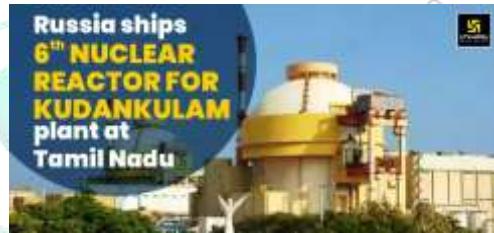
- Jallikattu, also known as eruthazhuvuthal**, is a **bull-taming sport** traditionally played in Tamil Nadu as part of the **Pongal harvest festival**.
- A tradition **over 2,000 years old**, Jallikattu is a competitive sport as well as an event to honour bull owners



In Pictures: Jallikattu 2025

### Russia ships 6<sup>th</sup> nuclear reactor for Kudankulam plant at Tamil Nadu

- The Russian government-owned company Rosatom has shipped the 6th and final unit of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant being set up in Kudankulam, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu
- The project is being constructed in three phases.
- In each phase two reactors of 1000 MW each will be constructed.
- The first two reactors of phase one have become operational and the electricity generated is shared between Tamil Nadu and its neighbouring states according to the central government's power distribution framework.



### About the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant

- In 1988 an agreement was signed between the government of India and the Soviet Union to construct a 6000 MW nuclear power plant in Kudankulam, Tamil Nadu.
- The nuclear plant will be the largest nuclear power plant at a single location in the country.
- The power plant consists of 6 units of 1000 MW capacity each.
- All six units will be constructed, maintained, and operated by the government of India-owned Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL).
- The Russians are supplying the nuclear reactors and enriched uranium to be used as the fuel for the reactors.
- The government has set a target to increase the power capacity to 22480 MW by 2031-32.
- According to the Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) in 2024 there were 24 operational nuclear reactors in 7 Nuclear power plants in the country with an installed capacity of 8080 MW.
- Asia's first research nuclear reactor 'Apsara' became operational at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre's Trombay campus in Mumbai and it was closed in 2009.
- The first nuclear power plant to become operational in India was established at Tarapur, Maharashtra in 1969.



### KERALA

Raman Rajamannan, king of Mannan tribe, to attend Republic Day parade

- Raman Rajamannan, the king of the Mannan community and the only tribal king in Kerala, will participate in the Republic Day parade in Delhi.
- as guests of the Scheduled Tribes (SC) Development department.
- The Mannan community is mainly settled in the buffer zone area of the Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary at Kozhimala, Kerala, the hub of the tribe with 48 settlements ruled by a king, the only such community in southern India.
- The King is an integral part of the traditional functions and festivities of the community

### About Mannan Community:

- The Mannan is a scheduled tribe (ST) of Kerala.
- It is the only Adhivasi tribal dynasty with a kingship currently existing in South India.
- The life of the Mannan Community is closely related to Tamil culture.



- They speak a dialect similar to Tamil but without a script.
- It is believed that they were originally from Tamil Nadu and later migrated to Idukki during the period of Poonjar Rajavamsham (kings).
- Nearly 97 percent of the Mannan community's population reside in Idukki District.
- They follow a matrilineal system of descent, and their ruler, the Raja Mannan, is elected by community headmen from among those eligible by heredity.
- Their primary occupation is agriculture, including coconut harvesting, cultivation of herbs, etc.
- They practice Hinduism
- Their main celebrations include the Kalavoot, Meenoot and Mutthiamman Festival.
- Mannankoothu is a unique ritual art form performed by the Mannans. The art form is staged mainly during worship, harvest times and weddings.



## Defence

### French Aircraft Carrier Charles De Gaulle Arrives in Goa for Naval Exercise

#### Varuna

- The 2025 Varuna naval exercise will take place in January,
- with the French Carrier Strike Group (CSG) visiting Goa and Kochi starting on January 4.
- The exercise will be conducted in the Arabian Sea off India's western coast.
- Participants:
  - French Navy: Carrier Strike Group (CSG) led by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier FNS Charles de Gaulle, with frigates, supply ships, and an air fleet.
  - Indian Navy: Frontline warships, submarines, maritime patrol aircraft, and helicopters.



#### About Exercise Varuna (Static)

- It is the bilateral Naval Exercise between India and France.
- This annual naval exercise between the two navies began in 1993. It was named as 'Varuna' in 2001.
- 2024 edition - in the Mediterranean Sea.
- Other Indo-French Joint Exercises:
  - Garuda (Air exercise)
  - Shakti (Army exercise)

### INS Mumbai Participates in Multinational Exercise La Perouse

- INS Mumbai, the indigenously designed and built guided missile destroyer, is participating in the fifth edition of the multinational exercise "La Perouse".
- The exercise started on January 16 and will end on January 24.
- This iteration of the exercise involves the participation of personnel, surface, and sub-surface assets from nine Indo-Pacific nations, including the Royal Australian Navy, the French Navy, the Royal Navy, the United States Navy, the Indonesian Navy, the Royal Malaysian Navy, the Republic of Singapore Navy, and the Royal Canadian Navy.
- The exercise is divided into two phases.
- The first phase, from January 16 to January 20, focuses on the Malacca and Sunda Straits, which are crucial sea lanes connecting the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.
- The second phase, from January 21 to January 24, involves securing the Lombok Strait.



- The exercise will witness complex and advanced multi-domain activities, including surface warfare, anti-air warfare, air-defence, cross-deck landings, tactical manoeuvres, and constabulary missions such as visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) operations.

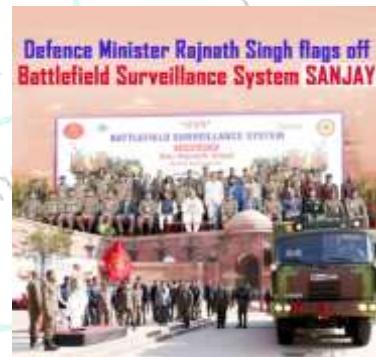
### Indian Armed Forces conduct Exercise Devil Strike from January 16-19

- The Indian Armed Forces are set to conduct Exercise Devil Strike from January 16 to 19, a joint exercise involving the elite airborne soldiers from the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force
- Focus on combat readiness and high-altitude warfare.
- Objective: Enhance synchronization, operational capabilities, and response tactics



### Defence Minister flags off Battlefield Surveillance System SANJAY

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh flagged-off 'SANJAY - The Battlefield Surveillance System (BSS)' from South Block, New Delhi
- SANJAY has been indigenously & jointly developed by the Indian Army and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)
- Follow up to the Indian Army's 'Year of Technology Absorption' (2024).
- An automated system which integrates the inputs from all ground and aerial battlefield sensors, processing them to confirm their veracity, preventing duplication and fusing them to produce a Common Surveillance Picture of the battlefield over secured Army Data Network & Satellite Communication Network.
- This system has been developed under the Buy (Indian) category at a cost of Rs 2,402 crore.
- These systems will be inducted to all operational Brigades, Divisions & Corps of the Indian Army in three phases w.e.f. March to October of 2025, which has been declared as 'Year of Reforms' in the Ministry of Defence (MoD).



### Goa Shipyard Launches New Fast Patrol Vessels

- Two Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs) - Amulya and Akshay - indigenously designed and constructed by the Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) were launched
- The two FPVs are the third and fourth vessels of the fleet of eight FPVs being constructed by GSL for ICG
- The first two FPVs of the same series - Adamya and Akshar - were launched in October 2024. The contract was concluded in March 2022 for Rs 473 crore. With over 60% indigenous content

### India Unveils 'Utkash' as Second Multi-Purpose Vessel

- Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has launched the second multi-purpose vessel for the Indian Navy from its Kattupalli Shipyard near Chennai.
- The launch of the vessel, christened INS Utkarsh, comes within three months of the launch of the first MPV INS Samarthak.
- The multi-purpose vessels (MPVs) are highly specialised and play multiple roles, including serving as trial platforms, for the development of next generation weapons and sensors.
- L&T is also constructing three Cadet Training Ships and six other defence vessels for the Indian Navy on public-private-partnership model.



### Indigenous Anti-Tank Guided Missile 'Nag Mk 2' ready for induction: DRDO

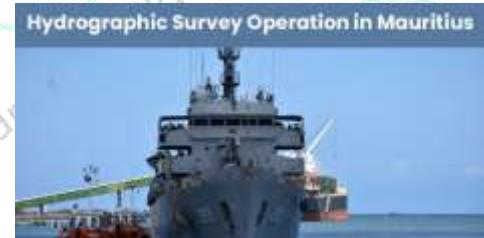
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) announced that the indigenously-developed third-generation fire-and-forget Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) 'Nag Mk 2' and the entire system was ready for induction into the Army



- Nag Missiles have **minimum range of 500 metres and maximum range of 7-10 km.**
- Field evaluation trials** of Nag-Mk 2 were successfully conducted recently at Pokhran Field Range
- Nag Missile Carrier version-2 was also field evaluated.

### Indian Navy takes delivery of 6th & final state-of-the-art Scorpene-class submarine

- Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd** delivered the sixth Scorpene submarine 'VAGHSHEER' of Project P-75 to the Indian Navy, subsequently to be commissioned as INS Vaghsheer.
- Sanjeev Singhal, Chairman & Managing Director at Mazagon Dock
- The delivery of six submarines namely, **Kalvari, Khanderi, Karanj, Vela, Vagir and now Vaghsheer**, reaffirmed India's membership in the exclusive group of submarine building nations.
- Vaghsheer can undertake multifarious types of missions** i.e. Anti-Surface warfare, Anti-Submarine Warfare, Intelligence Gathering, Area Surveillance etc.



### Indian Navy completes hydrographic survey of 25,000 sq. nautical miles of Mauritius

- The Indian Navy's INS Sarvekshak completed the final phase of the hydrographic survey of Mauritius covering an extensive area of over 25,000 square nautical miles.



#### About INS Sarvekshak:

- It is an Indian Navy hydrographic survey ship.
- It is based at Southern Naval Command at Kochi.
- It is fitted with state-of-the-art survey equipment like Deep Sea Multi-Beam Echo Sounder, Side Scan Sonars and a fully automated digital surveying and processing system.
- In addition, the ship carries an integral Chetak helicopter, which would be extensively deployed during the survey.
- The ship is the second ship of the Darshak class of ships and has a complement of 15 officers and 175 sailors.
- In the past, INS Sarvekshak has also undertaken foreign cooperation surveys in Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania, and Kenya.

### Centre approves creation of 2 new CISF reserve Battalions

- Central Industrial Security Force (**CISF**) provides security to critical infrastructure such as airports, metro networks, and power plants.
- Each battalion will consist of 1,025 personnel.**
- With this addition, the **total number of CISF battalions will increase from 13 to 15.**
- In November last year, the government had sanctioned the first-ever **all-women CISF reserve battalion** comprising more than 1,000 personnel.



#### About Central Industrial Security Force (CISF):

- It is a **Central Armed Police Force (CAPF)** in India.
- It was **set up under an Act** of the Parliament of India **on 10 March 1969** with a strength of 2,800.
- CISF was subsequently made an armed force of the
- It is **directly under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs**, and its **headquarters** are at **New Delhi**.
- Rajwinder Singh Bhatti is the **Director General** of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) **until September 30, 2025**.

### CRPF VIP Security Group Established

- A special unit of the CRPF that was withdrawn from the security of Parliament last year has been finally disbanded and merged with the VIP security wing of the force that has been recently provided a new battalion comprising over 1,000 personnel,
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued an order "changing the nomenclature" of about 1,400 personnel strength Parliament Duty Group (PDG) to VIP Security Group (VSG) under the CRPF.
- This came after the ministry early this month ordered transferring of the forces' battalion number 190, located in Jharkhand's Chatra district, to the VIP security unit of the force.
- The Central Reserve Police Group (CRPF) VIP security wing is presently providing protection to more than 200 people, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the Gandhi family of the Congress comprising Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra among others.
- The PDG was withdrawn from the Parliament House in May last year after the [job was handed over to the CISF](#).
- It was informally linked with the VIP security wing since its removal from Parliament, but its manpower will be utilised for the protection of high-risk dignitaries after the formal order received on



### Trajan 155 mm Towed Artillery Gun System

- The Trajan 155 mm towed artillery gun system, developed jointly by India and France, has bagged an export order from Armenia.
- It is a 155 mm towed artillery gun system.
- It is jointly developed by India and France.
- The gun is jointly developed by Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and KNDS France and has undergone rigorous testing by the Indian Army, meeting all qualitative requirements.
- The 52-calibre towed gun system is manufactured in India



### What is artillery gun?

- Artillery refers to large-caliber guns — guns with big barrels — which can be moved from one place to another for land battles. The artillery is also the name for the army unit that uses these big guns.

### T-55 tank used in 1971 Indo-Pak war installed at Red Fields in Coimbatore as a war trophy

- USSR, T-55 is a medium tank that was used as a combat track vehicle.
- The tank was part of the weaponry of the **73 Armoured Regiment** that was raised on December 3, 1971, during the Indo-Pak war.
- The tank had its footprints in **Operation Trident (1971)**, **Operation Rakshak (1990-91)**, **Operation Vijay (1999)**, and **Operation Parakram (2001-02)**
- The last round from the tank was fired on 24 February 2009



### Top 10 Most Iconic Indian Military Operations (Static)

#### 1. Operation Vijay (1961)

conducted in December 1961, marked the liberation of Goa, Daman, and Diu from Portuguese control. The operation involved Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force.

#### 2. Operation Trident (1971)

a naval operation launched on the night of December 4, 1971, during the Indo-Pakistani War. The Indian Navy's Western Fleet executed a surprise attack on the Pakistani port city of Karachi, resulting in the sinking of several Pakistani vessels and the destruction of Karachi's harbor installations.

#### 3. Operation Meghdoot (1984)

launched by the Indian Army to capture the Siachen Glacier in April 1984. The operation was aimed at pre-empting Pakistan's attempts to occupy the glacier.

#### 4. Operation Blue Star (1984)

a significant and controversial military operation carried out in June 1984 to remove militants from the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab. The operation, ordered by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, aimed to eliminate Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his followers, who were using the temple as a base for their separatist activities.

#### 5. Operation Pawan (1987-1990)

Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) mission in Sri Lanka from 1987 to 1990 - launched to disarm the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as part of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord.

#### 6. Operation Cactus (1988)

a swift military intervention by the Indian Armed Forces to thwart a coup attempt in the Maldives in November 1988. When the Maldives government sought India's assistance, the Indian Air Force airlifted paratroopers to the capital, Malé, within hours.

#### 7. Operation Vijay (1999)

The second Operation Vijay refers to the Kargil War of 1999, one of the most significant conflicts between India and Pakistan. The Indian Army, supported by the Air Force, launched a massive offensive to reclaim the captured territories.

#### 8. Operation Parakram (2001-2002)

In response to the December 2001 terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament, India launched Operation Parakram, a massive military mobilization along the India-Pakistan border.

#### 9. Operation Rahat (2013)

one of the largest and most complex humanitarian rescue operations conducted by the Indian Armed Forces. It was launched in June 2013 in response to the devastating floods in Uttarakhand. The Indian Air Force played a crucial

#### 10. Surgical Strikes (2016)

In September 2016, the Indian Army conducted surgical strikes against terrorist launch pads across the Line of Control (LoC) in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The strikes were in retaliation for a terrorist attack on an Indian Army base in Uri.

#### DRDO's multi-layer clothing system 'HIMKAVACH' clears user trials

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has introduced the **HIMKAVACH multi-layer clothing system**, specially designed to provide **optimal protection in extreme cold weather conditions** for temperature range of +20°C to -60°C.
- The innovative clothing system has **passed all user trials** under actual operational conditions, proving its **effectiveness for military operations in cold weather, particularly in the Himalayan region**.



#### Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan

- Recently, the "Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan" app was launched by Defence Minister coinciding with Army Day celebrations.
- It is developed by the **Ministry of Defence** in collaboration with the **Ministry of Tourism**.
- This app opens the doors to India's **most iconic battlefields**, offering citizens a chance to explore the country's wartime history like never before.
- The move is aimed at promoting **connectivity, tourism, and socio-economic development** in border regions.

#### India Joins Eurodrone Programme as Observer

- India has, as an observer state, officially joined the **Medium Altitude Long Endurance Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (MALE RPAS)** or Eurodrone programme

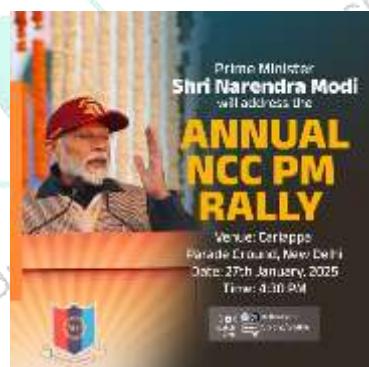


- Eurodrone is a 4-nation development programme of Germany, France, Italy and Spain, led by the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR).
- Germany takes the role of Lead Nation for the programme.
- Airbus Defence and Space (GER) is the Industrial Prime
- **The Eurodrone is a remotely piloted aircraft system (RPAS) designed for long-endurance missions such as intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR), maritime surveillance, anti-submarine warfare, and airborne early warning.**
- maximum mission payload of 2.3 tonnes and an endurance period of up to 40 hours
- Conceived as a “European Programme for European Sovereignty,” the initiative was founded in 2022 and passed its preliminary design review (PDR) in 2024.
- The drones are expected to enter service by 2030.
- OCCAR-executive administration director Joachim Sucker has handed over the **letter of approval (LoA)** to Ajit Gupte, India’s ambassador to Germany.
- **India follows Japan**, which became the first official OCCAR **observer state** in the programme in November 2023.
- As a Eurodrone observer state, **India will gain access to technical information about the advanced drone system**, while also fostering **closer defense ties with European nations**, and potentially paving the **way for future technology transfers and joint ventures** in the aerospace sector
- However, as an observer, India won't be involved in the design or development decisions of the Eurodrone program itself



#### PM Modi addressed annual NCC PM Rally at Cariappa Parade Ground

- on 27th January 2025
- **Theme for NCC PM Rally: 'Yuva Shakti, Viksit Bharat'**
- A total of **2361 NCC cadets participated in the Republic Day Camp** this year which included **917 girl cadets**, which was the highest ever participation by girls cadets.
- Participation by 144 young cadets from 18 friendly foreign countries



#### Indian Army to host 'Know Your Army' mela from January 3 to 5

- The Indian Army is set to host the 'Know Your Army' Mela 2025 at Golconda Fort from January 3 to 5.
- This initiative aims **to bridge the gap between civilians and the armed forces** by providing an experience into the Indian Army's technological capabilities and operational readiness.

#### Indian Army Inaugurates Bailey Bridges Over Shyok River

- The Indian Army inaugurated two newly constructed bailey bridges over the Shyok River, enhancing connectivity between the Shyok and Nubra valleys in the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- The bridges, located near Shatse Taknak in the Diskit sub-division of Leh.
- Constructed by the Fire and Fury Corps Engineers, the two bridges — 50 feet wide and 100 feet in length — reduce travel distance by approximately 40 km and cut travel time by around two hours for the farthest villages in Nubra and Shyok valleys

## Sci & tech

**ISRO successfully germinates cowpea seeds under microgravity conditions**

- **Microgravity 'Farming':** ISRO Sprouts Cowpea Seeds In Space In POEM-4 Experiment
- **ISRO's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC's) CROPS (Compact Research Module for Orbital Plant Studies) experiment** onboard PSLV-C60 POEM-4 successfully sprouted cowpea seeds under microgravity conditions **in 4 days.**
- **Cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*)** is an annual plant within the pea family (Fabaceae). It is also known as a **black-eyed pea, southern pea, etc.**
- **It originated** and was domesticated **in Southern Africa** and was later moved to East and West Africa and Asia.
- In total **24 payloads including CROPS** were launched in the **PS4-Orbital Experiment Module (POEM-4)** mission - onboard the **PSLV-C60 SpaDeX mission** to support a wide array of scientific and technological endeavours.
- The **PSLV Orbital Experiment Module (POEM)** is a **practical solution deployed by ISRO** that allows Indian start-ups, academic institutions, and research organizations to test their space technologies without the need to launch entire satellites.
- The **world's largest production and consumption of cowpea is in West Africa**, which accounts for more than **87% of world production and use.**
- **Nigeria**, the **largest producer and consumer**, accounts for **46% of production worldwide.**
- **In the Indian context**, it is a **minor pulse** cultivated mainly in arid and **semi-arid tracts of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, and West UP**, along with considerable areas in Rajasthan, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.



**India has successfully tested the Bhargavastra, its first indigenous micro-missile system designed to counter swarm drones**

- It was **developed by the Economic Explosives Ltd.**
- It can quickly deploy on a **mobile platform** and hit targets over **2.5 km.**
- It is capable of **detecting even small incoming flying machines at over 6 km** and can take them down using micro munitions that can be guided towards the threat.
- The system can simultaneously fire more than **64 micro missiles.**
- designed to **operate in all terrains**
- Designed to meet the requirements of the **Army Air Defence**
- **What are Swarm Drones?**
- **SWARM** stands for "**Smart War-Fighting Array of Reconfigured Modules.**"
- Drone swarm technologies coordinate at least three and up to thousands of drones to perform missions cooperatively with limited need for **human attention and control.**



**Purulia Observatory: 1st astronomical observatory of Eastern India inaugurated in Bengal**

- **Named Satyendra Nath Bose Astronomical Observatory**
- named after famous scientist Satyendra Nath Bose.
- **established by the Satyendra Nath Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences.**
- **MoU with the Sidhu Kanu Birsa University, Purulia** for running the observatory and sharing resources.
- **The first astronomical observatory of Eastern India** and the **sixth in the country** under the Department of Science and Technology, Union Ministry of Science and Technology
- It is the **sixth such observatory** in India after **Ladakh, Nainital (Uttarakhand), Mount Abu (Rajasthan), Girbani Hills in Pune, and Kavalur** in Tamil Nadu.



- **About Purulia Observatory:**
- **Location:** It is located on the Panchet Hill in the Garpanchot area of Purulia district in West Bengal.
- It is equipped with a **14-inch diameter telescope** for scientific observations.
- The observatory is at a height of 600 meters above ground level and at a **longitude of approximately 86° E.**
- It will be a major observatory not only in eastern India, but also in the world.
- Along the 86 degrees East longitude stretching from the **Arctic Ocean** in the north to Antarctica in the south, there are very few observatories.
- It will help in scientific observations of **astronomical objects**, training students in handling telescopes and recording data.

#### **SpaDeX mission: India becomes 4<sup>th</sup> nation to achieve successful space docking of 2 satellites**

- The Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission's docking operation was **successfully completed** on 16th January, 2025
- India becomes the **fourth country after US, China & Russia**
- Docking is a process of **joining of two separate free-flying space vehicles.**
- ISRO started the **mission** on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2024, with the successful launch of the **SpaDeX** spacecrfts using **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)-C60**, from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.**
- The SpaDeX mission involves two small satellites, **SDX01**, which is the **Chaser** and **SDX02, the Target**, each weighing approximately **220 kilograms.**
- **Both satellites**, the Target and Chaser were in the same **orbit separated by 20km** which is known as "**Far Rendezvous**", and then came closer to dock
- Post-docking, the two satellites will operate as a single spacecraft.



#### **Cabinet approves the establishment of "Third Launch Pad"**

- The Third Launch Pad project envisages the establishment of the launch infrastructure at **Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh for the Next Generation Launch Vehicles of ISRO and also to support as standby launch pad for the Second Launch Pad at Sriharikota.**
- It is **targeted to be established within 4 years.**
- The **total fund requirement is Rs. 3984.86 Crore** and includes the establishment of the Launch Pad and the associated facilities.
- At present, the spaceport in Sriharikota has **two launch pads**. The first launch pad was set up **30 years ago** and is designed to support the launch of smaller vehicles such as **PSLV and SSLV.**
- The second launch pad was set up **20 years ago**, primarily for the launch of heavier vehicles such as **GSLV and LVM3**, but can also be used as a **standby for the workhorse PSLV.**
- The expanded vision of Indian Space Programme during the Amrit Kaal including the **Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) by 2035 & an Indian Crewed Lunar Landing by 2040** requires a new generation of heavier launch vehicles with new propulsion systems, which cannot be met by the existing launch pads.



#### **Google-backed Pixxel successfully launches India's first private satellite constellation**

- India's space tech startup **Pixxel** launched three of its six **hyperspectral imaging satellites** aboard a **SpaceX rocket** from California.
- The launch marks a **milestone for the country's growing private space sector** and for **Google-backed Pixxel**, a five-year-old startup.
- The satellites aim to use **hyperspectral imaging**, a technology that captures highly detailed data across hundreds of light bands to serve industries such as agriculture, mining, environmental monitoring and defence.



### Blue Origin launched its first orbital rocket 'New Glenn'

- Jeff Bezos-led Blue Origin successfully launched its New Glenn reusable rocket on its maiden voyage.
- The launch, marked the rocket's first orbital achievement, carrying an experimental platform to support satellite deployment.
- The launch vehicle, named after John Glenn, the first American to orbit Earth, successfully reached orbit after its second-stage engine cutoff.
- New Glenn's second stage and payload are now in orbit.



### DRDL's Groundbreaking Active Cooled Scramjet Engine Test

- The Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) in Hyderabad, part of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has taken stride in the development of hypersonic technology.
- Recently, it successfully conducted a groundbreaking ground test of an Active Cooled Scramjet Combustor for 120 seconds—marking India's first achievement of this kind.
- Hypersonic missiles, which travel at speeds exceeding Mach 5 (more than 5,400 km/h), represent advanced weaponry capable of bypassing existing air defense systems to deliver high-speed, impactful strikes.
- Leading nations like the USA, Russia, India, and China are actively pursuing hypersonic technology, with scramjets—air-breathing engines that operate at supersonic speeds—playing a critical role.
- These engines function without moving parts, enabling sustained combustion even at hypersonic speeds.
- This success follows extensive ground testing and simulations using advanced Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) tools to optimize engine performance.
- DRDL, in collaboration with industry partners, also developed an indigenous endothermic scramjet fuel.
- This fuel not only improves cooling but also facilitates easier ignition—an essential feature for hypersonic vehicles.

### ISRO dispatches crew module for first uncrewed mission of Gaganyaan

- Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre of ISRO has dispatched the Crew Module for the first uncrewed mission of Gaganyaan (G1) after successfully completing the integration of the liquid propulsion system,
- Gaganyaan will be ISRO's first attempt to acquire human spaceflight capabilities. Before sending the crew, the ISRO is planning to send uncrewed mission to the space under its Gaganyaan project.
- the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) of ISRO dispatched the Crew Module for the first uncrewed mission of Gaganyaan (G1), after successfully completing the integration of the liquid propulsion system,
- The Crew Module Uprighting System (CMUS) designed by Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) was also integrated to the module at LPSC.
- the Crew Module Propulsion System (CMPS) is a bi-propellant based Reaction Control System (RCS) and is meant for precise three axis control namely Pitch, Yaw and Roll, of crew module.
- This system employs 12 100N thrusters, pressurisation system with high pressure gas bottles and the propellant feed system along with the associated fluid control components,
- A 100 N thrusters are rocket motors, which are used in spacecraft for propulsion.



### ISRO successfully launches NVS-02 satellite from Sriharikota

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched its historic **100<sup>th</sup> launch from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.**
- The **GSLV-F15 with the NVS-02 satellite** lifted off from the spaceport's second launch pad.
- Over these 100 launches ISRO has lifted 548 satellites to orbit
- **Dr. V Narayanan - Chairman, ISRO**
- The NVS-02 is the second satellite in the NVS series, and part of **India's Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC)**.



- NavIC is India's satellite-based independent regional navigation system - **designed to provide accurate Position, Velocity, and Timing (PVT)** service to users in India
- The region extending about 1,500 km beyond the Indian landmass
- It also aims to help with **disaster management, Tracks fleets, and Improves weather prediction**
- **NavIC provides two types of services:** Standard Positioning Service (SPS) and Restricted Service (RS).
- **NVS-01**, the first of the second-generation satellites, was launched on board **GSLV-F12 on May 29, 2023**. For the first time, an indigenous atomic clock was flown in NVS-01.

#### India to replace Maitri with Maitri-2 research station in Antarctica by 2029

- As India's research station **Maitri** in Antarctica is ageing, India is set to establish a new research station **Maitri-2**.
- The new station, which **will be built near the existing Maitri station in East Antarctica**, will have a capacity of around 90 scientists.

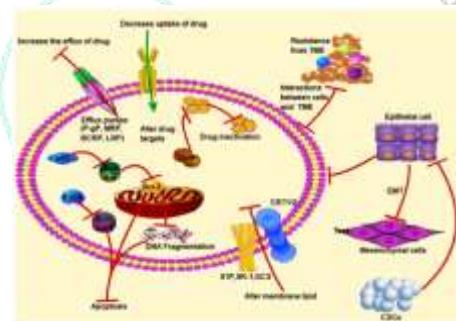


#### India's Antarctic Programme

- It is a **scientific research and exploration program** under the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCPOR). It started in 1981 when the first Indian expedition to Antarctica was made.
- **Dakshin Gangotri (1983), Maitri (1989), and Bharati (2012)**
- However, Dakshin Gangotri was submerged in ice in 1988-89 and was subsequently decommissioned.

#### 2nd 'living drug' against blood cancer gets regulatory nod.

- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has approved Chimeric Antigen Receptor or CAR T-cell, named Qartemi by Immuneel Therapeutics, for adult B-cell Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (B-NHL), a common and aggressive type of blood cancer.
- The product has been licensed from Hospital Clínic de Barcelona (HCB)
- A "living drug" is a therapy which involves removing and modifying a patient's cells, then infusing them back into the patient. They are also known as cellular therapies.
- The company is a cell-and-gene therapy start-up backed by Biocon founder Kiran Mazumdar Shaw and US-based oncologist and author Dr Siddhartha Mukherjee.



#### CSIR's Indigenously developed "Paracetamol" announced by Science & Technology Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh

- Karnataka-based Satya Deeptha Pharmaceuticals Ltd will utilize this breakthrough to produce affordable paracetamol domestically.
- Currently, India imports the key raw materials for paracetamol from various countries.
- India's 1st Indigenously developed Antibiotic - Nafithromycin

#### CPCRI launches organic manure 'Kalpa Bhooma' for the needs of urban dwellers

- The Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) at Kasaragod, Kerala has launched 'Kalpa Bhooma', an organic manure, for growing vegetables, fruits and flowers keeping mainly the needs of **urban dwellers** in mind.



#### India to deploy 1st human-operated underwater submersible

- Context: India is gearing up to deploy its first human-operated underwater submersible as part of the Deep Ocean Mission, according to Union Minister of State for Science and Technology.

- What it is:** The Deep Ocean Mission is an ambitious program initiated by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** to explore the deep sea, develop cutting-edge marine technologies, and harness ocean resources for economic and environmental benefits.
- Launched in:** DOM was launched in **2021** as one of nine key missions under the **Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PMSTIAC)** framework.

**Aims:**

- To develop advanced deep-sea exploration technologies.
- To identify and harness critical underwater resources like polymetallic nodules, sulphides, and rare metals.
- To study marine biodiversity and ecosystems for conservation and sustainable fisheries.
- To contribute to India's blue economy through innovation and knowledge-building.

**Key features:**

- Samudrayaan and Matsya6000:** India's first crewed submersible, Matsya6000, aims to reach 6,000 meters below the ocean surface, targeting polymetallic nodules and rare resources.
- Technological Advancements:** Includes development of underwater mining systems like **Varaha**, which has successfully operated at depths of 5,270 meters.
- Ocean Climate Change Services:** Developing advisory systems for ocean climate monitoring.
- Marine Biodiversity Conservation:** Exploring and conserving unique underwater ecosystems.
- Renewable Energy and Freshwater Harvesting:** Leveraging Ocean resources for energy and water needs.
- Marine Biology Station:** Establishing a state-of-the-art marine research station for advanced studies.

**Cipla Launches CipAir App for Asthma Screening in India**

- Cipla announced the launch of **CipAir**, a mobile application designed to facilitate the first line of screening for asthma in India.
- This app aims to empower users by helping them understand their likelihood of having asthma, therefore enabling timely intervention and management

**Indian Biological Data Centre Portals launched for Indian genome data**

- The **Indian Genomic Data Set** unveiled and Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh launched the '**Framework for Exchange of Data Protocols (FeED)**' and the **Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC) Portals**, making **10,000 whole genome samples accessible to researchers across India and the globe**.
- made available for research purposes not only within India but globally.
- India is no longer dependent on foreign genomic data
- The '**GenomeIndia**' project, spearheaded by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), which **aims to create a robust and comprehensive database of India's genetic diversity**
- The launch of the '**Framework for Exchange of Data (FeED)**' Protocols under the Biotech-PRIDE Guidelines ensures that the high-quality, nation-specific data will be shared in a transparent, fair, and responsible manner.
- India now ranks 12<sup>th</sup> globally in biotech and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Asia-Pacific region.**
- Genome India project:** **10,000 human genome dataset - the sequences of healthy individuals — from 99 ethnic populations of the country** — has helped create a baseline map of India's genetic diversity.
- It is led by the Centre for Brain Research at the **Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru**, and involves collaboration with 20 institutions.

**What is Garmin inReach?**

- Garmin inReach** is a Swiss-based popular GPS and satellite messaging device often used by backpackers and climbers.

- Scottish hiker Heather was detained at the Delhi airport for carrying **Garmin inReach**
- **India is among 14 countries which prohibits the satellite message device.**
- The other nations where the device is banned are Afghanistan, Ukrainian Crimea, Cuba, Georgia, Iran, North Korea, Myanmar, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Vietnam, China, and Russia.



#### Why is it banned in India?

- The **prohibition on satellite communication** came with the **Indian Telegraph Act of 1885** and the **Wireless Telegraphy Act of 1933**.
- These older regulations were **reinforced during the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks**, in which a terrorist group employed satellite communicators to plan bombings and shootings that claimed the lives of around 200 people

#### DeepSeek's new AI chatbot

**NEWS:** Chinese tech startup DeepSeek's new artificial intelligence chatbot has sparked discussions about the **competition between China and the U.S. in AI development**, with many users moving to test this rival of OpenAI's ChatGPT.



#### What is Generative AI?

- Generative AI (GenAI) is a type of AI that can **create a wide variety of data, such as images, videos, audio, text, and 3D models**.
- It does this by **learning patterns from existing data, then using this knowledge to generate new and unique outputs**.

#### What is a Chatbot?

- Chatbots are computer programs designed to simulate conversation with human users, usually through **text-based interfaces** like messaging apps or websites.
- They use **natural language processing (NLP)** and machine learning algorithms to understand and respond to user input in a way that mimics human conversation.
- They are used in a **variety of industries, including retail, healthcare, finance, and entertainment**, to improve customer service and automate repetitive tasks.

#### What is Dozer Push Mining Method?

- **CSIR-Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research (CSIR-CIMFR) has successfully conducted the first trial blast** for the Dozer Push Mining Method, integrating advanced digital technologies, for the first time in India.
- The trial was **conducted at the PEKB (Parsa East and Kanta Basan) Coal Mine** operated by M/s Adani Enterprises Limited in the Udaipur block of Ambikapur, **Chhattisgarh**
- The primary objective of the project was to develop a method that not only optimizes the mining process but also ensures that **vibration and flyrock are controlled within safe limits**.
- Moreover, the **unmanned operation** of the Dozer Push Mining method **greatly enhances worker safety**, minimizing the risks associated with manual labor and traditional mining techniques.
- It improves efficiency by enabling **quicker coal recovery**. It **reduces delays caused by adverse weather conditions**, particularly during the monsoon. The method is also **cost-effective, with an estimated 7-10% reduction in operational costs** compared to conventional methods.

#### IIT-M establishes centre to develop zero-waste bioplastics

- The new Centre of Biodegradable Packaging at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M) is working towards — creating packaging that is as sustainable as a fruit.
- Traditionally, bioplastics were derived from food sources such as starches from corn or potatoes, this approach raised concern about food security.

- The centre's goal is to produce bioplastics that are not only biodegradable but also microplastic-free, ensuring that these materials break down completely without leaving harmful particles behind in the environment.
- PLA (polylactic acid), one of the most well-known bioplastics, is currently expensive to produce, limiting its widespread use.
- Alternatives such as PHA (Polyhydroxyalkanoates) are also not commercially viable due to their high production costs.
- The IIT-M team, however, is optimistic that continued research and development could help lower these costs, making bioplastics more accessible for commercial use.

### First Made-in-India Surgical Robot 'SSI Mantra' Installed at Maharashtra's Noble Hospitals

- In a momentous stride forward, city based Noble Hospitals and Research Centre installed Maharashtra's first made in India Robotic System, an advanced innovation designed to improve surgical precision and efficiency for enhanced patient outcomes.
- The SSI Mantra 3 Robotic System features five lean robotic arms, an immersive 3D HD headset for better optics for surgeons, and a vision cart that offers 3D 4K imaging for the entire surgical team, ensuring enhanced precision and control.
- The Robotic System will be used in many life-saving procedures, including general surgeries, cardio-thoracic, urology, gynaecology, and many complex surgical procedures.



### New system developed for wearable devices that can detect stress

- Scientists from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru, developed a material that can sense strain and adjust its response over time.
- Using silver wire network on a stretchable material**, scientists have developed a device that **senses strain, mimics pain perception** and adapts its electrical response accordingly.
- could lead to more advanced health monitoring systems** that "feel" stress like the human body and adapt in real-time, giving **feedback to doctors or users**. Such technology could also improve **robotic systems**.



### C-DOT and IIT Bombay sign agreement for "Optical Transceiver Chipset for High-Bandwidth 6G Wireless Links"

- The premier Telecom R&D centre of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India, has signed an agreement with the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT Bombay) for the development of "Optical Transceiver Chipset for High-Bandwidth 6G Wireless Links".
- Signed under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) 6G Call for proposal from the Department of Telecommunications,



### ICAR Renames Central Tobacco Research Institute

- The Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) has renamed the Central Tobacco Research Institute (CTRI-Rajahmundry) after the National Institute for Research on Commercial Agriculture (NIRCA).

Year of establishment : 1947

Tobacco Varieties Released in 2023

FCV Varieties: CTRI Neeruva (3300 kg/ha) & CTRI Shrestha (2400 kg/ha)

Burley Variety: Vipetu (2800 kg/ha)

Hidi Variety: Nandyal Pragakar-2 (2300 kg/ha)

Chewang Variety: Yash (3700 kg/ha)

Jelli Varietal: DJ-1 (1500 kg/ha)

New nematode + Fluopyram 400 SC @ 0.66%

Reduced root knot disease by 60.0% (nursery) & 58.8% (farmers)

Decreased soil nematode population by 41.9% (nursery) & 49.1% (nursery) in Karnataka

Customized fertilizers (basal 12-18-14-4.5-2.5 N-P-K-S-Co; top dressier 17-0-17-9-0-N-P-K-S-Co) along with micronutrients (Mg, Zn, B) resulted in a 15% higher tobacco cured leaf yield in Andhra Pradesh.

Beta Pressing Tool: Commercialized for FCV farmers in Andhra & Karnataka.

- ICAR has set a new mandate to focus on research of four more commercial crops, namely turmeric, chilli, castor and 'ashwagandha' (Indian ginseng), in addition to tobacco.
- Headquartered in Rajamahendravaram, CTRI was established in 1947.
- Now, the premier research institute has six research stations located in Guntur, Kandukur, Jeelugumilli and Vedasandur in Tamil Naidu, Hunsur in Karnataka and Dinhata in West Bengal.
- It has two 'Krishi Vignan Kendras' located at Kalavacharla and Kandukur in Andhra Pradesh.
- NIRCA is now tasked with four key areas; research and development, sustainability and climate resilience, capacity building and training, market linkage and commercialisation of the four crops.

### Genome editing laboratory launched at NIRCA in Rajamahendravaram

- Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR-Crop Sciences) Deputy Director General T.R. Sharma that gene mapping of various plant species is crucial to tackling climate change in the future.
- The Genome Editing Laboratory at the Crop Improvement Division of the National Institute for Research on Commercial Agriculture (NIRCA), formerly known as the Central Tobacco Research Institute (CTRI), at Rajahmundry.
- NIRCA scientists should focus on gene mapping of the turmeric, chilli, castor and ashwagandha varieties which were recently added to the institute's research mandate



### Tularemia – Rising Cases of Rabbit Fever

#### What is rabbit fever?

- Rabbit fever (Tularemia) is caused by bacterium **Francisella tularensis**.
- Tularemia can be spread to human beings by infected animals like rabbits, rodents, hares and prairie dogs, as well as through tick or deer fly bites.
- The infection can also spread by drinking contaminated water and inhaling contaminated aerosols or agricultural and landscaping dust, and laboratory exposure.
- Symptoms vary depending on how the infection occurs



#### The 'zombie deer' disease

Scientists express concern over the possibility of the deadly and incurable 'zombie deer' disease affecting humans.

#### About Zombie Deer Disease:

- Known scientifically as **Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)**, it is a progressive and fatal neurological disease which primarily affects deer, elk, moose, and reindeer.



#### What causes CWD?

- CWD is caused by infectious proteins called **prions**.
- Prions are proteins that cause other proteins in the brain to fold abnormally - they create spongy holes in the tissue - leading to brain damage and neurological diseases

#### Transmission:

- CWD prions are highly contagious and spread through body fluids such as saliva, feces, blood, or urine, either by direct contact or environmental contamination.

#### Symptoms:

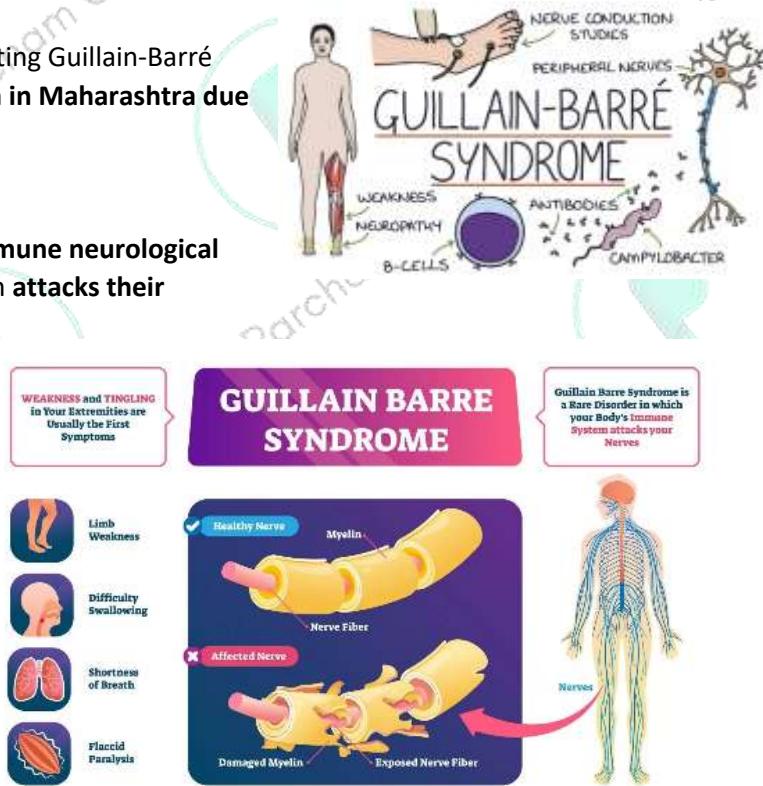
- progressive weight loss.**
- Numerous **behavioral changes**, including **decreased social interaction**, loss of awareness, and **loss of fear of humans**.
- Diseased animals also may exhibit **increased drinking, urination**, and excessive salivation.
- Treatment:** It is always fatal in infected animals. There is no vaccine or treatment.

### Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS)

**NEWS:** A Pune-based patient has **died** after contracting Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), making it the **first suspected death in Maharashtra due to the disease.**

#### What is Guillain-Barré Syndrome?

- Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) is an **autoimmune neurological disorder** in which a person's immune system **attacks their peripheral nerves** (the part of the nervous system outside the brain and spinal cord), leading to muscle weakness that can **progress to paralysis.**
- It can develop over a few days or several weeks. People of any age can be affected, but it is **more common in adults and males.**
- The **condition is rare**, with an estimated incidence of 1/2 per 100,000 population.
- **According to the World Health Organization (WHO)**, infection with the **bacteria Campylobacter jejuni**, which causes gastroenteritis (including symptoms of nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea), is **one of the most common risk factors**
- Can also develop GBS after having the flu or other viral infections including cytomegalovirus, Epstein-Barr virus, and the Zika virus.



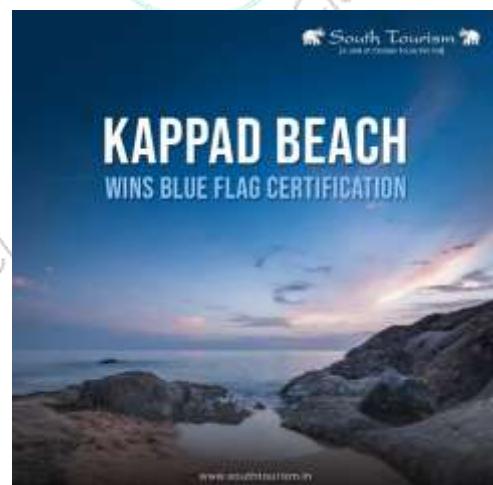
#### Signs and symptoms

- The **first signs** of GBS are **usually tingling and weakness** that start in the **feet and legs** before spreading to the upper body, arms and face.
- The **ability to speak and swallow can become affected** in severe cases.
- GBS can lead to life-threatening complications when it affects the autonomic nervous system which controls your blood pressure and heart rate.
- **TREATMENT:** There is **no known cure for GBS**. However, there are some treatments that aid in recovery.
- Most people can make a nearly full recovery. A few may be left with remaining muscle weakness.
- The treatments **primarily include plasma exchange and intravenous immunoglobulin therapy.**

## Environment

### Kerala's Kappad & Chal beaches get global Blue Flag certification

- Kerala's famed **Kappad beach in Kozhikode** and **Chal beach in Kannur** have been bestowed with the coveted **Blue Flag certification** by Denmark-based **Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)**
- The **Kappad Beach** in Kozhikode, the **first beach in the state to receive the Blue Flag certification**, has renewed its Blue Flag status
- Blue Flag beaches are considered the **cleanest beaches of the world**. It is an **eco-tourism model** endeavouring to provide the tourists/beachgoers clean and hygienic bathing water, facilities, a safe and healthy environment and sustainable development of the area.

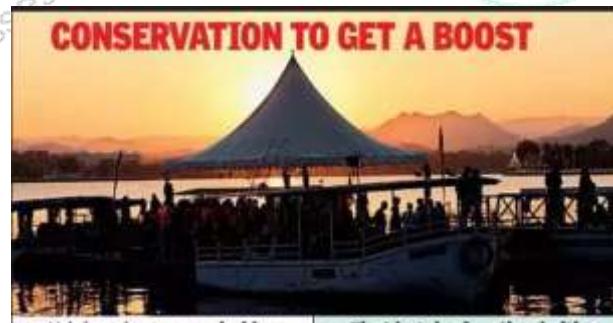


- **Blue Flag certification** is an internationally recognised eco-label that is accorded **based on 33 criterias**. These criterias are divided into **4 major heads** namely,
  - Environmental education and information
  - Bathing water quality
  - Environmental management
  - Conservation and safety services in the beaches
- The **other Indian beaches in the blue list** are Shivrajpur-Gujarat, Ghoghla-Diu, Kasarkod and Padubidri-Karnataka, Kappad-Kerala, Rushikonda- Andhra Pradesh, Golden-Odisha, Radhanagar- Andaman and Nicobar, Kovalam in Tamil Nadu, Eden in Puducherry beaches, Minicoy Thundi beach and Kadmat beach in Lakshadweep

### Indore and Udaipur join list of Wetland Accredited Cities

- Rajasthan's Udaipur and Madhya Pradesh's Indore have become India's first two cities to receive international accreditation as 'Wetland Cities' under Ramsar Convention.
- accredited 31 new cities, including two from India, making the global list of such cities to reach 74.
- **Wetland City Accreditation (WCA)**
- The WCA is a **voluntary accreditation system established by the Ramsar Convention** during the **Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) 12, 2015** to recognize cities that have taken **exceptional steps to safeguard their urban wetlands**.
- The WCA is **valid for 6 years**.
- The scheme aims to promote the conservation and wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands, as well as sustainable socio-economic benefits for local populations.
- Udaipur city is surrounded by five major wetlands: Pichola, Fateh Sagar, Rang Sagar, Swaroop Sagar, and Doodh Talai.
- **Indore: Sirpur Lake, a Ramsar site**
- The ongoing Amrit Dharmohar initiative by the MoEF&CC aligns with WCA goals, promoting the conservation values of Ramsar Sites.
- The nominated cities included: Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), and Udaipur (Rajasthan).

**CONSERVATION TO GET A BOOST**



► Udaipur is surrounded by 5 lakes, which also conserve many fish species and attract migratory birds

► Ramsar Conference of the Parties in 2015 (COP12) passed the establishment of Wetland City Accreditation system globally

► First batch of wetland cities from China, France and Sri Lanka, among others, was notified in 2018

► Second batch of cities from Japan, Morocco, Iraq, Spain, and others was declared in 2022

### About Wetlands & Ramsar Convention:

- Wetlands are areas where **water covers the soil or is present at or near the surface**, creating unique ecosystems.
- The Ramsar Convention, formally known as the Convention on Wetlands, is an **international treaty established in 1971** in the Iranian city of Ramsar.
- India joined it in **1982**, initially designating the **Chilika Lake** in Orissa and **Keoladeo National Park** in Rajasthan.

### First-ever multi-taxon global freshwater fauna assessment identifies Western Ghats as a hotspot of threatened species

- The first-ever multi-taxon global freshwater fauna assessment for The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species has identified Western Ghats as a key location with greatest abundance of threatened freshwater species.
- The study led by IUCN and published in the multidisciplinary science journal, *Nature*,
- the study pinpoints Lake Victoria (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda), Lake Titicaca (Bolivia and Peru), Sri Lanka's Wet Zone, and the Western Ghats (India) as hotspots of threatened freshwater species richness.
- Presence of iconic Humpbacked mahseer, a critically endangered megafish
- Among Indian States, Kerala has the highest number of threatened freshwater fishes, with 74 of its 188 fish species for which Red List assessments are available categorized as threatened while Periyar River stands out

as a critical conservation priority due to its high concentration of endemic and threatened freshwater fish species

### Piyush Goyal Launches Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform at Bharat Climate Forum 2025

- **Union Minister of Commerce & Industry**, Piyush Goyal unveiled the Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform at the Bharat Climate Forum 2025 in New Delhi.
- The platform will look to unify stakeholders from policy, industry, finance, and research to spur cleantech manufacturing in the country across sectors such as solar, wind, hydrogen, and battery storage.



### Government of India has designated areas around Shikari Devi Wildlife Sanctuary as eco-sensitive zones (ESZs)

- to reduce the impact of urbanisation and developmental activities on the surrounding protected



### Shikari Devi Wildlife Sanctuary:

- located in the district of **Mandi** in Himachal Pradesh.
- This high-altitude sanctuary is named after the goddess Shikari Devi
- An area of 7,200 ha surrounding the temple was declared a **sanctuary** in 1962.

### Tropical Cyclone Sean

- NASA Earth Observatory features Tropical Cyclone Sean, which brought record-breaking rainfall to the Pilbara region of Western Australia.
- A tropical low formed over the Indian Ocean off Western Australia.
- The storm had strengthened into Tropical Cyclone Sean – the second tropical cyclone of Australia's 2024–2025 season
- The region includes the waters surrounding northern Australia, encompassing the Indian Ocean, Coral Sea, and the Timor Sea.
- The northern regions of Western Australia, the Northern Territory, and Queensland are most affected



### Characteristics of a Tropical Cyclone

- Tropical Cyclone is a weather phenomenon.
- A tropical cyclone is formed only over warm ocean waters near the equator.
- The **centre of a cyclone is very calm and clear with very low air pressure**.
- The average speed is **120 kmph**.
- They have closed **isobars** which leads to greater velocity.
- Isobars are imaginary lines on a weather map that connect **locations with equal atmospheric pressure**.
- They develop over oceans and sea only.
- They **move from east to west** under the influence of trade winds.
- They are seasonal in nature.

### How are Cyclones Classified?

- Cyclones are classified **on the basis of wind speed** by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD):
  - **Depression**: Wind speeds of between 31–49 km/h
  - **Deep Depression**: Between 50–61 km/h
  - **Cyclonic Storm**: Between 62–88 km/h
  - **Severe Cyclonic Storm**: Between 89–117 Km/h

- **Very Severe Cyclonic Storm:** Between 118-166 Km/h
- **Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm:** Between 166-221 Km/h
- **Super Cyclonic Storm:** Above 222 Km/h

### Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan Launches 'Kavacham' Disaster Risk Warning System

- The Kerala Warnings, Crisis and Hazard Management system (KaWaChAM), the disaster risk warning system launched by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.
- developed by the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) with the support of the National Disaster Management Authority and the World Bank.
- The entire system includes a network of 126 siren-strobe light units, 93 emergency operation centres connected via VPN, decision support software, and a large data centre.
- The system will provide timely alerts rated to extreme weather events, such as heavy rain, strong winds, and sea surge to the public through the network of the "KaWaChAM" warning sirens, developed as part of the National Cyclone Mitigation Plan.
- location-based SMS, and other communication channels for disseminating severe weather or disaster warnings received from central agencies to the public.
- a network of sirens and strobe lights has been set up for broadcasting severe disaster warnings from State and district Emergency Operations Centres to the public in the form of messages and sirens.



### Scientists discover fast-growing glacier in Uttarakhand's Niti Valley

- A group of scientists recently discovered a new glacier in Uttarakhand that was found to be rapidly expanding in size
- The glacier is located in the Niti Valley, a remote area in the northernmost region of the hilly state, close to the India-Tibet border.
- Stretching about 10 km in length, the new glacier that is yet to be named lies adjacent to the Randolph and Rekana glaciers and spans approximately 48 sq km.
- Their study, Manifestations of a Glacier Surge in Central Himalaya Using Multi-Temporal Satellite Data, was done using satellite data. Their findings show the glacier is currently 'surging'.

### Nepal's Yala Glacier Rapidly Shrinking, Predicted To Disappear By 2040s

- Nepal's Yala Glacier is shrinking so rapidly that, by the 2040s, it is predicted to disappear entirely.
- Launched in 2024 by organizations including the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), UNESCO, Rice University, and the University of Iceland, it is the only Himalayan glacier on the Global Glacier Casualty List.
- Since monitoring started, the glacier's extent and volume have significantly decreased.
- Its height dropped from 5,170 m to 5,750 m in 2011 and has retreated by 680 m between 1974 and 2021.
- The Global Glacier Casualty List identifies 15 glaciers as critically endangered, including Nepal's Yala Glacier.
- China's Dagu Glacier is also critically endangered and projected to disappear by 2030.
- In an effort to draw attention to the significance of glaciers and their function in hydrology, meteorology, and climate systems, the United Nations has declared 2025 the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation.



### India's Initiatives:

- **National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem,**
- **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS):** Monitors glacier-related events and issues GLOF alerts.
- Missions to Arctic & Antarctic e.g., **IndARC** (2014).

### Nepal PM officially announces Sagarmatha Sambad on the occasion of the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation

- Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli announced the Sagarmatha Sambad (Dialogue) scheduled to take place in Kathmandu on May 16-18.
- The Prime Minister declared the Dialogue amidst a programme organised by the Ministry of Forests and Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, Singha Durbar held on the occasion of the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation (IYGP), 2025.
- The Sagarmatha Sambad has been scheduled to be organised biannually.

### SIAM's 3rd International Conference on Sustainable Circularity

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, delivered the keynote address at the Special Ministerial Session of the 3rd International Conference on Sustainable Circularity, organized by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), in New Delhi
- Themed 'Nature Positive Recycling', the conference brought together key stakeholders from the automotive industry to discuss sustainable development and circularity.
- Shri Yadav also unveiled the SIAM Strategy Paper, titled 'Towards Circular Future in the Automobile Industry: Integrating EPR Regime in Waste Stream Regulation'.



### The Minister detailed key government policies supporting sustainability in the automotive sector:

- **Vehicle Scrappage Policy (2021):** Mandates fitness tests for passenger vehicles older than 20 years and commercial vehicles older than 15 years, replacing polluting vehicles with BS-VI-compliant models.
- This is projected to reduce up to 17% NOx and 11% PM2.5 emissions from freight trucks.
- **End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs) Rules, 2025:** To be effective from April 1, 2025, these rules ensure environmentally sound scrapping of vehicles, with manufacturers fulfilling Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) by ensuring ELVs are properly scrapped in registered facilities.
- The scrapping of vehicles is also incentivized.

**Promotion of Electric Vehicles (EVs):** Initiatives like the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME) and the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes are driving EV adoption on a huge scale.

EV sales are expected to reach 35% of total vehicle sales by 2030, avoiding 5 metric tonnes of CO2 emissions annually.

### Epicoccum Indicum

- Recently, researchers from Banaras Hindu University identified a new species of phytopathogenic fungi named '*Epicoccum indicum*'
- This discovery is linked to an emerging leaf spot disease affecting as **vetiver or khus**.
- The species name refers to India, where it was discovered.
- **Phytopathogenic fungi** are fungi that cause diseases in plants, leading to significant economic losses in agriculture and horticulture.
- **70–80% of plant diseases are caused by phytopathogenic fungi.**



### Banded Royal Butterfly Discovered in Tripura

- Tripura recorded a milestone in biodiversity documentation with the first-ever recording of the **Banded Royal butterfly** (*Rachana jalindra* indra), a rare species, in the state in the Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary.



- It is a species of lycaenid or blue butterfly found in parts of South and Southeast Asia.
- Scientific Name:** *Rachana jalindra indra*
- Habitat:** Found in forests, particularly near the Western Ghats, Northeast India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, and Malaysia.
- three subspecies** of *Rachana jalindra* **found in India**, including macantia, distributed from southwest India to Goa; R. j. tarpina, distributed in the Andamans; and R. j. indra, distributed from Orissa to lower West Bengal and Bangladesh.
- Schedule II of the Indian Wildlife (Protected) Act, 1972.**



#### Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary (SWL):

- situated Tripura, 25 kilometers from the capital, Agartala.
- Clouded Leopard National Park**, established in 2007, is a part of SWL.

#### Black-collared yellow catfish

Researchers at the Centre for Peninsular Aquatic Genetic Resources, Kochi, of the National Bureau for Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR) claimed to have developed a captive breeding protocol for black-collared yellow catfish.



- It is endemic to the **Chalakudy river in Kerala**.
- It is characterized by its greenish-brown mottled coloration, shorter barbels, and distinct genetic traits, the **species coexists with the endangered Horabagrus Nigricollaris**.
- It has been **classified as endangered** in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.
- The captive breeding programme of the fish began in 2020.
- Significance of captive breeding:** The development of the breeding technique will help in the conservation of the species. The development of the protocol would ensure the **preservation of biodiversity in the Western Ghats**.

#### Key facts about the National Bureau for Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR)

- It was established in December 1983 in Allahabad under the aegis of **Indian Council of Agricultural Research**
- It aims to undertake research related to the **conservation of fish germplasm resources** of the country.
- The Institute's vision is assessment and conservation of fish genetic resources for intellectual property protection, sustainable utilization and posterity.

#### Gaddi dog of the Himalayas recognised by ICAR-NBAGR Karnal



- The Gaddi dog, a loyal and resilient **shepherd dog from the Himalayas**, has been **officially recognized** as an **indigenous breed** by the **National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR)** under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
- Named after the Gaddi tribe**, known for herding sheep and goats in the high Himalayas, these dogs play a vital role in protecting livestock, herding and fostering a deep bond with shepherds
- This recognition paves the way for their conservation and promotion on a national scale.

#### Discovery of New Indo-Burmese Pangolin Species

- Scientists of the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** have identified a **new species of Indo-Burmese pangolin (*Manis indoburmanica*)** that **diverged from the Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*)** approximately 3.4 million years ago.
- Its current distribution spans parts of **Arunachal Pradesh, Assam**, and possibly extends to **Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar**.



Pangolins are among the most trafficked wild mammals globally. India is home to two species —

- the **Indian Pangolin**, found across the subcontinent;

2. the **Chinese Pangolin**, found across a larger area in south Asia.
  - Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam have both species in their States.
  - **World Pangolin Day** is observed every year on **February 18**.
  - **Conservation Status:** The conservation status of these species ranges from **Endangered (Indian Pangolin)** to **Critically Endangered (Chinese Pangolin)**.
  - **Trade of pangolins is banned under the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species \(CITES\)](#)** and they are listed in **Appendix I of the IUCN Red List**, indicating they are threatened with extinction.
  - **[Schedule I of the Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#)**, prohibiting exploitation.

### Goby Fish Discovery in Andhra

- Researchers from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) discovered two species *Hemigobius hoevenii* and *Mugilogobius tigrinus* in the Coringa wildlife sanctuary.
- These species are **goby fish** that had not been recorded in Andhra Pradesh previously.
- This discovery is significant as ***M. tigrinus*** has been found along the eastern coastline of India for the first time.
- **Habitat:** Most gobies found in estuarine areas, especially around mangroves.



### Reviving Bison Population in Jharkhand

- The Jharkhand Forest department has initiated a study to revive the dwindling population of Bison, popularly known as Gaur, at Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR).
- The bovine, a food source for big cats, has already gone extinct from across Jharkhand, excluding the PTR where merely 50-70 bison are surviving



### About Indian Gaur:

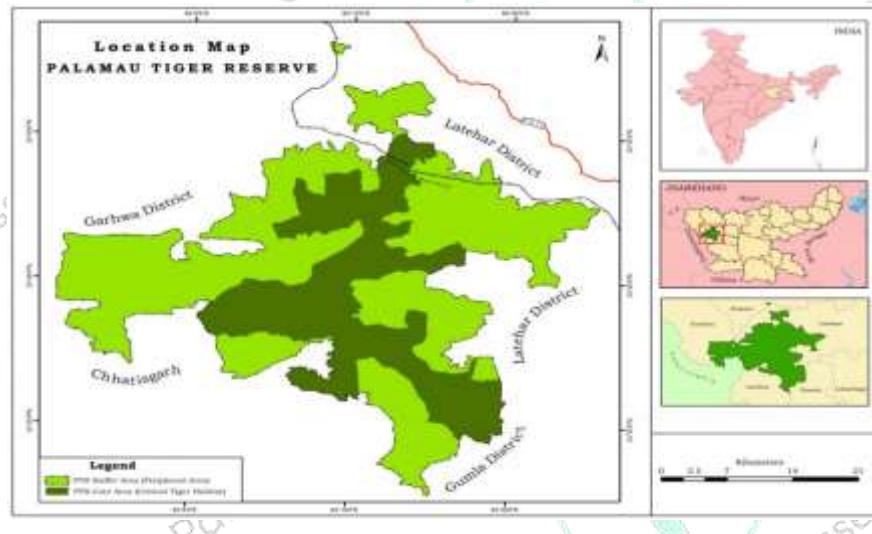
- The Indian Bison of Gaur is the largest and tallest in the family of wild cattle.
- Scientific Name: *Bos gaurus*
- Distribution: Gaurs are indigenous to the South and Southeast parts of Asia.
- Gaurs are primarily the denizens of **evergreen and semi-evergreen forests** along with **moist deciduous forests** with open grasslands.

### Conservation Status:

- **IUCN Red List: Vulnerable**
- Wild Life Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I
- It is listed in [CITES](#) Appendix I.

### Palamu Tiger Reserve:

- It is located in the Chhota Nagpur plateau region of Jharkhand.
- The reserve forms a part of the Betla National Park.
- Palamu Tiger Reserve was established in 1974 under Project Tiger.



### Four New Tarantula Species Discovered in Western Ghats

Recent research has revealed four new tarantula species, including a new genus, from India's Western Ghats.

#### Habitat and Behaviors

- Tarantulas live in tree hollows, along streams, forest paths, and shola forest patches surrounded by tea plantations.
- Females exhibit unique behaviors like carrying egg sacs under their mouthparts and creating hammock-like web structures to protect their eggs.

#### Examples of newly discovered species:

- *Haploclastus bratocolonus* ("tree dweller"): Found in hollow trees along rivers.
- *Haploclastus montanus*: Lives at elevations above 2,000 meters, making it one of the highest-living tarantulas in the region.



#### 23 species of blood-sucking flies recorded in Andaman & Nicobar Islands

- Researchers from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have identified 23 species of blood-sucking flies, 13 of them recorded for the first time in the country, in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- These tiny insects, also called midges, are similar in appearance to flies but are more closely related to mosquitoes in their feeding habits.
- They are locally called *bhusi* flies.
- These flies feed on the blood of livestock such as sheep, goats, and cattle, as well as wild animals like deer.
- Of particular concern are five species known to transmit the bluetongue disease virus, a condition that can be fatal to livestock.
- Bluetongue disease manifests through symptoms including blue discolouration of the tongue, fever, facial swelling, and excessive salivation.
- It can potentially lead to death in affected animals and poses a significant threat to livestock farming and the agricultural economy.



## Index/ report

### Indian Cities' Air Quality Progress Report 2025

- The study, based on **data from Respirer's AtlasAQ platform**,
- In the years **from 2019 to 2024**, Indian cities **made strides in reducing PM2.5 pollution levels**.
- The **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** cities achieved a notable **24% reduction**.
- **Varanasi emerged as the frontrunner** with a remarkable **76% decrease**, followed by Moradabad (58 per cent) and Kanpur (51.2 per cent).
- Despite these advancements, cities like **Delhi, Gurugram, and Faridabad** continue to grapple with **severe air pollution challenges**.

City	PM2.5 ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) in 2019	PM2.5 ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) in 2024	Reduction Since 2019	Key Factors Influencing Pollution
Delhi	108.4	107.0	1.3% reduction	Despite minor improvement, seasonal spikes and emission density remain dominant challenges.
Mumbai	35.2	36.1	2.6% increase	Localized emissions from industrial and transport sectors drive a slight increase.
Kolkata	57.1	44.8	21.5% reduction	Consistent reductions due to improved public transport and stricter industrial regulations.
Bengaluru	35.9	33.0	8.0% reduction	Stable performance with limited seasonal variation.
Chennai	32.5	29.5	9.2% reduction	Benefitted from coastal winds and minimal industrial emissions.

### Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2024

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry released the "Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2024" report in New Delhi.
- It is the **6th edition** of the LEADS report.
- It was **conceived on the lines of the Logistics Performance Index of World Bank in 2018** by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It evaluates logistics performance across **four key pillars**: Logistics Infrastructure, Logistics Services, Operating and Regulatory Environment, and the newly introduced **Sustainable Logistics**.
- It highlights initiatives undertaken by various States and UTs across the identified pillars.
- Key highlights of LEADS 2024



**Coastal Group**

- Achievers: Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu
- Fast Movers: Andhra Pradesh, Goa
- Aspirers: Kerala, West Bengal

**Landlocked Group**

- Achievers: Haryana, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand
- Fast Movers: Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan
- Aspirers: Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand

**North-Eastern Group**

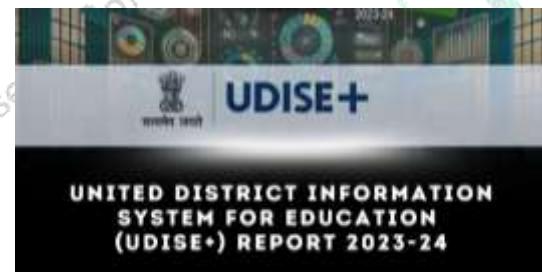
- Achievers: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh
- Fast Movers: Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura
- Aspirers: Manipur

**Union Territories**

- Achievers: Chandigarh, Delhi
- Fast Movers: Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Jammu and Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Puducherry
- Aspirers: Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Ladakh

**Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) Report 2023-24**

- (UDISE+) report released by the Ministry of Education (MoE).
- The total enrolment of students has dropped by over a crore in 2023-24 as compared to the previous years

**Highlights of UDISE+ Report 2023-24:**

- **24.8 crore students enrolled in 2023-2024**, while this figure stood at **25.18 crore in 2022-2023**.
- The figures for the previous four show that the **average total enrolment** stood around **26.36 crore**.
- Boys account for **51.9% of enrolments** and girls 48.1%.
- While **over 90% of schools have basic amenities** like electricity and gender-specific toilets, **advanced facilities** such as functional desktops, internet access, and ramps with handrails **remain limited**.
- Only **57.2% of schools have functional computers**, **53.9% have internet**, and **52.3% are equipped with ramps**, underscoring significant gaps in accessibility and tech readiness.
- **Madhya Pradesh** has the **highest number of schools with single teachers**.
- **West Bengal** has the **largest number of schools with zero enrolment** (3,254), followed by **Rajasthan** (2,167), and **Telangana** (2,097)
- **UDISE+** is one of the largest Management Information Systems initiated by the **Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education** for record of data related to schools, teachers, enrolment, infrastructure, etc.

**Odisha Lake Bird Census 2025**

- More than 16.56 lakh birds of over 200 species were sighted during a mid-winter census carried out in three major wetlands – Chilika Lake, Bhitarkanika National Park and Hirakud Reservoir – across Odisha,
- The bird census in three major water bodies
- According to the census report, altogether 11,27,228 birds were counted in the Chilika Lake.
- Of the total count, 10,87,226 were migratory birds of 109 species while the number of resident ones was 40,002 of 87 species.
- The bird count in 2024 was 11,37,759 of 187 species,
- This year, there is a decrease of 10,531 birds in total, and there is a decline of 4,054 birds in Nalabana
- adding that the highest of 2,01,926 Gadwall species visited the Chilika Lake, followed by Northern Pintail (1,93,394) and Eurasian wigeon (1,54,937).

**Odisha Bird Census 2025 Kicks Off at Chilika and Mangalajodi**

This year's census aims to gather crucial data on bird populations, migration patterns, and habitat health, contributing to conservation efforts for these ecologically significant areas

- The number of species this year was 196, and the same was 187 species in 2024.
- The number of visiting avian winter species has risen to 1,51,614 this year while 1,51,421 birds were counted last year in the national park

### Gujarat Launches 'Atlas to Protect Indian Wolf Habitats'

- According to the Wolf Census conducted in 2023, the total population of the animal in 13 districts of Gujarat — spanning 2217 square km area in the state — stands at 222
- At 80 wolves, Bhavnagar tops among the 13 districts, according to the government statement.
- The census was conducted in 2023 based on an initiative of the Gujarat Forest Department in collaboration with Gujarat Ecological Education and Research Foundation (GEER Foundation).
- The 13 districts where wolf habitat was found include Bhavnagar (80), Narmada (39), Banaskantha (36), Surendranagar (18), Jamnagar (12), Morbi (12), Kutch (9), Porbandar (6), Mehsana (3), Navsari (3), Patan (2), Aravalli (1), and Surat (1).
- A wolf's average length is three to five feet and weight is between 30 to 80 kg.
- A pack consists of 6 to 15 wolves led by an alpha male and an alpha female.
- The Gujarat Forest Department has also launched a project under which wolves, bred in captivity, are being 'soft released' in the wild to restore the ecological balance in the grasslands and parts of revenue areas where the population of wild boars, blue bulls, and other such herbivores has been growing.

### The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024

- ASER is an annual citizen-led survey that provides reliable estimates of children's schooling and learning levels.
- The 'basic' ASER survey generates district, state and national level estimates of the enrollment status of 3 to 16-year-old children and the basic reading and arithmetic skills of 5 to 16-year-old children.
- Additionally, in ASER 2024, older children aged 14 to 16 were asked questions about their digital access and usage and were administered a set of smartphone-based tasks to gauge their digital abilities.
- ASER 2024 reached almost 6.5 lakh children in 605 villages rural districts in India.
- Facilitated by the NGO Pratham, a local organisation or institution conducted the survey in each surveyed district.
- Key findings** of the ASER 2024 survey are presented separately below for three groups of children: Pre-primary (age group 3-5), elementary (age group 6-14), and older children (age group 15-16).
- The survey found a slight improvement in comparison to pre-COVID 2018 levels.
- However, the majority of children in Classes 3 and 5 are still unable to read a Class 2 level text in their local language or do simple maths problems.
- In 2018, ASER reported that 20.9% of Class 3 students enrolled in government schools were able to read a text at a Class 2 level; this figure dropped to 16.3% in 2022, but recovered to 23.4% in 2024.
- In 2018, 44.2% of Class 5 students were able to read it, which declined to 38.5% in 2022, and has plateaued again at 44.8% in 2024.
- The survey showed that 67.5% Class 8 students were able to read the Class 2 text.
- two out of three Class 3 students were still unable to solve the subtraction problems correctly.
- Among Class 5 students, the proportion of those who could solve the division problems has improved from 27.9% in 2018 to 30.7% in 2024, which still leaves almost 70% of them lagging behind.
- Among Class 8 students, improvement in basic arithmetic rose marginally from 44.1% in 2018 to 45.8% in 2024.
- The assessment method has remained the same since 2007
- The most improved States were Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Sikkim, and Mizoram which saw at least 10 percentage point hikes in the number of children able to read the Class 2 text.



#### Assessing reading levels

The table shows the percentage of children in Classes 3 and 5 able to read a Class 2 text in government schools

Class 3: % children reading at Class 2 level

2018 20.9

2022 16.3

2024 23.4

Class 5: % reading at Class 2 level

2018 44.2

2022 38.5

2024 44.8



SOURCE: ASER(RURAL) 2024

### Digital literacy

- Among older teenagers aged 14 years to 16 years, 89% have access to smartphones at home. Of this category, 31.4% possess their own phones.
- Of the 82% of children (used a smartphone), 57% used it for education-related matters and 76% said they browse social media on the phone.
- Boys were more aware of safety features on their phones than girls.

### NITI Aayog Releases Inaugural Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025

- The report compiled by the NITI Aayog
- released in New Delhi by the Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission, Dr. Arvind Panagariya in the presence of Suman Bery, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, BVR Subrahmanyam, CEO of the NITI Aayog.
- The NITI Aayog report assesses the fiscal health of 18 major states of India as per the 2022-23 fiscal year, identifies areas for improvement, and promotes best practices across these states.
- Odisha has topped the inaugural edition of the NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025.

The Fiscal Health index includes five major sub-indices -

- Quality of Expenditure,
- Revenue Mobilisation,
- Fiscal Prudence,
- Debt Index, and
- Debt Sustainability
- The Fiscal Health Index segregated the 18 states into four groups of Achiever, Frontrunner, Performer, and Aspirational on the basis of their performance in 2022-23.
- Achiever States (1-5 rank)- Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Jharkhand and Gujarat
- Frontrunner (6-10 rank)-Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka.
- Performer (11-14 rank)- Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Bihar, Haryana
- Aspirational (15-18 rank)- Kerala, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab.



### HOW STATES FARE

Fiscal Health Index Score (out of 100)

TOP 5 ↑	
1	Odisha 67.8
2	Chhattisgarh 55.2
3	Goa 53.6
4	Jharkhand 51.6
5	Gujarat 50.5

BOTTOM 5 ↓	
18	Punjab 10.7
17	Andhra Pradesh 20.9
16	West Bengal 21.8
15	Kerala 25.4
14	Haryana 27.4

Source: NITI Aayog

### Top 5 in Fiscal Health Index 2025

Rank (2022-23)	States	FHI Score	Quality of Expenditure	Revenue Mobilisation	Fiscal Prudence	Debt Index	Debt Sustainability
1	Odisha	67.8	52	69.9	54	99	64
2	Chhattisgarh	55.2	55.1	56.5	56	79.6	29
3	Goa	53.6	45.5	87.1	59.4	51	25.2
4	Jharkhand	51.6	47.3	45.7	62.4	66.9	35.7
5	Gujarat	50.5	40	48.7	52.7	69	42

### Bottom 5 in Fiscal Health Index 2025

Rank (2022-23)	States	FHI Score	Quality of Expenditure	Revenue Mobilisation	Fiscal Prudence	Debt Index	Debt Sustainability
14	Haryana	27.4	24.8	47.8	26.1	24.1	14.3
15	Kerala	25.4	4.2	54.2	34	23.1	11.3
16	West Bengal	21.8	32.3	12.4	25.4	18.3	20.6
17	Andhra Pradesh	20.9	31.4	22.1	13.3	37.8	0
18	Punjab	10.7	4.7	28.1	5.6	0	15.2

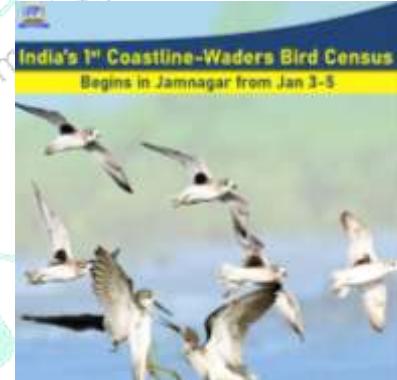
### About the NITI Aayog

- The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog was set up by the government of India through an executive order.

- It came into existence on 1 January 2015, replacing the Planning Commission.
- The Prime Minister is the chairman of the NITI Aayog.
- Vice Chairman- Suman Bery
- Chief Executive Officer- BVR Subrahmanyam

**Country's first-ever 'Coastline-Waders Bird Census' to be conducted in Jamnagar from January 3 to 5**

- In a first, the Gujarat government and Bird Conservation Society of Gujarat (BCSG) will conduct the census of coastal and wader birds at the Marine National Park and Marine Sanctuary in Jamnagar
- Marine National Park and Sanctuary Area is the Home to Around 300 Species of Resident and Migratory Birds
- The Marine National Park and Marine Sanctuary in Gujarat is India's first marine national park. Spread across three districts of the state – Devbhoomi Dwarka, Jamnagar and Morbi



#### IIT Kanpur sets record with 152 IPR filings in 2024

- The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK) has filed 152 Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in 2024.
- This milestone of the highest number of IPRs filed in a single year sees the institute sustain the increasing momentum for the fourth consecutive year, with a total of 1200 IPRs filed to date
- The 152 IPR filings include 124 patents, 10 design registrations, two copyrights, and six trademark applications.
- IIT Kanpur also received the STEM Impact Awards 2024 for its impactful technology transfer activities.



#### Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu richest Chief Minister, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee poorest

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is the richest Chief Minister in India with assets worth over ₹931 crore, while West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee is the poorest with just ₹15 lakh, according to an Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) report.
- While India's per capita net national income or NNI was approximately ₹1,85,854 for 2023-2024, the average self-income of a Chief Minister is ₹13,64,310, around 7.3 times the average per capita income of India.
- Arunachal Pradesh's Pema Khandu is the second richest Chief Minister
- Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is the second poorest in the list



#### India Ranked 123<sup>rd</sup> out of 143 Countries in Readiness for a Rapidly Aging Society

- The study 'Nature Aging' was conducted by researchers from the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Columbia University,
- Developed a new measure—the Global Aging to assess the preparedness of 143 countries, covering 95.4% of the world's population, to tackle the challenges of population aging.
- The study examined five key domains: well-being, productivity and engagement, equity, cohesion, and security.
- Switzerland has secured 1st position, followed by Norway and Denmark ranked at 2nd and 3rd position, respectively.
- Singapore ranked 10th -first among Asian, Japan (15), China (46).
- India is at present the youngest nation in the world, with over 50% of its population below the age of 25 and over 65% below the age of 35. rank – 123
- But the picture will change in the next few decades when the youngsters age

### India's Metro Rail Network Surpasses 1,000 km, Becoming World's Third Largest

- Spanning over 1,000 km across 11 states and 23 cities, India now has the **third-largest metro network in the world, surpassed Japan.**
- The initiative for a metro system started in 1969 with the Metropolitan Transport Project
- The **London Underground rail system** popularly known as “Tube”, was the **first modern metro rail network** in the world. It started its **operation in 1863.**



### Metro Rail Network in India

- The first metro rail network to become **operational in India** was in **Kolkata (earlier Calcutta) in 1984**. It was a 3.4 km route that connected Esplanade and Bhowanipur, in the city and it was built with the assistance of the Soviet Union.
- The first modern metro system was inaugurated in **Delhi in 2002** and it is being **operated by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)**. DMRC opened its first metro corridor between **Shahdara and Tis Hazari in Delhi**.
- Now DMRC operates India's largest metro network** with an operational network of 395 km.
- India's first underwater metro** became operational in **Kolkata** in March 2024 which runs **under the Hooghly river**. The underwater tunnel is 520 meters long which the train crosses in 45 seconds.

### Dubai ranks among world's top 10 cities in Global Power City Index (GPCI) for 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year

- Dubai has secured the **top spot in West Asia** in the Global Power City Index 2024 and **eighth position globally**, marking its **second consecutive year in the top 10 rankings**.
- The annual study, conducted & released by **Japan's Mori Memorial Foundation's Institute for Urban Strategies**
- The **Global Power City Index evaluates cities** worldwide based on their **ability to attract people, capital, and enterprises, measuring six key areas**: Economy, Research and Development, Cultural Interaction, Livability, Environment, and Accessibility.
- London, New York, Tokyo – Top 3 cities**



### India Becomes Second Most Targeted Nation For Cyberattacks In 2024.

- India ranks second globally after the US in terms of cyberattacks in 2024, according to CloudSEK, a cyber intelligence platform.
- The most affected sectors globally include: Manufacturing, Real Estate, Healthcare, Technology, Finance



### QS World Future Skills Index 2025, India ranks 25<sup>th</sup>

- The Index by higher education UK-based firm QS evaluates how **countries are equipping themselves to meet evolving global job market demand**
- India ranks 25th overall** in the index
- The country excels in the future of work indicator, securing the second-highest global score (99.1).
- The **United States**, known for its Silicon Valley and universities that have updated curricula, **comes first with a 100 score**. Followed by the **UK, Germany and Australia** in that order.
- The **QS World Future Skills Index classifies economies into four categories** based on their overall performance – future skills **aspiring, practitioner, contender, and pioneer**.
- India is positioned in the contender category.**

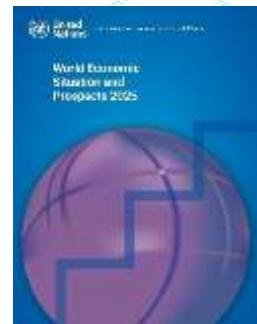


Skills Fit Country	Score	Academic Readiness Country	Score	Future of Work Country	Score	Economic Transformation Country	Score
UK	100.00	UK	100.0	United States	100.0	South Korea	100.0
US	94.4	Germany	99.6	India	99.1	Israel	98.9
Canada	90.9	Netherlands	99.3	Mexico	98.2	United States	97.9
Germany	89.2	Australia	98.9	Canada	97.4	Switzerland	96.8
Netherlands	88.6	United States	98.6	Australia	96.5	Japan	95.8

- The new index is based on **four key indicators** – skills fit, academic readiness, future of work, economic transformation
- India was ranked second in terms of preparedness for jobs of the future** including artificial intelligence (AI) and green skills, **only behind the United States**

### World Economic Situation and Prospects Report 2025

- The **UN World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025**, released in United Nations , said that the near-term outlook for **South Asia** is expected to remain robust, with **growth projected at 5.7% in 2025 and 6.0 per cent in 2026**, “driven by strong performance in India as well as economic recovery in a few other economies”, including Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- The **Indian economy grew by 6.8% in 2024** and is **forecast to expand by 6.6% in 2025 and 6.8% growth in 2026**.
- The **economy of India, the largest in the (South Asia) region**, is forecast to expand by 6.6 per cent in 2025, primarily supported by **robust private consumption and investment**.
- Additionally, **capital expenditure on infrastructure development** is expected to have strong multiplier effects on growth in the coming years.
- Meanwhile, **favourable monsoon rains in 2024** have improved the summer-sowing areas for all major crops, boosting agricultural output expectations for 2025.
- Investment growth has remained particularly strong in East Asia and South Asia**, partly driven by domestic and foreign investments in new supply chains, **particularly in India, Indonesia, and Vietnam**.



### 4th Edition of “International Migrant Workers” Report

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) recently published the fourth edition of its Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers, highlighting the significant contributions and challenges faced by international migrants in the global labor market.



### Key Findings of Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers (ILO)

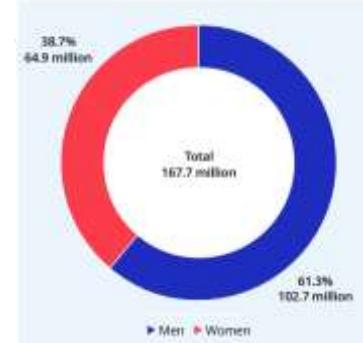
- Contributions to Global Economy:** In 2022, International migrants made up 4.7% (167.7 million) of the global labor force, which includes both employed and unemployed individuals.
  - It marks **an increase** of over 30 million compared to 2013.

### Regional Distribution:

- High-income Countries** absorbed the **largest number of International migrants**, accounting for **68.4% (114 million people)**, primarily in **key sectors such as services**, especially in the provision of care.
- Upper-middle-income countries** accounted for 17.4% (29.2 million) of International migrants.
- The share of **International migrants in the labor force** in Northern, Southern, and Western Europe was 23.3%, while in Northern America, it was 22.6%.



Global distribution of international migrants in the labour force by sex, 2022



### Employment Sectors:

- Services Sector:** 68.4% (higher than non-migrants);
  - Women (80.7%) and Male (60.8%);
  - Care Economy:** Migrant women (28.8%) and Migrant men (12.4%);
- Industry Sector:** 24.3%
- Agriculture:** 7.4%
  - Non-migrants share in agriculture: 24.3%.

### Age Distribution:

- Prime-age adult** (between 25 and 54 years): **74.9%** (125.6 million);

- **Young** (between 15-24 years): **9.3%** (15.5 million);
- Between **55-64 years**: **12.5%**;
- **Above 65 years**: 3.4%

**Men** constituted 4.7% of the total male employment.

**Women** accounted for 4.4% of the total female employment.

- However, the number of women International migrants has steadily risen since 2015.
- Addressing labor market shortages in host nations and contributing **remittances** to their home countries.
- In 2024, India received an **estimated \$129.1 billion** worth of remittances (**14.3% of the world**), the highest ever for a country in any year. These funds **support families, boost local economies, and contribute to national development**.

#### About International Labour Organization (ILO)

– It is an **United Nations Agency** established in 1919 as part of the **Treaty of Versailles** that ended **World War I**, and it became the **first specialized agency of the UN** in 1946.

It is the **only tripartite U.N. agency** that brings together **governments, employers and workers**.

- It has 187 Member states.
- It sets labour standards, develops policies and devises programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.
- It is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

#### Major Reports

- World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO);
- Global Wage Report; World Social Protection Report;
- World Employment and Social Outlook for Youth;
- World of Work Report

#### World Economic Forum Releases Global Risks Report

- The 20th edition of the Global Risks Report 2025 reveals an increasingly fractured global landscape, where escalating geopolitical, environmental, societal and technological challenges threaten stability and progress.
- This edition presents the findings of the Global Risks Perception Survey 2024-2025 (GRPS), which captures insights from over 900 experts worldwide.
- The report analyses global risks through three timeframes to support decision-makers in balancing current crises and longer-term priorities.



**Published by:** World Economic Forum.

#### Key Features:

- **Escalating Cyber Threats:** Highlights the sophistication of cybercrime amid geopolitical tensions and emerging technologies.
- **Widening Cyber Resilience Gap:** Smaller organizations face seven times higher struggles compared to 2022, while larger organizations show improvement.
- **Regional Disparities:** 42% in Latin America and 36% in Africa lack confidence in cybersecurity preparedness, compared to 15% in Europe and North America.
- **Public vs. Private Sector:** 38% of public-sector entities report inadequate resilience versus 10% of private organizations.
- **Workforce Gap:** Nearly 49% of public-sector organizations lack sufficient cybersecurity talent.



### UNICEF Report on Children's Crises in 2025

- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report "Prospects for Children in 2025: Building Resilient Systems for Children's Futures" warns of escalating global crises and their potential impacting children.
- It highlights the urgent need to strengthen national systems to protect children and provide essential support.



#### Key points

- Impact of Conflict on Children:** In 2023, over 473 million children, or more than one in six globally, lived in conflict zones. The proportion of children affected by conflict has nearly doubled from 10% in the 1990s to 19%.
  - Children face risks such as displacement, starvation, disease, and psychological trauma.
- Debt Crisis and its Impact on Children:** Nearly 400 million children live in countries burdened by debt, limiting investments in education, healthcare, and social services.
  - The [World Bank](#) estimates that a 5% rise in external debt for [low-and middle-income countries](#) could cut education spending by USD 12.8 billion.
- Climate Change Impact:** Only 2.4% of [global climate finance](#) is allocated to child-responsive initiatives, weakening social services crucial for children.
- Digital Inequality:** [Digital Public Infrastructure \(DPI\)](#) is transforming how governments deliver essential services like education, healthcare, and social protection to children.
  - However, a significant [digital divide](#) exists, with youth (15-24 years) in high-income countries enjoying internet access, while [only 53% of youth in Africa have internet access](#), especially in low-income countries.
  - Adolescent girls and children with disabilities are particularly impacted, with [9 out of 10 adolescent girls in low-income countries being offline](#).

#### The Key Facts About UNICEF

- Established:** UNICEF established in 1946, to help children affected by World War II.
- It currently operates in over 190 countries and territories, including India.
- Global Headquarters:** New York City, USA.
- Awards:** [Princess of Asturias Award](#) (2006), [Indira Gandhi Prize](#) (1989), and [Nobel Peace Prize](#) (1965).
- Key Reports:** The State of the World's Children, Humanitarian Action for Children.
- UNICEF and India:** UNICEF began its work in India in **1949**.

#### World Employment and Social Outlook Report 2025

- The global economy is slowing down, making it harder for labour markets to recover fully since the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic, according to the International Labour Organization's (ILO) report, World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2025
- India's growth underpins GDP growth performance in Southern Asia, a sub-region whose GDP is expected to have grown by 6.2% in 2024 and to grow by 5.8% in 2025.
- India has one of the fastest growth rates in the world, 6.9% in 2024 and forecast to be 6.4% in 2025
- global employment grew in line with the labour force, keeping the unemployment rate steady at 5%.
- "However, youth unemployment showed little improvement, remaining high at 12.6%.
- Informal work and working poverty returned to pre-pandemic levels, and low-income countries faced the most difficulties in creating decent jobs
- Economic growth stood at 3.2% in 2024, down from 3.3 and 3.6% in 2023 and 2022, respectively. A similar level of growth is expected in 2025
- The global jobs gap – the estimated number of people who want to work but do not have a job – reached 402 million in 2024



#### Moon added to list of threatened cultural sites for first time

- The moon has been placed on a list of threatened heritage sites, owing to fears of potential looting and destruction caused by planned commercial trips.



- The watchlist of the [World Monuments Fund](#) (WMF) usually includes vulnerable cultural sites on Earth.
- This year's selection – the first since 2022 – includes Qhapaq Ñan, a pre-Hispanic Andean road system.
- Antakya in Turkey and the Noto peninsula in Japan, which were damaged by earthquakes, also made the list.
- The moon was included among the 25 sites because of “mounting risks amidst accelerating lunar activities”



**Forbes 2025 Billionaires list:**  
See the top rankings and the world's richest people



### Forbes Billionaires List 2025- World's Richest People

- World's Billionaires List for 2025, the United States leads with a record 813 billionaires, followed by China with 473 and India, remarkably claiming the third spot with 200 billionaires.
- Elon Musk has begun 2025 at the pinnacle of wealth, [ranking as the world's richest person](#), with a net worth of \$433.9 billion

Rank	Name	Net Worth (USD)	Source of Wealth	Country
1	Elon Musk	\$433.9 B	Tesla, SpaceX	United States
2	Jeff Bezos	\$239.4 B	Amazon	United States
3	Mark Zuckerberg	\$211.8 B	<a href="#">Facebook</a>	United States
4	Larry Ellison	\$204.6 B	Oracle	United States
5	Bernard Arnault & Family	\$181.3 B	LVMH	France
6	Larry Page	\$161.4 B	Google	United States



### Microsoft's Satya Nadella tops HSBC Hurun Global Indians List 2024

- Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella has claimed the top spot in the [inaugural HSBC Hurun Global Indians List 2024](#), which ranks 226 leaders of Indian origin heading the world's most valuable companies.
- Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai and YouTube CEO Neal Mohan secured the second and third spots, respectively.
- The list features 12 women, leading with Reshma Kewalramani of Vertex Pharmaceuticals, followed by Jayshree Ullal of Arista Networks, and Leena Nair, Global CEO of fashion brand —Chanel
- 79 per cent of the list's entrants residing in the US, followed by the UK at 5 per cent and UAE at 4 per cent.
- San Francisco emerged as the city with the most entries, home to 37 leaders

### India's ranking drops to 85th in Henley Passport Index, Singapore tops global list

- India's ranking has dropped by five points to 85 this year in Henley Passport Index released by citizenship advisory firm Henley & Partners
- Singapore has reclaimed its place at the top of the quarterly ranking of the world's most powerful passports (195 out of 227 destinations) worldwide
- Japan is second in the ranking. Henley Passport Index is the only one of its kind based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Authority [IATA].
- The index includes 199 different passports and 227 different travel destinations

- As per the index for 2025, India stands at 85th while the ranking of Pakistan and Bangladesh stood at 103rd (101st in 2024) and 100th (97th in 2024), respectively.
- India's ranking in the Henley Passport Index for 2024 was 80th globally.**

### The most powerful passports for 2025

- Singapore (195 destinations)
- Japan (193)
- France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Finland, South Korea (192)



### WEF's "Blueprint to Close the Women's Health Gap" Report

- Report prepared by World Economic Forum (WEF) and McKinsey Health Institute underscores economic and societal potential of closing women's health gap.

#### Key Findings of Report

- Women live 25% more of their lives in poor health when compared to men
- 9 selected conditions drive 1/3rd of women's health gap.
- It includes conditions that affects lifespan (e.g. Cervical & Breast cancer, Maternal hypertensive disorders, Post-partum haemorrhage etc.) and conditions that affect health span (e.g. Menopause & perimenopause, Premenstrual syndrome (PMS), Migraine etc.)

#### Potential:

- Closing the health gap could generate \$1 trillion in annual global GDP by 2040
- and reclaim 75 million disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) annually.



### India Slips to Third Place in 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.
- The 25<sup>th</sup> annual Edelman Trust Barometer, released before the start of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting,
- India slipped to **3rd position** in the **Edelman Trust Barometer 2025**,

Category	Details
<b>Top 3 Global Rankings</b>	1. China 2. Indonesia 3. India
<b>Trust in Indian Companies</b>	India ranks <b>13th globally</b> for trust in companies headquartered in India. <b>Canada</b> ranks 1st.
<b>Trust by Income Groups in India</b>	<b>High-Income Group:</b> Ranked 4th globally with <b>80% trust</b> . <b>Low-Income Group:</b> Ranked 3rd globally with <b>65% trust</b> . <b>Trust Gap: 15%</b> .
<b>Trust Levels: Developing vs. Developed Nations</b>	<b>Developing Nations:</b> China: 77% Indonesia: 76% India: 75% UAE: 72% <b>Developed Nations:</b> Japan: 37% (lowest) Germany: 41% UK: 43% US: 47% France: 48%

## National News

### 76<sup>th</sup> Republic Day

- This year marks **75 years** since our Constitution came into effect on January 26, 1950 (**adopted** on November 26, 1949).
- **The Indian National Congress**, on **19 December 1929**, passed the historic ‘Purna Swaraj’ – (total independence) resolution – at its Lahore session.
- A public declaration was made on **26 January 1930** – a day which the Congress Party urged Indians to celebrate as ‘Independence Day’.
- **First Republic Day Celebration:** Parade took place at **Irwin Stadium** (now Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium) in New Delhi.
- **President of India unfurls the National Flag** at Republic Day Parade.



### Difference Between Flag Unfurling and Flag Hoisting

- **Hoisting** refers to **raising the flag from a lower position to the top of a pole**. This act symbolises freedom and self-governance, and it is primarily associated with **Independence Day**, observed on **August 15**. On this day, the **Prime Minister hoists the flag at the Red Fort in Delhi**.
- **Unfurling**, on the other hand, involves **unveiling a flag that is already secured at the top of the pole**. The **President of India** performs this act during **Republic Day** celebrations, symbolising a commitment to the principles enshrined in the Constitution.
- **Union Ministry of Defence organises and manages** the Republic Day celebration.
- Since 2022, the Republic Day celebration **starts on 23rd January** and continues till **30th January**.
- **23rd January** is observed in the country as the **Parakram Diwas** (birth anniversary of **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**)
- The **Beating Retreat ceremony** is held on **29th January** at the **Vijay Chowk in New Delhi** – it features a musical performance by the bands of the Indian Armed Forces, Central Armed Police Force (CAPF), and the Delhi Police.
- The Beating Retreat ceremony marks the end of the Republic Day parade and it is **presided over by the President of India**.
- During the Beating Retreat ceremony, the Armed Forces ask the permission of the President to go back to their barracks.
- The **President** is the **Commander in Chief of the Indian Armed Forces**.
- **Martyr's Day**, observed on **30th January** to mark the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, will officially mark the end of the Republic Day festivities.



### Highlights of the 2025 Republic Day Parade

- **Chief Guest** - Indonesian President **Prabowo Subianto** (Chief Guest during the **1st Republic Day** in 1950 was **President Sukarno of Indonesia**)
- 2025 Republic Day parade featured a **352-member marching and band contingent** from Indonesia.
- No Foreign Chief Guests attended Republic Day in 1952 and 1953
- **President Droupadi Murmu arrives in buggy**
  - Between 1984 and 2024, the President's black limousines were used for the movement. But in **2024**, Murmu and French President Emmanuel Macron arrived in a black traditional buggy.
- The **Commander of the 2025 Republic Day Parade** was Lieutenant General Bhavnish Kumar, the General Officer Commanding of the Delhi Area.
- The **first foreign military contingent** to participate in the Republic Day parade was the **French Army band** which participated in the **67<sup>th</sup> Republic Day parade in 2016**.



Indonesian President Sukarno was the first Chief Guest for the Republic Day in 1950. Here, the President and Lady Sukarno are seen with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

- Assistant Commandant Aishwarya Joy M. led the 148-member all-women marching contingent of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
- Deputy Commandant Manohar Singh Kheechee led the Camel contingent of the Border Security Force (BSF).

#### Tableaux and its Theme

- Theme of the Republic Day tableaux is chosen by the Union Ministry of Defence.
- The theme of the 2025 Republic Day tableaux was **Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas**.
- 16 States/Union Territories and 15 Ministries/departments** of central governments displayed their tableaux.
- For the first time, a **Tri-services tableau** was displayed with the theme 'Shashakt aur Surakshit Bharat' (strong and secure India). It showed a Joint Operations Room facilitating networking and communication among the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.
- Pralay missile:** The indigenous short-range quasi-ballistic missile Pralay also made its debut at the Republic Day parade.
- The missile, meant for the Army and the Air Force
- The missile with the capability of carrying a **nuclear warhead** was developed by DRDO
- It is a short-range surface-to-surface missile with a **payload capacity of 500-1,000 kg**. It has a **range of 150 to 500 kms**.
- SANJAY:** The Army's automated battle surveillance system integrates inputs from all ground and aerial battlefield sensors
- First woman officer** to present a **salute to President Captain Dimple Singh Bhati** set a world record by becoming the first woman Army officer to present a salute to President Droupadi Murmu on a **12-foot ladder mounted on a moving motorcycle**.
- The Army's Motorcycle Rider Display Team, known as the "Daredevils," set a world record by forming the tallest human pyramid, standing 20.4 feet tall, on moving motorcycles.
- The Union Ministry of Tourism organises the 'Bharat Parv' festival from 26-31st January 2025 to coincide with the Republic Day celebrations at the Red Fort in New Delhi.
- During the Bharat Parv the various **Tableaux** displayed at the Kartavya Path will be displayed along with cultural performances, Military Bands (Static), etc.
- 5,000 artists from different parts of the country performed over 50 dances titled 'Jayati Jaya Mamah'



## PRALAY: Surface-to-Surface Missile

Pralay is a canisterised tactical, surface-to-surface, and short-range ballistic missile for battlefield use developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation of India

**ENGINE:** Two stage rocket motor with third stage MaRV

**SPEED:** Mach 1 to 1.6

**RANGE:** 150-500 km

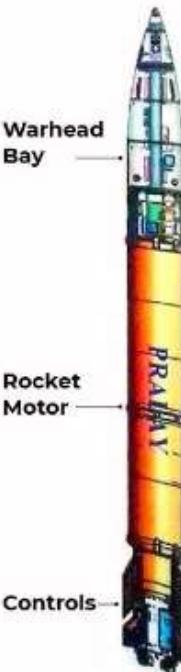
**TRAJECTORY:** low

**GUIDANCE SYSTEM:** Inertial navigation system

**LAUNCH PLATFORM:** 8x8 BEML Tatra transporter erector launcher

**MASS:** 5 tonnes (4.9 long tons; 5.5 short tons)

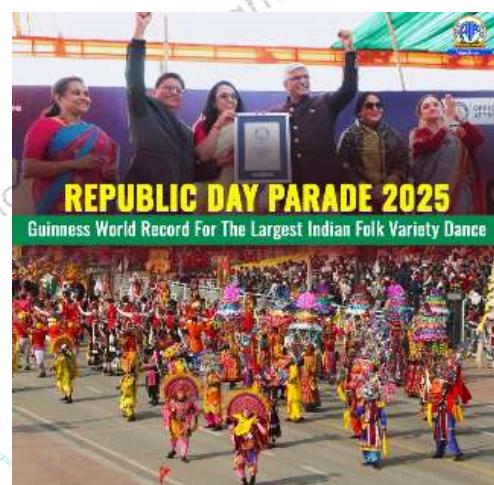
**OPERATIONAL RANGE:** 150–500 km (93–311 mi)



It has the capability to defeat interceptor missiles

Can change its path after covering certain range mid-air and is difficult to be tracked

It is capable of being launched from a mobile launcher and has latest navigation system and integrated avionics



**'Bharatam'** by minofculturegoi & Sangeet Natak Akademi Guinness World Record for 'The Largest Indian Folk Variety Dance'

- The musical composition 'Jayati Jai Mamah Bharatam', written by Subhas Sehgal, composed by Shankar Mahadevan, with voice-over by Harish Bhimani

#### Artists from different states performed different dances –

- Snow Lion and Monpa Mask Dances** from Arunachal Pradesh
- Bihu** from Assam
- Kalbelia** from Rajasthan
- Padayani** from Kerala
- Chhau** from Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha.
- Badhai** folk dance of the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh
- Mentok Flower Dance** – Ladakh
- Sinhtoo dance** - Hatti community from the Giri region of Sirmaur district, Himachal Pradesh
  - The term "Sinhtoo" translates to "lion cub" in the Pahari dialect, which explains the prominence of lion masks in the performance.

#### Tricolour unfurled for first time in 35 years at Tral in J&K

- For the first time in 35 years, the national tricolour was unfurled at Tral in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday (January 26, 2025) as patriotic songs marked the celebration of 76th Republic Day.

#### What is the 'Beating Retreat' Ceremony 2025

- Beating Retreat — a centuries-old military tradition — dates back from the days when troops disengaged from battle at sunset.
- Beating Retreat is a ceremony that **marks the end of Republic Day festivities in India**. It is held **on the evening of January 29**, three days after Republic Day, **at the Vijay Chowk**, New Delhi.
- The ceremony features a **musical performance by the bands of the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, Delhi Police, and the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF)**.
- The ceremony is **presided over by the President of India**, who is the supreme commander of the Armed Forces.
- The beating retreat ceremony in India was **first held in 1950s**, during the **state visit of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip**.
- Since then, the ceremony has become an annual event to pay tribute to the valour and sacrifice of the Indian Armed Forces
- The principal conductor in 2025 was Commander Manoj Sebastian.**



#### I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launches special songs by Akashvani, Doordarshan for Mahakumbh

- The theme song "Mahakumbh Hai" produced by Doordarshan for Mahakumbh 2025
- Sung by** the illustrious **Padma Shri Kailash Kher**
- The **lyrics** by renowned writer **Aalok Shrivastav**
- Vaishnaw also launched a special composition by Akashvani 'Jai Mahakumbh'
- Sung by** Ratan Prasanna
- lyrics penned by Abhinay Shrivastava



#### e-Shram Portal Expands to 22 Scheduled Languages

- Union Minister of Labour & Employment **Mansukh Mandaviya** launched multilingual functionality on the e-Shram portal to **provide seamless access to various government schemes for unorganised workers**.
- The previous version was available only in English, Hindi, Kannada and Marathi.

**About e-Shram Portal:**

- It is a **flagship initiative** by the Government of India to support and empower the unorganized workforce.
- It was **launched** by the Ministry of Labour and Employment on **26th August 2021**.

**Objectives**

- Establish a centralized database of unorganized workers** for effective policy implementation.
- Enhance access to social security schemes** and benefits for workers in sectors such as agriculture, construction, domestic work, and street vending.
- Promote financial inclusion** through direct benefit transfers and digital payments.

**Pranab Former President Pranab Mukherjee to get memorial at Delhi's Rajghat complex**

- Pranab Mukherjee served as **President of India from 2012 to 2017**
- In **2019 he was awarded the Bharat Ratna**, India's highest civilian honour.
- He **passed away** on **31<sup>st</sup> August 2020** at the age of 84.
- Mukherjee was the **author of several books**, including **Beyond Survival: Emerging Dimensions of Indian Economy** (1984) and **Challenges Before the Nation** (1993).

**I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launches Union Government's official calendar**

- Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and MoS for Ministry of Information and Broadcasting L Murugan launched the official calendar of the Government of India at the Rail Bhawan.
- "**Janbhagidari se Jankalyan**" (public welfare through public participation) is **theme** of GoI's New Year calendar
- The calendar begins with **Moto अन्न का वर्धन हो** i.e welfare of all. The **mantra अन्न का वर्धन हो**
- Published in **13 Indian languages**. Designed and produced by the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC)

**Nitin Gadkari announces nationwide cashless treatment scheme for road accident victims**

- Following the **pilot programme** initiated by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in **Chandigarh on March 14, 2024**, the scheme will now be applicable to road accident victims **nationwide by March**.
- to provide **cashless treatment for road accident victims nationwide**, under which they will be entitled to a maximum amount of **₹1.5 lakh per accident per person**, for a **maximum period of 7 days** from date of the accident
- The scheme will be **applicable to all road accidents caused by motor vehicles on any category of road**.
- The **National Health Authority (NHA)** shall be the **implementing agency for the programme**, in coordination with police, hospitals and State Health Agency etc.
- Nitin Gadkari also launched the scheme for pan-India setup of **Driver Training Institutes (DTI)**
- will provide incentives for setting up DTIs and additional incentives for the integrated infrastructure of Automated Testing Stations (ATSS) and DTIs.



- there is a lack of skilled drivers in the country and the government is committed to setting up more driving training centres in the country.

### HM Amit Shah launches BHARATPOL

- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah launched **BHARATPOL portal developed by central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** in New Delhi on 07th January, 2025 in Bharat Mandapam in Delhi.
- BHARATPOL portal will significantly facilitate real-time information sharing for faster access to international police assistance**, including the issuance of Red Notices and other colour-coded INTERPOL notices.

**Union Ministry of Railways will set up its 69<sup>th</sup> railway division at Jammu under the Northern Railway Zone.**

- Currently, the Indian Railways has 68 divisions** and when the notification is issued by the Indian Railways, **Jammu will be the 69<sup>th</sup> division of the Indian Railways.**
- India has the fourth largest rail network** in the world after the United States of America, China, and Russia.
- However, the Indian railways is the world's largest railway system under single management** and the **largest employer** with around 1.25 million employees.

**Currently, there are 17 Railway Zones** and 68 Divisions in the country, and their list is given below.

S.NO.	RAILWAY ZONES	Headquarter	DIVISIONS
1.	Central Railway	Mumbai	Mumbai (CST), Bhusawal, Nagpur, Solapur, Pune.
2.	Eastern Railway	Kolkata	Asansol, Howrah, Malda, Sealdah.
3.	East Central Railway	Hajipur	Danapur, Dhanbad, Mughalsarai, Samastipur, Sonpur.
4.	East Coast Railway	Bhubaneswar	Khurda Road, Sambalpur, Waltair.
5.	Northern Railway	New Delhi	Ambala, Delhi, Lucknow, Moradabad, Ferozpur.
6.	North Central Railway	Allahabad	Prayagraj, Agra, Jhansi.
7.	North Eastern Railway	Gorakhpur	Lucknow, Izzatnagar, Varanasi.
8.	Northeast Frontier Railway	Guwahati	Katihar, Alipurduar, Rangiya, Lumding, Tinsukia.
9.	North Western Railway	Jaipur	Ajmer, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur.
10.	Southern Railway	Chennai	Chennai, Madurai, Palghat, Trichy, Trivandrum, Salem.
11.	South Central Railway	Secunderabad	Guntakal, Guntur, Hyderabad, Nanded, Secunderabad, Vijayawada.
12.	South Eastern Railway	Kolkata	Adra, Chakradharpur, Kharagpur, Ranchi.
13.	South East Central Railway	Bilaspur	Bilaspur, Nagpur, Raipur
14.	South Western Railway	Hubli	Bangalore, Hubli, Mysore
15.	Western Railway	Mumbai	Mumbai (Central), Vadodara, Ratlam, Ahmedabad, Rajkot and Bhavnagar.
16.	West Central Railway	Jabalpur	Bhopal, Jabalpur, Kota.
17.	Metro Railway	Kolkata	Not applicable.

**PM Modi to lay the foundation stone for South Coastal Railway (S Co R) Zonal Headquarters in Visakhapatnam on 8 January.**

- Currently, there are 17 Railway Zones and 68 Divisions in India

### COLOUR-CODED INTERPOL NOTICES AND WHAT THEY SIGNIFY

There are seven types of notices that help in tracing miscreants hiding in foreign countries or in announcing alerts on suspicious objects

**Red** | For tracing miscreants against whom a chargesheet has been filed in court



hidden in parcels, disguised weapons and other hazardous substances

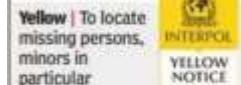
**Blue** | This helps countries share alerts on suspects and respond to requests on information about wanted persons



**Green** | To alert foreign countries about repeat offenders involved in sex-related crimes and cybercrimes



**Purple** | This is meant to track, arrest and deport members of international crime syndicates, involved in piracy and drug smuggling



**Orange** | To warn against any imminent threat from a person, object, material



**Black** | To identify unidentified dead bodies believed to be of foreign nationals



- This will be the 18th zone (Konkan Railway is an administrative zone but is not considered as an operational zone of the Indian railways)

### Marathi language officially granted classical status

- Although the Union cabinet accorded classical language status to Marathi, alongside Assamese, Bengali, Pali, and Prakrit on October 3 last year, an official notification had not been issued in this regard
- The total number of recognised classical languages in India - 11
- The government of India created a separate category called 'Classical Languages' on October 12, 2004.



Language	Year of notification
Tamil	2004
Sanskrit	2005
Telugu	2008
Kannada	2008
Malayalam	2013
Odia	2014

- According to the **Linguistic Experts Committee**, the **following revised benchmarks** must be met for a language to be considered "classical":
  - High antiquity** of (its) is early texts/recording history over a period of **1500- 2000 years**.
  - A body of ancient literature/texts**, which is considered a heritage by generations of speakers.
  - Knowledge texts**, especially prose texts in addition to poetry, **epigraphical and inscriptional evidence**.
  - The Classical Languages and literature could be distinct from its current form** or could be discontinuous with later forms of its offshoots.
  - Once a language is designated as classical, the Ministry of Education provides various benefits to promote it

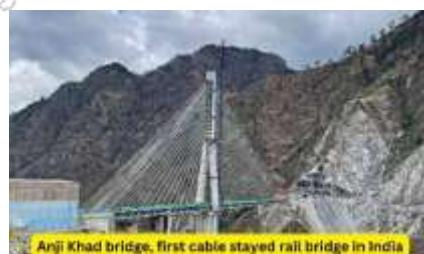
### Railways unveils Vande Bharat, specially designed for winters in J&K, for Katra-Srinagar route

- This semi-high-speed train will operate between Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra (SVDK) and Srinagar railway station.
- The Northern Railway (NR) zone will be responsible for its maintenance and operation.
- It has **advance heating systems** which prevent freezing of water tank and bio-toilet tanks, provide warm air for vacuum system as well as laboratories and ensures air-brake system functions optimally for smooth operations even in sub-zero temperatures.
- The Katra-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express will be the **first semi-high-speed train for the Kashmir Valley** and the **third for Jammu**.
- Developed by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai, the **Katra-Srinagar-Katra Vande Bharat Express** will cover over 100 kilometers in less than 2.5 hours.



### Anji Railways completes trial run on J&K's first cable-stayed Anji Khad bridge

- Indian Railways newly completed **Anji Khad Bridge**, the country's first **cable-stayed rail bridge**.
- Located in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir
- This monumental structure is part of the ambitious **Udampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) Project**, designed to enhance regional connectivity and economic growth.
- total length of 725.5 meters, towering 331 meters above the riverbed**.



- This bridge ranks as India's second-highest railway bridge after the Chenab Bridge, which holds the world record at 359 metres above the riverbed.
- The Anji Khad Bridge crosses a deep valley, bridging the gap between Katra and Reasi, and will significantly improve connectivity between the Jammu region and the Kashmir Valley.
- The design and construction supervision of the bridge were handled by Italian company ITALFERR,
- The Anji Khad Bridge's design features 96 cables
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to flag off the Vande Bharat train in January 2025, providing a faster link for passengers traveling between Kashmir and Delhi.

### 10 Years of UJALA Scheme & Street Lighting National Programme

- UJALA Scheme launched in January 2015, to promote energy efficiency by replacing traditional lighting systems (incandescent lamps (ICLs) and Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs)) with energy-saving LED bulbs.
  - The scheme is a joint project between the Government of India's Public Sector Undertakings, the Union Ministry of Power's Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), and DISCOMs (Distribution Companies).
- Objective:** The UJALA Scheme aims to save 85 lakh kWh of electricity and reduce 15,000 tonnes of Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) by replacing 77 crore traditional bulbs and 3.5 crore street lights with LEDs.
- Over the past decade, more than 36 crore LED bulbs have been distributed across the country

#### Key Features of UJALA:

- Subsidized LED Bulbs:** The cost of LED bulbs distributed under UJALA was reduced to Rs 70 per LED bulb, compared to Rs 450 in 2014.
- Distribution Mechanism:** The bulbs are distributed via a demand aggregation-price crash model (Bulk buying to reduce prices).

### Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal launches National Turmeric Board

- Shri Palle Ganga Reddy as its first Chairperson.
- The headquarters of the Board has been set up at Nizamabad, Telangana
- turmeric is also known as 'Golden Spice'.
- the newly formed Board will pay special attention to the welfare of the turmeric farmers spread across 20 states, including Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya and others
- The Board will focus on key areas such as research and development, value addition to turmeric products, and promoting awareness of the spice's medicinal and essential properties. It will also work on improving turmeric yield, enhancing logistics and supply chains, and exploring new international markets for turmeric.
- India is the largest producer, consumer and exporter of turmeric in the world.
- India is responsible for over 70% of the world's turmeric production, with 30 varieties of turmeric being grown in the country.



- India has more than 62% share of world trade.
- Recently, a high-yielding curcuminoid-rich variety of turmeric named **CIM-Pitamber** and the NBRI's (National Botanical Research Institute) Keshari variety have been introduced in Nabarangpur (One of the Aspirational Districts) of Odisha.
- **CIM-Pitamber:** It is a high-yielding curcuminoid-rich variety of turmeric developed by [Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants \(CIMAP\)](#).
- It can yield 50% more than the existing varieties of turmeric and help farmers.
- It is also tolerant to the leaf blotch disease of turmeric.
- **Keshari variety:**
  - It is tolerant to low temperature and frost during winter. It has a longer growth period as compared to other varieties
  - In comparison to other existing varieties, there is less problem of yellowing and falling of leaves in this variety during winter, which leads to extending the life period of this variety.
  - The total curcuminoid content is around 1.16 %, which is also more than other existing cultivated varieties of north India.

#### **EmpowHER Biz – Empowering Women Entrepreneurs**

The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) of NITI Aayog, launched EmpowHER Biz – Sapno Ki Udaan in partnership with New Shop, India's convenience retail chain under its Award to Reward (ATR) program.

- It will offer mentorship and comprehensive training, covering retail management, digital tools, financial literacy and business development to aspiring women entrepreneurs.
- Through this collaboration with New Shop, WEP aims to create a robust retail ecosystem that empowers women entrepreneurs and drives sustainable growth in the sector.
- Under the initiative, fifty participants aged 18–35, will be selected
- Top 20 of these participants will receive a 100% waiver on New Shop franchise fees, empowering them to own and operate their retail businesses with significantly reduced barriers to entry.
- The program is being launched for women from Delhi NCR, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat.

#### **INROAD Project in NE to Boost Natural Rubber Quality**

- The INROAD (Indian Natural Rubber Operations for Assisted Development) project in the North East has received financial support of ₹100 crore for improving the quality of natural rubber.
- INROAD is a first-of-its-kind project in the world in which the tyre industry is contributing directly to the development of rubber plantations.
- It is financially supported by four members of ATMA (Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association), including Apollo, Ceat, JK, and MRF, and implemented by the Rubber Board of India
- With the completion of its fourth planting year, the initiative now emphasizes empowering growers through technical training and infrastructure development.
- In the first four years of the project, 1,25,272 hectares have been covered under new Natural Rubber plantations across 94 districts in the North-East and parts of West Bengal.



#### **India Joins UN Panel to Shape Global Big Data Standards for Official Statistics**

- India has joined the United Nations Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD).
- UN-CEBD was established to explore the opportunities and challenges of big data as well as its potential for monitoring and reporting on sustainable development goals.

### India to host 28<sup>th</sup> CSPOC in 2026

- 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Parliaments of Commonwealth Countries (CSPOC) scheduled to be held in India in 2026
- The event will focus on the use of artificial intelligence and social media in parliamentary processes.

### New Appointment Process for Election Commissioners

- Current CEC Rajiv Kumar demits office on February 18.
- The Election Commission comprises the CEC and two election commissioners — Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu at present.
- For the first time, as per the Chief Election Commissioner And Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service And Term of Office) Act, 2023 Sections

6 and 7, the Ministry of Law will set up a Search Committee chaired by the Law Minister to prepare a panel of five names to be proposed to the Selection Committee.

- The Selection Committee, comprising the Prime Minister, a Cabinet minister and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, can select from this panel or consider “any other person” from outside.
- TRADITIONALLY, the successor to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) has been the next senior most Election Commissioner.
- In March 2023, the Supreme Court ruled that the appointment of the CEC and ECs would be done by the President on the advice of a committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Justice of India.
- This arrangement was to prevail until the Parliament enacted a law for the appointments.
- The Union government eventually brought a law in December 2023, which made it mandatory to appoint the CEC and ECs by way of a shortlist panel and a selection committee.
- However, the Chief Justice of India was dropped as a member of the Selection Committee.
- The two ECs Kumar and Sandhu have been appointed as per this new provision.
- The Supreme Court said it would consider in February petitions challenging the Act, particularly the exclusion of the CJI.



### Composition:

- Structure: Initially, ECI had only one member, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). In 1989, due to the reduction of the voting age from 21 to 18, two additional Election Commissioners were appointed, making it a three-member body.
- Appointments: The President of India appoints the Chief Election Commissioner and the two Election Commissioners. They serve for a term not exceeding six years or until the age of 65, whichever is earlier.

**Removal process:** The Chief Election Commissioner can only be removed from office like that of a Supreme Court judge, requiring a special majority in both Houses of Parliament.

### Constitutional provisions:

- Article 324 empowers the ECI to supervise, direct, and control the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of all elections to Parliament and state legislatures.
- Article 325 ensures no one is excluded from the electoral rolls based on religion, race, caste, or sex.
- Article 326 establishes adult suffrage (voting rights for all citizens aged 18 and above) as the basis for elections.
- Article 327 allows Parliament to make laws regarding elections to Parliament and state legislatures.
- Article 328 empowers state legislatures to make provisions related to elections within the state.
- Article 329 prohibits judicial interference in electoral matters.



### 150<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day of India Meteorological Department

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi participated in celebrations of 150th Foundation Day of **India Meteorological Department** on at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- **Established in 1875**, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) is **completing 150 years of service on 15th January 2025**
- Prime Minister launched '**Mission Mausam**' with the goal of **making our country a 'Weather-ready and Climate-smart' nation**.
- The Mission aims to achieve this by **developing cutting-edge weather surveillance technologies and systems**, implementing high-resolution atmospheric observations, next-generation radars and satellites, and high-performance computers.
- It will also focus on improving the **understanding of weather and climate processes**, provide air quality data that will help **strategize weather management** and intervention in the long run.
- **Budget - Rs 2,000 crore for the first two years of its implementation**.
- **Mission Masum** will be spearheaded by three institutions funded by the Ministry of Earth Sciences — the IMD, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, and the National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting, Noida.
- India is establishing a first-of-its-kind cloud chamber at the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune**.
- Prime Minister also released the **IMD Vision-2047 document** for weather resilience and climate change adaptation.
- It includes plans for weather forecasting, weather management, and climate change mitigation.
- A similar boost to **monsoon prediction took place in 2012**, with the launch of **Mission Monsoon**. It had targeted the improvement of India's long-range forecasts.

#### About India Meteorological Department (IMD):

- IMD was established in 1875. It is the **National Meteorological Service** of the country and the principal government agency in all matters relating to meteorology and allied subjects.
- There are **6 Regional Meteorological Centres**, each under a Deputy Director General with headquarters at Mumbai, Chennai, New Delhi, Calcutta, Nagpur and Guwahati.
- Its **headquarter is in New Delhi**.
- At present IMD is **under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**.

#### **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)**

- **NEWS:** The **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)** has approved 56 new Watershed Development Projects across 10 high-performing states, with a budget of Rs. 700 crore
- PMKSY was launched in 2015 to improve farm productivity and ensure better utilization of the resources in the country.
- It is a **Centrally Sponsored**

#### KRISHI SINCHAYEE YOJANA **COMPONENTS OF SCHEME**

##### Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP):

It was launched in 1996 with the aim of accelerating the **implementation of irrigation projects** that exceed the resource capabilities of states.



#### **PRADHAN MANTRI KRISHI SINCHAYEE YOJANA**

PMKSY was **launched in 2015** with the goal of enhancing access to water for farming, expanding the cultivable area under assured irrigation, improving water use efficiency, and **promoting sustainable water conservation practices**.

It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (Core Scheme)**, where Centre- States share will be 75:25.

In the case of the north-eastern region and hilly states, **the share will be 90:10**.

**Objectives:**

- Convergence of **investment in irrigation** at the field level
- **Expand cultivable area under irrigation**
- Improve On-farm water use efficiency to **reduce the wastage of water**
- It consists of two major components namely,
  - Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (**AIBP**)
  - **Har Khet Ko Pani (HKKP)**
- In addition, PMKSY also consists of two components
  - **Per Drop More Crop (PDMC)** component is being implemented by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
  - **The Watershed Development component (WDC)** is being implemented by the Department of Land Resources

**Watershed Development:**

It is the effective management of **runoff water and improved soil & moisture conservation activities** such as ridge area treatment, drainage line 5 treatment, rain water harvesting, in - situ moisture conservation and other allied activities on watershed basis.

**Har Khet ko Pani (HKKP):**

It aims to create **new water sources through Minor Irrigation**. Repair, restoration and renovation of water bodies, strengthening carrying capacity of traditional water sources, constructing **rain water harvesting structures**.

**HM Amit Shah to launch fast track immigration system at 7 airports**

- A fast-track immigration process for **pre-verified Indian nationals and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders** will be rolled
- Will inaugurate the '**Fast Track Immigration Trusted Traveller Program (FTI-TTP)**' at Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Cochin and Ahmedabad airports
- The Home Minister had launched the **FTI-TTP** on June 22, 2024, from Terminal-3 of Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI) in New Delhi.
- FTI-TTP will eventually be implemented at **21 major airports across the country**.
- The FTI-TTP is implemented through an online portal and Bureau of Immigration will be the nodal agency

**Piyush Goyal sets a target of 10000 GI tags by 2030**

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Mr. Piyush Goyal, set a target of 10,000 Geographical Indication (GI) Tags by 2030 at the GI Samagam in New Delhi, organised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and India Today Group.
- This goal will be achieved through a coordinated government effort, with a committee to be formed to oversee the process.
- Over the last 10 years, the number of authorised users for GI tags has grown from 365 to 29,000, and the number of patents granted has risen from 6,000 to 100,000.

**GOYAL SETS 10,000 GI TAGS TARGET BY 2030**

- Once a product gets this tag, any person or company cannot sell a similar item under that name. This tag is valid for a period of 10 years following which it can be renewed.
- Under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, GI is covered as an element of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).
- They have also been covered under the WTO's Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement.
- India's Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act 1999, has come into force with effect from September 15, 2003.

### Republic Day parade (1950-2024)

- 'Swarnim Bharat – Virasat aur Vikas' (Golden India: Heritage and Progress) is the theme for the 2025 Republic Day military parade.
- On January 26, 2025, India will commemorate its 76<sup>th</sup> Republic Day — marking the day India's Constitution came officially into force.
- The first Republic Day celebrations were kicked off with the oath ceremony of India's first President Dr. Rajendra Prasad, administered by the Chief Justice of India
- The President's flag replaced the Governor-General's flag on the top of Government House and a 31-gun salute was fired to mark the assumption of office by the President on January 28, 1950.
- The 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day parade in 2024 saw participation of the first all-women Tri-Service contingent, all-women CAPF contingent and women pilots.
- In 2018, members of the BSF's women motorcycle team 'Seema Bhawani' replaced their male counterparts – a first.
- Throughout the decade (1971-1980), a new tradition was set — the Prime Minister paying homage to the 'unknown soldier' at the Amar Jawan Jyoti memorial, a tribute to the fallen soldiers in the Bangladesh Liberation War, 1971.
- In 1983, Doordarshan — India's national broadcaster — telecast the Republic Day parade live, for the first time in colour
- The NWM, which lies in at the 'C' Hexagon near the India Gate, was built in memory of over 26,000 Indian soldiers who laid down their lives in post-Independence and inaugurated on February 2019.
- In 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi changed the pre-parade tradition by choosing to pay tribute to fallen warriors at the eternal flame in National War Memorial (NWM) instead of the Amar Jawan Jyoti at the India Gate.
- The names of all Indian martyrs from all the wars, including 1971 and wars before and after it, are housed at the NWM.
- made another dramatic change by 'merging' the Amar Jawan Jyoti with the NWM flame, days ahead of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Republic Day
- Similarly, Rajpath was renamed as Kartavya Path on September 8, 2022, while a statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was unveiled under the canopy at India Gate that during British rule had a statue of King George V.
- The Republic Day Celebrations comes to a close with the 'Beating Retreat Ceremony', which is held every year on the 29th January at Vijay Chowk.
- 'Bharat Parv' will be organised at the Red Fort, Delhi from January 26-31, 2025 by the Ministry of Tourism. It will showcase Republic Day Tableaux, performances by the Military Bands (Static), cultural performances, Food Courts serving pan India cuisines and Crafts Bazaar.
- PM's NCC rally, with the theme of 'Yuva Shakti-Viksit Bharat' is scheduled to be organised at Cariappa Parade Ground, Delhi Cantt. on January 27, 2025.
- The third edition of Project Veer Gatha was organized as a part of Republic Day Celebrations-2025 to inspire and spread awareness among children about the gallant deeds and sacrifices of the Armed Forces.
- The event was organised by Ministry of Defence in collaboration with Ministry of Education during 16 September to 31 October, 2024.

## Govt celebrates 10th anniversary of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme

- The government will organise weeks-long celebrations to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative, the Union women and child development ministry
- the celebrations will continue till March 8, observed as International Women's Day.
- Launched on January 22, 2015, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Haryana's Panipat, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative was created to address the critical issues of gender imbalance and declining child sex ratio.
- The aim to address sex selective abortion and the declining child sex ratio which was at 918 girls for every 1,000 boys in 2011.
- The national sex ratio at birth improved from 918 in 2014-15 to 930 in 2023-24, and the gross enrolment ratio of girls at the secondary level rose from 75.51 per cent to 78 per cent during the same period.
- Initiatives such as the Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav returned more than a lakh out-of-school girls to education while programmes like the Yashaswini Bike Expedition showcased the empowerment of women in action.
- The scheme has also utilised creative campaigns, including collaborations with television shows, to address societal issues such as girl child abandonment and to spread awareness about the value of daughters.



## President Murmu's invite for this year's Republic Day reception set to honour crafts from South

- To mark 75 years of the Republic of India, President has introduced a unique Republic Day "At Home" reception.
- A stiff white card embossed with the Lion Capital of Ashoka is the usual format of the invitation card sent out for the customary "At home" reception held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Republic and Independence Day.
- invitees for the "At home" will receive a specially curated box of craft work from the five southern States — Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh — along with the card.
- The craft products in the invitation box are all made in the southern States, have GI (geographical indicator) tags, and are drawn from the "One District One Product" scheme.
- The elements of the invitation include a box made of bamboo weave with Kalamkari paintings on it done by Nimmalakunta artisans, an Ikat-Pochampalli cover that can be used even after the box has been dismantled, a fridge magnet depicting Mysore's Ganjifa art, usually seen in the famous Ganjifa playing cards, and a handmade pouch of Kanjeevaram silk from Tamil Nadu.
- "Etikopakka dolls from Andhra Pradesh, a male and female doll, are included, along with a bookmark made of screwpine leaves woven by artistes from Kerala,"
- The special invitees at the Rashtrapati Bhavan reception will include a contingent of 'drone didis', women achievers, agriculturists engaged in natural farming, and achievers who are also people with disabilities.

**Kalamkari paintings :** It is a highly popular form of hand-painted or block-printed cotton textile and paintings, practised in Andhra Pradesh.

- Kalamkari came up as a textile tradition during the reign of Qutb Shahis at Golconda in the 16-17th century.

## Art in a box

President Droupadi Murmu's guests are set to receive a gift box containing the best of south India's GI-tagged crafts. **Here are some products featured in the hamper:**

 <b>Pochampally Ikat on a pencil pouch:</b> This Telangana staple is known for its distinct geometric patterns and bold colours.	 <b>Etikoppaka toys:</b> The soft wood and lacquer toys from the eponymous village in Andhra Pradesh are valued for the use of natural dyes and themes depicting everyday life.	 <b>Kalamkari on bamboo:</b> These goodies will arrive in a bamboo box decorated with Kalamkari motifs, pen-drawn with natural dyes.
 <b>Kanchipuram silk as a pouch:</b> The handloom silk, world renown for its richness and elegance, makes its way from Tamil Nadu.		



- The art form originated in Tilang, the region between what is present-day Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- There are two distinct styles of Kalamkari - **Srikalahasti and the Pedana style Kalamkari**
- received the Geographical Indications tag.

**Ikat-Pochampalli :** Ikat originates from the Indonesian/Malay word '**mengikat**', meaning to bind.

- It features a **resist dyeing process** where threads are dyed before weaving.
- The fabrics exhibit unique 'blurred' effects due to slight misalignments of threads.
- Ancient references to ikat include the Buddhist '**Lalitavistara Sutra**' and the **Ajanta caves murals**.
- These references mention '**Vichitra Patolaka**', associated with the double ikat or patola of Gujarat.



#### Mysore's Ganjifa art :

- GI Tag State:** Karnataka.
- Ganjifa, an ancient Indian card game, was historically believed to have been brought to India and popularised during the Moghul period. The Persian word '**Ganjifeh**' means playing cards,
- In the 19th Century the Maharaja of Mysore, Mummuvi Krishnaraja Wadiyar III (1794-1868) had a niche created for the game and art of Ganjifa
- Kouthuka Nidhi, the last Chapter of Sritatvanidhi, the monumental work of the Maharaja, has details of the card game of Mysore, known as the Mysore Chada Ganjifa. I



**Etikopakka dolls:** These are **traditional toys** made by **artisans of Etikoppaka village** located on the banks of Varaha River in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh.

- These toys are **made out of wood** and are **coloured with natural dyes** derived from seeds, lacquer, bark, roots and leaves.
- The artisans **mainly use the wood from trees known as 'ankudu'** (*Wrightia Tinctoria*) that is **soft** in nature.
- These toys have **no sharp edges**. They are **rounded on all sides**.
- Etikoppaka toys received Geographical Indication (GI) tag IN 2017



**Screwpine leaves :** oven from natural screwpine leaves, this sustainable bookmark exemplifies Kerala's commitment to eco-friendly crafts. It carries a GI tag, highlighting its cultural and environmental significance.



#### Kanjeevaram silk : symbolizing the elegance of Kanjeevaram weaving.

- GI Tag State:** Tamil Nadu.
- The Kanchipuram silk sari is a type of silk sari made in the Kanchipuram region in Tamil Nadu, India.
- Traditionally, the Kanjeevaram is a sari that is usually handwoven in mulberry silk and has pure gold or silver zari that renders it a festive quality.
- Tracing its long and rich history from the Chola Dynasty, Kanchipuram sarees today are considered as one of the oldest and rich legacies of the Indian textile industry.



### PM Modi to inaugurate Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025

- The Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, organized by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with EEPCL India, is set to take place from January 17–22, 2025.
- across three key venues in Delhi NCR: Bharat Mandapam (New Delhi), Yashobhoomi (Dwarka), and the India Expo Centre & Mart (Greater Noida).
- This year's expo aims to surpass the success of its 2024 edition, targeting over 5,000 global buyers and expanding to cover a massive 200,000 square meters of exhibition space.



### NIXI announces Internet Governance Internship & Capacity Building Scheme

- The National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) announced the launch of its Internet Governance Internship and Capacity Building Scheme.
- This program aims to build awareness and develop expertise in internet governance (IG) among Indian citizens.
- It will nurture a pool of domestic talent who can deeply engage with emerging internet governance issues and contribute to their resolution.
- The program offers a bi-annual internship with two parallel tracks: a six-month program and a three-month program.
- Each intern will be mentored by subject matter expert from international organizations like ICANN APNIC or APTLD, members from Special Interest Group, high ranked retired government official and faculty advisors from recognized institutions/universities.
- A fixed stipend of Rs. 20,000/- per month will be provided to interns along with support to conduct mandatory outreach programs.



#### About NIXI:

- Set up on 19th June 2003, the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) is a not-for-profit (Section 8) company under the aegis of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India.
- It is tasked with increasing internet penetration and adoption in India by facilitating various infrastructure aspects to enable the internet ecosystem to be managed and used by the masses.
- The four services under NIXI include: Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) for building Internet Exchange Points, .IN Registry for building the .in domain digital identity, IRINN for IPv4 and IPv6 addresses adoption.

### Cabinet Approves ₹11,440 Cr Revival Package for Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited

- The Union Cabinet has approved a Rs 11,440 crore package to bail out debt-laden public-sector undertaking (PSU) Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), or Vizag Steel,
- The infusion includes Rs 10,300 crore as equity capital into RINL and Conversion of Rs 11,440 crore working capital loan as 7 per cent non-cumulative preference share capital redeemable after 10 years to keep it as a going concern,
- RINL operates the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), the only offshore steel plant under the government sector in Andhra Pradesh.
- It has an installed capacity of 7.3 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) of liquid steel.



### Nitin Gadkari announces increase in reward for those helping accident victims

- Union Minister of Road, Transport, & Highways, Nitin Gadkari, has announced an increase in the reward for those who help out victims in a road accident.
- As per recent developments, the government will increase the reward for "Good Samaritans" helping accident victims by five times to Rs 25,000. Currently the reward for good samaritans is only Rs 5,000.



- The revision will be applicable on national and state highways, as well as district, city, and Gram Panchayat roads.
- First launched in October 2021, the aim of this scheme was to reward the person who saved the life of a victim of a fatal accident by administering immediate assistance and rushing to hospital/trauma care centre within the Golden Hour (first hour) of the accident to provide medical treatment.
- The government would now cover hospital expenses of up to Rs 1.5 lakh for the first seven days for the people injured in accidents.

### Who is a “Good Samaritan”?

- “Good Samaritan is a person who, in good faith, without expectation of payment or reward and without any duty of care or special relationship, voluntarily comes forward to administer immediate assistance or emergency care to a person injured in an accident, or crash, or emergency medical condition, or emergency situation.”

### 9th Swachh Survekshan Toolkit & Super Swachh League Launched

- The Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Manohar Lal Khattar launched the toolkit for 9th edition of Swachh Survekshan (SS), the world's largest urban cleanliness survey, in its new avatar—simpler, sharper, systematic and all-inclusive.
- Initially launched by MoHUA in 2016, Swachh Survekshan drives urban sanitation improvement through citizen participation and third-party validation.
- For the year 2024, a special category - ***Super Swachh League*** has been introduced creating a separate league of cities excelling in cleanliness.
- The cities who have been in top 3 in at least 2 years in the last 3 years (2021-2023) have made the cut.
- There are 12 cities in the Super Swachh League.
- Moving ahead, top 3 ranking cities in each population category will move into the league for the subsequent years.
- ULBs in this league will be assessed on additional aspirational indicators and must maintain a score of 85% or higher to retain their position.



### India Develops World's Most Powerful Hydrogen Train Engine

- It will undergo its **first trial run** on the **Jind-Sonipat route** in Haryana.
- The engine has been made by **Indian Railways** using **indigenous technology**, having a capacity of **1,200 horsepower**.
- Only 4 countries (**Germany, France, Sweden, and China**) in the world have **hydrogen-powered trains**, producing between 500 to 600 horsepower.



### Hydrogen as a Clean Fuel

- Hydrogen is a clean & versatile energy source with potential to decarbonize transportation, industry, & power generation.

### Types

- Blue Hydrogen:** Produced from **natural gas with a process of steam methane reforming**, where natural gas is mixed with very hot steam and a catalyst. **Carbon dioxide is also produced as a by-product**.
- Grey Hydrogen:** Produced from natural gas via steam methane reforming (SMR). It emits **significant carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)**.
- Green Hydrogen:** Produced through **water electrolysis** powered by renewable energy sources (e.g., wind, solar) with **no harmful by-products**.
- Pink hydrogen:** Generated through **electrolysis powered by nuclear energy**.

### 3rd National Mines Ministers' Conference begins in Odisha

- The Ministry of Mines, in collaboration with the Government of Odisha, is hosting the 3rd National Mines Ministers' Conference on January 20-21, 2025, at Konark.
- The two-day event aligns with the vision of "Vikasit Bharat 2047"



#### Key Highlights of the Conference

- Release of the Report on States' Best Practices in Mining:** Showcasing innovative governance models implemented by states, the report aims to improve efficiency and transparency in mining practices.
- Launch of the Mining Tenement System (MTS) Module:** A landmark step towards digital governance, this module will streamline mining operations and enhance accountability.
- Awards to Best-Performing States:** States excelling in mineral auctions and mining reforms will be honoured for their outstanding contributions.
- Launch of the 5th Tranche of Critical Mineral Blocks:** The launch aims to accelerate exploration and attract private sector investment in critical minerals, reducing import dependency.

#### **Ad-hoc judges can be appointed to deal with criminal cases in HCs: Supreme Court**

- The Supreme Court suggested the appointment of ad-hoc judges in high courts to deal with the huge pendency of criminal appeals.
- A special bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices B.R. Gavai and Surya Kant referred to the data on pendency of criminal cases in several high courts and said in Allahabad High Court alone there were 63,000 criminal appeals pending.
- in the Jharkhand High court the figure stood at 13,000, and similarly 20,000, 21,000, 8,000 and 21,000 criminal cases were pending in high courts at Karnataka, Patna, Rajasthan and the Punjab and Haryana respectively.
- The CJI said no ad-hoc judge should be appointed in a high court if it was functioning with 80% sanctioned strength of judges.
- On April 20, 2021, the apex court in a crucial verdict directed retired high court judges to be appointed as ad-hoc ones for a period of two to three years to clear the backlog of cases.
- The 2019 case titled as *Lok Prahar v. Union of India* is being heard by the bench in which the judgement was delivered in 2021.
- The rarely used Article 224A of the Constitution deals with the appointment of ad-hoc judges in high courts and says "The Chief Justice of a High Court for any State may at any time, with the previous consent of the President, request any person who has held the office of a Judge of that Court or of any other High Court to sit and act as a Judge of the High Court for that State".

#### **Cabinet raises raw jute MSP by 6% to ₹5,650 per quintal**

- The Union Cabinet approved a minimum support price of ₹5,650 per quintal for raw jute for marketing season 2025-26, an increase of 6% or ₹315 over the previous MSP.
- The new MSP ensures return of 66.8% over all-India weighted average cost of production and will benefit growers.
- The government has increased MSP of raw jute from ₹2,400 per quintal in 2014-15 to ₹5,650 per quintal for 2025-26 marketing season, an increase of 2.35 times.
- About MSP:** MSP is a form of market intervention (a policy decision not enforceable by law) by the Government of India to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices during bumper production years.
- Announced by:** These are announced by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (Chaired by the PM of India) on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops.
- In 1964, **Lal Bahadur Shastri** formed the Food Grain Price Committee (under LK Jha), to push for a MSP regime.
- The first MSP announcement** was made in 1967 by the then Agriculture Minister Jagjivan Ram.



**Crops covered:**

- Government announces MSPs for **22** mandated crops and fair and remunerative price (FRP) for **sugarcane** (total 23).
- The mandated crops are **14** crops of the **kharif** season, **6 rabi crops** (Wheat, Barley, Gram, Masur [Lentil], Rapeseed & Mustard, Safflower) and two other commercial crops.

**Cabinet approves continuation of National Health Mission for another five years**

- The Union Cabinet approved continuation of the National Health Mission for another five years.
- The National Rural Health Mission was launched in 2005 particularly in rural areas, later its scope was expanded to urban areas in 2013.
- The main programmatic components include Health System Strengthening in rural and urban areas for - Reproductive-Maternal- Neonatal-Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A), and Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases.
- The NHM envisages achievement of universal access to equitable, affordable & quality health care services that are accountable and responsive to people's needs.

**Major Initiatives Supported Under NHM:**

- Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK).
- Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK).
- Implementation of Free Drugs and Free Diagnostics Service Initiatives.
- PM National Dialysis Programme.
- Implementation of National Quality Assurance Framework in all public health facilities.
- Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) & Tele-consultation services are also being implemented to improve access to healthcare particularly in rural areas.
- Ayushman Bharat.
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).

**PM Modi inaugurates 'Utkarsh Odisha, Make-in-Odisha Conclave 2025' in Bhubaneswar**

- The Utkarsh Odisha - Make in Odisha Conclave 2025 in Bhubaneswar, the **flagship Global Investment Summit**, being **hosted by the Government of Odisha**,
- from **28th to 29th January**
- aims to position the state as the **anchor of the Purvodaya vision** as well as a leading **investment destination and industrial hub in India**.
- CM – Mohan Charan Manjhi



PM MODI TO INAUGURATE UTKARSH ODISHA CONCLAVE IN BHUBANESWAR

**India, China agree on Kailash Mansarovar Yatra resumption, direct flights, river data sharing**

- PM Narendra Modi had met with Mr. Xi Jinping, President of China, on the sidelines of the **16th BRICS Summit at Kazan, Russia**
- **Three months after** negotiating an **end to the military stand-off** at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), India and China **agreed** to concrete measures to **resume direct flights, visas, a number of exchanges, and the Mansarovar Yatra for pilgrims this summer**
- The decisions were announced after **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri held wide-ranging talks with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong in Beijing**.
- They also agreed to **resume the dialogue on trans-border rivers and sharing of hydrological data**, that China has withheld for years.



**NEW CHAPTER IN INDIA-CHINA TIES?  
KAILASH PILGRIMAGE BACK ON TRACK**

**About Kailash Mansarovar :**

- It is located in Tibet. It is revered as one of the holiest sites in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Bon religion.
- Mount Kailash is considered the earthly representation of the celestial Mount Meru, and is believed to be the dwelling place of Lord Shiva and his wife Parvati.
- Situated at an altitude of **6,638 meters** (21,778 feet), Mount Kailash is surrounded by the sacred **Mansarovar Lake**, located at 4,590 meters (15,060 feet).
- **Kora around Mount Kailash:** The circumambulation of Mount Kailash, also known as 'Kora'

## MAKING THE PILGRIMAGE EASIER FOR YATRIS A NEW ROAD TO KAILASH

**KAILASH MANSAROVAR ROUTE**

Almora, Dania, Pithoragarh, Dharchula, Tawaghat, Narayan Ashram, Lipu Pass (India-Tibet border)-Parkha Plains-Tarchen

**Lipulekh Pass**

- high-altitude mountain pass located in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, near the trijunction of India, Nepal, and China.
- It links the Indian state of Uttarakhand with the Tibet region of China.
- It is the first Indian border post opened for trade with China in 1992.
- Old Yatra route – via Nathula in Sikkim
- A new route for Kailash Mansarovar yatra via Lipulekh Pass (China border).

**Centre approves National Critical Mineral Mission essential for promoting green technologies**

- Union Cabinet, chaired by PM Narendra Modi, has approved the launch of a ₹16,300-crore National Critical Mineral Mission, envisaging a total outlay of ₹34,300 crore spread over 7 years.
- Intensify the exploration of critical minerals within the country and in its offshore areas.
- Critical minerals such as copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt and rare earth are essential raw materials (**24 critical minerals have been identified**). Demand gathering momentum worldwide.

**Examples of Critical Minerals Used in Advanced Technologies**

**Solar panels –**  
Arsenic, Germanium, Indium, Tellurium



**Battery storage –**  
Cobalt, Graphite, Lithium, Manganese



**Wind turbines –**  
Aluminum, Rare Earth Elements



**National defense –**  
Chromium, Gallium, Scandium



**Aviation –**  
Niobium, Tantalum, Vanadium



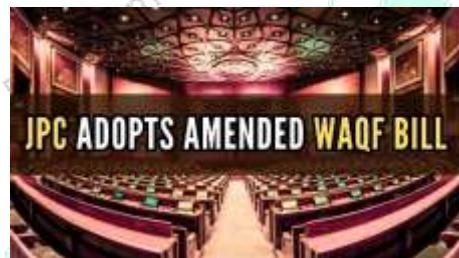
- Finance Minister announced the setting up of the Critical Mineral Mission in the Union Budget for 2024-25 on 23rd July 2024.
- major objectives of this mission are to increase exploration, reduce import dependence, acquire mineral blocks overseas, develop technologies for processing of critical minerals and recycle the minerals.

#### KEY FEATURES

- Encompass all stages of the value chain, including mineral exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing, and recovery from end-of-life products.
- It aims to create a fast track regulatory approval process for critical mineral mining projects.
- will offer financial incentives for critical mineral exploration and promote the recovery of these minerals from overburden and tailings.
- encourage Indian PSUs and private sector companies to acquire critical mineral assets abroad and enhance trade with resource-rich countries.
- It also proposes development of stockpile of critical minerals within the country.
- provisions for setting up of mineral processing parks and supporting the recycling of critical minerals.
- It will also promote research in critical mineral technologies and proposes setting up Centre of Excellence on Critical Minerals.

**JPC adopts amended Waqf bill; Opposition slams its provisions as 'unconstitutional'**

- The Joint Committee of Parliament scrutinising the Waqf (Amendment) Bill adopted its report and the amended version of the proposed law with a majority vote
- The Bill aims to amend the Waqf Act, 1995, to address issues and challenges in regulating and managing Waqf properties.
- JPC Chairman and BJP MP Jagdambika Pal
- The adopted Bill accepts the government's stand of removing the "Waqf by user" clause in the existing law, - no cases will be reopened against such properties on a retrospective basis provided these are not in dispute or belong to the government.
- The provisions to omit the 'Waqf by user' definition of a Waqf property will be with prospective effect.
- It has also endorsed the government's move to include non-Muslims in Waqf boards, saying they can be "beneficiaries, parties to disputes, or otherwise interested in Waqf matters"
- The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, was referred to the [Joint Parliamentary Committee \(JPC\)](#) on August 8, 2024, following its introduction in the Lok Sabha by the Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju.



#### What is a Waqf Property?

- A Waqf is a property donated by Muslims for a specific religious, charitable, or private purpose. Ownership of the property is considered to belong to God, while its benefits are directed to the specified purposes.
- **Establishment:** A Waqf can be established through a written deed, legal instrument, or orally.
- **Use and Permanence:** A property may be recognized as Waqf if it has been used for religious or charitable purposes over an extended period. Once declared Waqf, the property's status is permanent and irreversible.

#### **Waqf Act 1995**

- The Waqf Act, originally enacted in 1995, governs the management and administration of Waqf properties in India

#### Following are the Key Provisions of the Waqf Act, 1995:

- Defines Waqf as a permanent dedication of property for religious or charitable purposes under Muslim law.
- Requires each state to establish a Waqf Board for managing and administering Waqf properties.
- Establishes the Central Waqf Council to advise on Waqf matters.
- Provides mechanisms, including tribunals, for resolving Waqf property disputes.
- Mandates the registration and surveying of Waqf properties for proper management.

### **Waqf Amendment Bill 2024**

- On August 8, 2024, the **Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024** and the **Mussalman Wakf (Repeal) Bill, 2024** were introduced in the Lok Sabha to enhance the management of Waqf properties.
- The **key change proposed in the amendment** is the **transfer of governance from Waqf Boards and Tribunals to state governments**, centralizing control and addressing administrative issues within the Waqf system.
- One key amendment empowers **state governments to appoint an officer to determine whether a property is Waqf**, replacing the District Collector who initially had absolute authority.
- The committee also dropped the mandatory inclusion of two non-Muslim members in Waqf Boards and proposed increasing it to three, including a scholar.

### **Waqf Amendment Bill 2024 Provisions, Key Changes**

- The Waqf Amendment (Bill) 2024 proposes **changing the name** of the parent Act from the **Waqf Act of 1995** to the **Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development Act of 1995**:
- **Waqf Formation:** Waqfs can be formed by (i) declaration, (ii) recognition of long-term use, or (iii) endowment when succession ends.
  - **Only practicing Muslims for at least five years can declare waqfs**, with ownership of the property being mandatory.
- **Government Property:** Government properties identified as waqf will revert to state ownership. The District Collector will determine ownership in disputed cases.
- **Waqf Property Determination:** The **Waqf Board's power** to determine waqf properties is **removed**.
- **Waqf Survey:** Collectors will conduct waqf surveys under state revenue laws.
- **Central Waqf Council:** Two non-Muslim members are added. MPs, judges, and eminent persons need not be Muslims. However, **Muslim members must include two women**.
- **Waqf Boards:** State governments will appoint representatives, including two non-Muslims and members from Shia, Sunni, and backward Muslim communities. Women representation remains mandatory.
- **Tribunal Composition:** Muslim law experts are removed. Tribunals will include a **District Court judge** and a state officer of joint secretary rank.
- **Appeals:** Tribunal decisions can be appealed to the High Court within 90 days.
- **Central Government Powers:** The central government can set rules on registration, waqf accounts, and Board proceedings. Audits can be conducted by the CAG.
- **Separate Waqf Boards:** Separate Waqf Boards are allowed for Bohra and Agakhani sects.

### **Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam 2024 Replaces Aircraft Act of 1934**

- India replaced the outdated 90-year-old 'Aircraft Act of 1934' with the 'Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam 2024,' establishing new regulations to protect passenger rights, as well as ease the policy environment to promote investment in the sector.
- In a gazette notification, the Centre said provisions of the Act would come into force from January 1, 2025.
- The Act was passed by Parliament during the Winter Session in 2024. It was presented by Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu.
- Notably, the 'Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam' aims to create more efficient and safe air operations, while also providing a better consumer protection environment by ensuring higher service quality.
- It aspires to create an "efficient online mechanism" to address passenger grievances, ensuring a time-bound response period.
- Besides, the Act removes redundancies and provides effective regulatory powers to control areas such as air traffic management and the drone segment.
- The Act seeks to promote aircraft manufacture in the country by regulating the design, assembly, technology, and other related aspects.
- The predecessor, the Indian Aircraft Act, brought in 1934, went through several changes over the years; it was amended 21 times.

Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024 replaces the Aircraft Act, 1934, regulating aviation activities such as aerodrome use, aircraft operations, air traffic control, and related facilities; effective date to be notified later



## 90 artisans to display their art in second edition of Lok Samvardhan Parv

- The 2nd edition of 'Lok Samvardhan Parv' is now being organized from 27th January to 2nd February, 2025 by the Ministry of Minority Affairs at Connaught Place, New Delhi.
- 90 artisans from different parts of the country would participate in the event showcasing their art crafts.
- These include:
- Ajrak Print Saree Dupatta from Maharashtra,
- Banaras Brocade from Uttar Pradesh,
- Cane & Bamboo from Assam,
- Channapatna Toys & Dolls from Karnataka,
- Kantha Stitch from West Bengal,
- Crewal Sozni from Jammu & Kashmir, Kashmiri Shawls,
- Kosa Silk Saree Handloom from Maharashtra,
- Leather Puppetry from Andhra Pradesh,
- Matka Silk Saree from Bihar,
- Rugs & Durries from Haryana,
- Samar Tribal Jewellery from Delhi,
- Woodwares, Zari Work from Uttar Pradesh.
- Additionally, 16 culinary experts will offer visitors the opportunity to savor the diverse flavors of India.

These include :

- Lucknawi Zaika, Gujarati Rasoi, Parsi Cuisine, Punjabi Tadka, Street Treats, Nawabi Dawat, Dry Fruit Delights, Fusion Flavors.



## Prime Minister Modi pays tribute to Lala Lajpat Rai on his birth anniversary

- Lala Lajpat Rai was born on 28 January 1865 in Dhudike village, Punjab.
- Lala Lajpat Rai, also known as **Punjab Kesari (Lion of Punjab)**, was a prominent nationalist leader, freedom fighter, and social reformer.
- alongside **Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal**, forming the famous Lal-Bal-Pal trio - pushed for **Swaraj, Swadeshi, and Boycott** of British goods during the Swadeshi Movement.
- Lala Lajpat Rai led the protests against the Simon Commission, famously raising the slogan "**Simon Go Back.**" - martyrdom on November 17, 1928
- He co-founded the Punjab National Bank in 1894.
- He founded and edited several newspapers, including **Vande Mataram**, and **Arya Gazette**. founding force behind the influential newspaper **Punjab Kesari**.
- Rai also authored several books, including **Young India**, **England's Debt to India**, **The Story of My Deportation**, and **Unhappy India**
- Lala Lajpat Rai wrote biographies of **Mazzini, Garibaldi, Shivaji**, Dayanand, and Shri Krishna



## Savitribai Phule 194<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary

- India's first woman teacher.
- A Dalit woman from the Mali community, Savitribai was born on **January 3, 1831, in Maharashtra's Naigaon village**.
- Married off at the age of 10, her husband **Jyotirao Phule** is said to have educated her at home.
- the couple went on to open a school for girls in Bhidewada, Pune, in 1848. This became the **country's first girls' school**.
- Along with Jyotirao, Savitribai started the **Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha** ('Home for the Prevention of Infanticide') for pregnant widows facing discrimination.
- In 1873, the Phules set up the **Satyashodhak Samaj** ('Truth-seekers' society'), a platform open to all, irrespective of their caste, religion or class hierarchies, with the sole aim of bringing social equity. As an extension, they started '**Satyashodhak Marriage**' – a rejection of Brahmanical rituals where the marrying couple takes a pledge to promote education and equality.



### Savitribai's literary works

- Kavya Phule ('Poetry's Blossoms')
- Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar ('The Ocean of Pure Gems')

### Bharat Ratna Karpuri Thakur ji birth anniversary

- Karpoori Thakur, called as "Jan Nayak", was a prominent Indian politician who served as the 11th Chief Minister of Bihar twice, from 1970-71 and 1977-79.
- Karpoori Thakur, born on 24 January 1924 in Pitaunjhia (now Karpoori Gram) in Darbhanga, Bihar,
- Represented the **Nai community**, listed as an **Extremely Backward Class (EBC)** among OBCs.
- In 2024, the **President of India** announced the **Bharat Ratna** awarded to **socialist leader and former Chief Minister of Bihar Karpoori Thakur**, posthumously.



## Finance

### CheQ introduces Wisor, India's first AI-powered credit card expert

- Indian fintech leader CheQ, founded by ex-Flipkart executive Aditya Soni, has unveiled Wisor, India's first AI-powered credit card expert, designed to turn credit card chaos into clarity.
- to redefine how millions of Indians interact with their credit cards, offering personalized insights, effortless management, and maximise rewards-all at their fingertips.



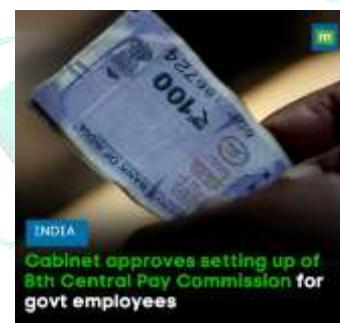
### SBI Introduces 'Har Ghar Lakhpatti' and 'SBI Patrons' Deposit Schemes

- **Har Ghar Lakhpatti** is a **pre-calculated recurring deposit scheme** designed to help customers to accumulate Rs 1 lakh or multiples thereof.
- The **minimum tenure of recurring deposits is 12 months (one year), and the maximum is 120 months (10 years).**
- This product is **also available to minors**, encouraging early financial planning and savings habit.
- '**SBI Patrons**,' is a **fixed deposit scheme** specifically for select senior citizens who are **80 years and above**.



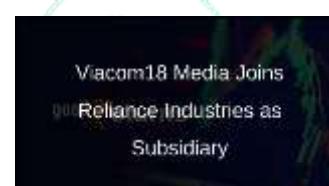
### Cabinet approves setting up of 8<sup>th</sup> pay commission

- The Central government will set up a committee for the implementation of the 8th Pay Commission for government employees and pensioners, potentially benefiting millions of individuals.
- The **7th Pay Commission's recommendations**, which **were implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, would conclude on December 31, 2025.**
- the **8th Pay Commission will come into force on January 1, 2026.**
- this is expected to lead to updates in salaries, including modifications to Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) for retirees.
- Prior to this, the 4th, 5th, and 6th Pay Commissions all had 10-year terms.



### Viacom18 Media becomes direct subsidiary of Reliance Industries

- Viacom18 Media, a leading media and entertainment company, has become a direct subsidiary of Reliance Industries
- **Earlier, Viacom18Media was a material subsidiary of Network18 Media & Investments Ltd, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL).**
- has ceased to be a subsidiary of Network18.



## International News

### US Senate confirms John Ratcliffe as Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director

- John Ratcliffe was sworn in by vice president JD Vance as a key member of President Donald Trump's administration.



Senate confirms John Ratcliffe as CIA director

### Canadian PM Justin Trudeau announces his resignation as leader of ruling Liberal Party

- Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his resignation in the face of rising discontent over his leadership and after the abrupt departure of his finance minister signalled growing turmoil within his government.
- This ends his nine-year stretch as leader.
- Trudeau came to power in 2015 after 10 years of Conservative Party rule
- Will stay on as prime minister until a new leader of the Liberal Party is chosen, and parliament would be prorogued - or suspended - until 24 March.
- Capital: Ottawa
- Currency: Canadian dollar (\$)
- Canada, the second largest country in the world in area (after Russia)
- During the freedom struggle, many Indian migrants settled in Canada.
  - "Swadeshi Sevak Home" in Vancouver was instrumental in mobilising the Indians against British rule.
- In 1947, India and Canada established diplomatic relations after the independence.
- Education: India has also been the top source country for international students in Canada since 2018.



### John Dramani Mahama sworn in as Ghana's President

- John Dramani Mahama was sworn in for a second term as Ghana's president
- Capital: Accra
- Currency: Cedi (GHS)
- situated on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea.



### Pope Francis has named the first woman to head a major Vatican office

- Pope Francis named the first woman to head a major Vatican office, appointing an Italian nun, Sister Simona Brambilla, to become prefect of the department responsible for all the Catholic Church's religious orders.



### Croatia President Zoran Milanovic wins another 5 year term

- Capital : Zagreb
- Currency: Euro (€) (EUR)
- The Republic of proclaimed **independence on 25 June 1991** after breaking away from the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.
- The body of the crescent forms a long coastal strip along the Adriatic Sea
- India formally recognized Croatia in May 1992 and **diplomatic relations** were established on 9 July 1992.



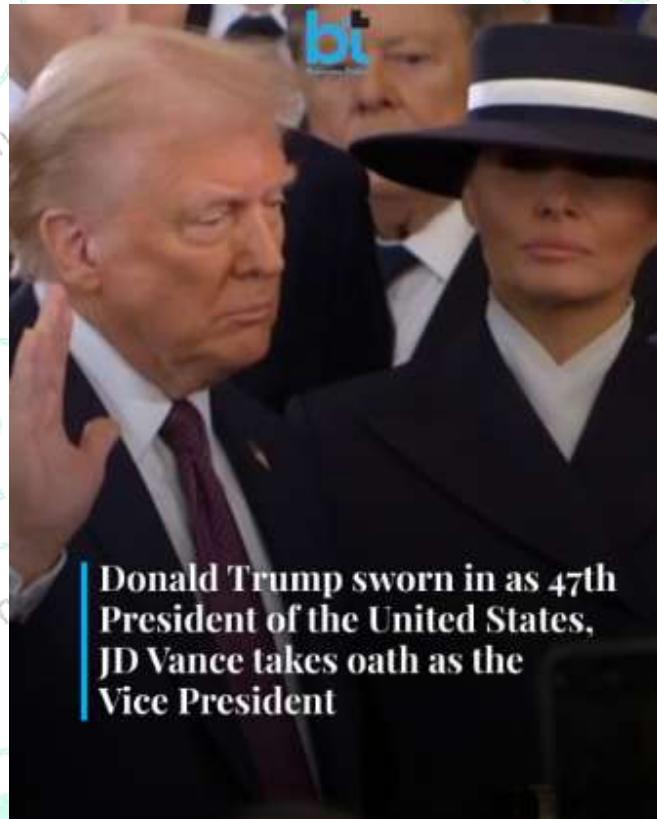
### Lebanon's President names ICJ Chief Nawaf Salam Prime Minister

- Lebanese President Joseph Aoun picked international jurist Nawaf Salam to form a government to pull the war-scarred country out of economic crisis.
- Judge Julia Sebutinde likely to assume the presidency of ICJ
- Capital: Beirut
- Currency: Lebanese pound
- Lebanon is bounded to the north and east by Syria, to the south by Israel, and to the west by the Mediterranean Sea.



### Donald Trump Takes Oath as 47th President of United States; J.D. Vance Sworn in as Vice President

- JD Vance took oath as the 50th Vice President of the United States at the US Capitol Rotunda in Washington DC.
- Donald Trump was sworn in as the 47th president of the United States
- **US Chief Justice John Roberts** administered the oath of office to the 40-year-old JD Vance, who became the third youngest Vice President of the United States.
- Trump will use the same Bible as Abraham Lincoln while taking the oath of office
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is representing India at the Swearing-In Ceremony of the 47th President of the United States of America in Washington DC.



### Alexander Lukashenko wins seventh consecutive term as Belarus President for a term of five years

- He in power in Belarus since 1994
- Capital: Minsk
- Currency: Belarusian ruble



### Syria appoints Maysaa Sabrine as first woman to lead central bank

- Syria's new rulers have appointed Maysaa Sabrine, formerly a deputy governor of the Syrian central bank, to lead the institution as the **first woman to do so in its more than 70-year history**.
- Recently Syrian rebels had declared **President Bashar al-Assad's ouster** after seizing control of Damascus



### Micheal Martin confirmed as new Irish PM

- Micheal Martin has been elected the Republic of Ireland's prime minister for a second term after a vote in parliament
- Ireland, country of western Europe occupying five-sixths of the westernmost major island of the British Isles.



- it is separated—at distances ranging from 11 to 120 miles (18 to 193 km)—by the North Channel, the Irish Sea, and St. George's Channel.
- Capital: Dublin
- Currency: Euro (€)[c] (EUR)



### Brazil announces Indonesia as new full member of BRICS

- Brazil, which holds the presidency of the BRICS in 2025
- Indonesia President - President Prabowo Subianto
- BRICS has been expanding its membership in recent years. Alongside Indonesia, the bloc also includes Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates



About BRICS:

- The term BRIC was first used in 2001 by economist Jim O'Neill
- The BRIC organization was established in 2009, with South Africa joining in 2010
- The first BRIC Summit was held in Russia's Yekaterinburg in 2009.
- The 16th BRICS Summit was being held under Russia's chairmanship in Kazan in 2024.
- 2024 Theme - Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security'



### Nigeria Joins BRICS Bloc

- Nigeria has been admitted as a "partner country" of the BRICS bloc of developing economies.
- Brazil holds the bloc's presidency in 2025
- Nigeria becomes the ninth BRICS partner country, joining Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.
- BRICS has expanded to include 22 countries, comprising full members and partner nations.
- 5 new members (BRICS+): Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.
- Recently, Indonesia has officially joined the BRICS group
- Turkey, Azerbaijan and Malaysia have formally applied to become BRICS members, while a few others have also expressed interest.
- BRICS was formed by Brazil, Russia, India and China in 2009, with South Africa added in 2010, as a counterweight to the Group of Seven (G-7) leading industrialised nations.
- 2014: The Fortaleza Declaration was adopted at the 6th BRICS Summit, and it marked the establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB).



### Trump signs executive order withdrawing U.S. from the World Health Organization

- The United States will exit the World Health Organization, President Donald Trump - the global health agency had mishandled the COVID-19 pandemic and other international health crises.
- The WHO had failed to act independently from the "inappropriate political influence of WHO member states" and required "unfairly onerous payments" from the U.S. that are disproportionate to the sums provided by other, larger countries, such as China.
- The United States is by far the WHO's biggest financial backer, contributing around 18% of its overall funding.
- WHO's most recent two-year budget, for 2024-2025, was \$6.8 billion.



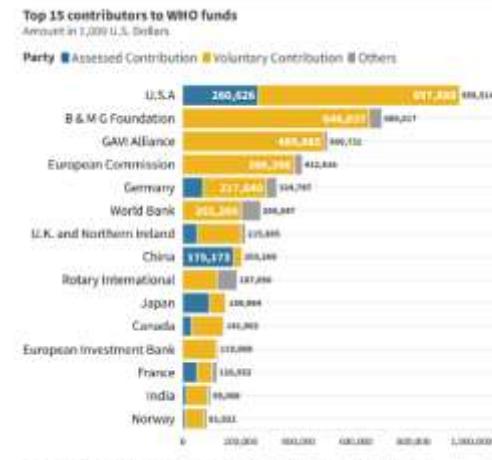
- The World Health Organization (WHO), established in 1948, is a specialized agency of the United Nations that connects nations, partners and people to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable – so everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health.
- Regional Offices: WHO also has six regional offices: Africa, the Americas, Southeast Asia, Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, and Western Pacific.
- Each regional office is responsible for coordinating and supporting WHO's work in their respective regions.

### US President Trump ends automatic citizenship of children born in country to non-citizen parents

- US President Donald Trump has sought to revoke birthright citizenship – automatic citizenship of children born in the US to non-citizen parents.
- The order titled 'Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship' specifies that those who were born in the US "but not subject to the jurisdiction thereof" are excluded from birthright citizenship.
- The Indian-American community, which is one of the fastest-growing immigrant populations in the US, will be profoundly impacted by this change as and when it comes through.
- If such a change is to occur, it will potentially impact children born in the US to H-1B visa holders, Green Card holders (lawful permanent residents), temporary visa holders such as those on student or visitor visas, and undocumented immigrants.
- According to official statistics of the US Census Bureau, Indian Americans number over 5.4 million as of 2024, comprising 1.47 per cent of the US population.
- Of these, around two-thirds are first-generation immigrants, while the rest are US-born citizens
- Under birthright citizenship, anyone born on American soil is automatically granted US citizenship, regardless of the citizenship or immigration status of the parents.
- This provision was enacted in 1868 and was designed to extend citizenship to all persons born in the US.

The Citizenship Act of 1955 specifies five methods for obtaining citizenship - birth, descent, registration, naturalisation, and territorial incorporation.

#### Citizenship by Birth



Anyone born in India	
Date	Condition
Between January 1, 1950, and January 1, 1987	Considered a citizen by birth.
On or after July 1, 1987	Considered an Indian citizen only if <b>either</b> of his/her parents is an Indian citizen at the time of birth.
On or after December 3, 2004	Considered an Indian citizen by birth if <b>one parent</b> is Indian and the other is not an illegal immigrant.

**Note:** If one of the parents is an **illegal immigrant**, the child born after 2004 will have to obtain Indian citizenship through other means than birth.

**Citizenship by Descent**

<b>A person born outside India</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Condition</b>
Between January 26, 1950, and December 10, 1992	Shall be a citizen of India by descent if his <b>father</b> was a citizen of India at the time of his birth.
On or after December 10, 1992	Shall be an Indian citizen if <b>either of his parents</b> was an Indian citizen at the time of his birth.

**Note:** A person born outside India with at least one Indian parent will be granted citizenship if the birth is registered with the Indian consulate in the jurisdiction **within one year of the birth**.

**Citizenship by Registration**

<b>Any person (other than an illegal migrant)</b>	
<b>Type of person</b>	<b>Condition</b>
Person of Indian origin	- Living in India for <b>at least seven years</b> before applying or - Ordinarily resident in any country or place outside undivided India.
A foreign person married to an Indian	- Lived in India for <b>seven</b> years before making an application for registration
Person of legal age	- Parents are <b>Indian citizens</b> - Either of his parents was an earlier citizen of <b>Independent India</b> and had been ordinarily resident in India for twelve months prior to making an application for registration. - Registered as an <b>overseas citizen of India</b> cardholder for <b>five years</b> and has been ordinarily resident in India for twelve months prior to making an application for registration.
Minor children	- Parents are Indian citizens

**Note:**

- No person of full age shall be registered as an Indian citizen until he has taken the **oath of allegiance** in the form prescribed in the **Second Schedule**.
- No person who has renounced, been deprived of, or had his Indian citizenship terminated under this Act shall be registered as a citizen of India.

**Citizenship by Naturalisation**

- Section 6 of the Citizenship Act states that a certificate of naturalisation can be granted to a person who is not an illegal immigrant and has lived in India **continuously for 12 months** prior to making an application.
- Furthermore, in the 14 years preceding the 12 months, the person must have lived in India for **at least 11 years** (reduced to **five years** for the categories covered by the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019).

**Citizenship by Incorporation of Territory**

- If any territory becomes a part of India, the **Central Government** may, by order published in the Official Gazette, specify the persons who will be citizens of India due to their connection with that territory.
- Such persons will be citizens of India as of the date specified in the order.

**President Trump Signs the Laken Riley Act into Law**

- This law mandates the federal detention and deportation of illegal immigrants in the USA who are accused of theft, burglary, assaulting a law enforcement officer, and any crime that causes death or serious bodily injury.

**US Withdrawal from OECD Global Tax Deal**

- US President Donald Trump in an executive order soon after being sworn in has pulled the US out of the OECD's global tax deal that aims to discourage cross border tax avoidance by multinational firms.



- With this action, the US has put the tax deal in suspended animation but the impact on India is seen to be minimal.
- The OECD Global Tax Deal supported under the prior administration not only allows extraterritorial jurisdiction over American income but also limits our Nation's ability to enact tax policies that serve the interests of American businesses and workers,
- Over 140 countries have signed the OECD's global tax deal that aims to tackle tax avoidance by large multinational companies, through two pillars of taxation
- India, on the other hand, have always adopted a 'wait and watch' policy on adoption of GloBE rules and has yet to introduce any substantial legislative change in this direction.
- In the Union Budget 2024, India had abolished the 2% equalisation levy (which, being a unilateral action, was a bone of contention for the US).

#### About Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

- It is an international organisation of 38 countries committed to democracy and the market economy.
- OECD members are typically democratic countries that support free-market economies.
- The OECD was established on Dec. 14, 1960, by 18 European nations, plus the United States and Canada.
- Headquarters: Paris, France.
- The OECD publishes economic reports, statistical databases, analyses, and forecasts on the outlook for economic growth worldwide.
- The organization also seeks to eliminate bribery and other financial crime worldwide.
- The OECD maintains a so-called "black list" of nations that are considered uncooperative tax havens.

#### Kampala Declaration on Agriculture

- The Extraordinary African Union Summit on the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) concluded in Kampala, Uganda with the adoption of the transformative Kampala Declaration for Africa's agri-food systems from 2026 to 2035.
- The new declaration is the successor to the Malabo Declaration, whose implementation period concludes this year.

#### African countries adopt new 10-year agriculture strategy

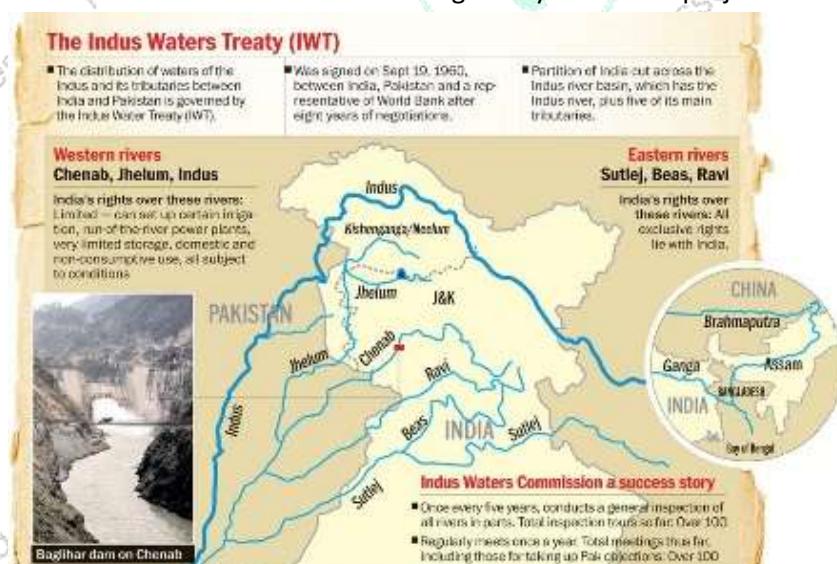
The Kampala Declaration, a 10-year strategy adopted at an AU summit, shifts Africa's agricultural policy to focus on sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems, setting ambitious goals for resilience, investment, and governance by 2035.

#### Malabo Declaration

- The CAADP was officially launched in July 2003 during the Second Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique, in response to challenges such as low agricultural productivity, food insecurity, and under-investment in Africa's agriculture.

#### World Bank appointed neutral expert backs India's stand on dispute with Pakistan regarding Indus Water Treaty

- The Neutral Expert (NE) appointed under terms of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), 1960, decided that he was "competent" to decide on differences between India and Pakistan on the design of hydroelectric projects built on the Indus Treaty-rivers
- The treaty, that divided up the six Himalayan rivers equally between India and Pakistan, allows India the unrestricted use of all water from the three eastern tributaries of the Indus river (Sutlej, Beas and Ravi) while Pakistan receives use of the western tributaries (Indus or Sindhu, Jhelum and Chenab).
- Pakistan had first raised objections to India's construction of the 330 MW Kishenganga hydroelectric project on the Jhelum river back in 2006, and



then objected to plans to construct the 850 MW Ratle Hydroelectric Project on the Chenab river as well.

- Both India and Pakistan differ on whether the technical details of the hydel projects conform with the treaty, given that the Jhelum and Chenab were part of the “western tributaries”.

### 55th Annual Meeting of World Economic Forum to begin in Switzerland

- The 55th World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting will begin from January 20 to 24 in Davos, Switzerland.
- theme 'Collaboration for the Intelligent Age'
- During the five-day event, India's model of inclusive growth and digital revolution will be highlighted.
- The Indian delegation will be spearheaded by Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw along with Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil, Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu, Food Processing Industries Minister Chirag Paswan and Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary.



### Who initiated the World Economic Forum (WEF)?

- It was founded in January 1971 by German engineer and economist Klaus Schwab.
- HQ: Geneva, Switzerland.

### Different reports published by WEF

- Global Competitiveness Report,
- Global Information Technology Report,
- Global Gender Gap Report,
- Global Risks Report,
- Global Travel and Tourism Report,
- Global Enabling Trade Report.

### WEF 2025: Crystal Awards Honor Beckham, Furstenberg, and Yamamoto

- Riken Yamamoto (2024 Pritzker Prize laureate), Diane von Furstenberg (fashion designer, philanthropist and champion of women's rights) and David Beckham (UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and global advocate for children's rights) named as 2025 31st Annual Crystal Award recipients.
- The winners will be honoured at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025 in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland.
- The Crystal Awards are presented each year by Hilde Schwab, Chairwoman and Co-Founder of the World Economic Forum's World Arts Forum.
- The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025, taking place in Davos-Klosters from 20 to 24 January, convenes global leaders under the theme, Collaboration for the Intelligent Age



### Interpol issues first Silver Notice, it enables tracing illicit wealth laundered across borders

- Adding a new tool to its armoury of colour-coded notices, the Interpol has issued its first Silver Notice to locate assets laundered across borders as part of a pilot project in which India is also a participant
- The Silver notice will help to locate assets of criminals who have transferred their illicit wealth to tax havens and other countries thinking that it will never be traced or accounted for



- At present, the Interpol has eight types of colour-coded notices which allows a member country to seek specific kind of information worldwide.
- Interpol's Red Notice seeks to locate and arrest people wanted for prosecution or to serve a sentence.
- The Yellow Notice helps locate missing persons, often minors, or identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.
- The Blue Notice collects additional information about a person's identity, location or activities in relation to a criminal investigation.
- The Black Notice is issued to seek information on unidentified bodies.
- The Green Notice is for providing warning about a person's criminal activities, where the person is considered to be a possible threat to public safety
- The Orange Notice warns of an event, a person, an object or a process representing a serious and imminent threat to public safety
- The Purple Notice seeks or provides information on modus operandi, objects, devices and concealment methods used by criminals

#### **About Interpol:**

- The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), commonly known as Interpol
- It is the world's largest international police organization, representing 195 member countries.
- It is headquartered in Lyon, France.
- **Official Languages:** Arabic, English, French, and Spanish.
- **Status:** It is 'not' a unit or part of a united nation system.

#### **Dalai Lama Charitable Trust Receives FCRA Approval**

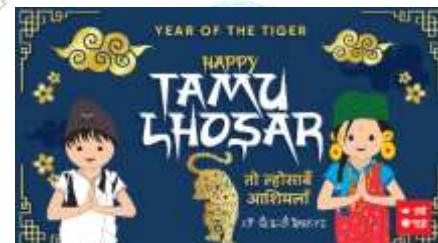
- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has granted a Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registration to 'His Holiness the Dalai Lama Charitable Trust' for "religious" purposes, among others. FCRA registration is a mandatory requirement to receive foreign funds.
- the NGO is not directly linked with the spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, but is associated with the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), which looks after the welfare of the Tibetan community in India.
- The CTA is headquartered in Himachal Pradesh's Dharamsala.
- In 1959, thousands of Tibetans arrived in India along with the Dalai Lama in the face of the Chinese occupation of Tibet.
- The Indian government provided asylum as well as assistance towards temporary settlement. Per the 2022 census conducted by the CTA, there are 63,167 Tibetan refugees in India.
- The Foundation for Universal Responsibility, another non-profit that was founded in 1990 with the funds from the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Dalai Lama, is also registered under the FCRA.

#### **About FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act)**

- Purpose: FCRA stands for Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, which is a law enacted by the Parliament of India to regulate the acceptance and utilization of foreign contributions by individuals, associations, and companies.
- Prohibition: The Act prohibits the receipt of foreign contributions "for any activities detrimental to the national interest".
- Registration: Organizations require the government's permission to receive funding from abroad.
- Implementation: The Act is implemented in convergence with various Union government Ministries and agencies, State authorities, and a network of formal and informal institutions and individuals.

#### **What is Tamu Lhosar?**

- The Gurung community in Nepal is celebrating Tamu Lhosar, marking the beginning of a new year.
- The festival is marked on the 15th of the Nepali month of Poush as sun rays reach early in the geography of Gurung settlements



- The Gurung year is divided into 12 cycles, each represented by an animal called "Lho."
- The 12 animals are:
  - Garuda (eagle), serpent, horse, sheep, monkey, bird, dog, deer, mouse, cow, tiger, and cat.
- Tamu Lhosar marks the transition from one "Lho" (animal cycle) to another.
- During Tamu Lhosar, the Gurung community bids farewell to the outgoing Lho and welcomes the new one.
- During the recent celebrations, the Gurungs bid farewell to the Garuda cycle and welcomed the Snake cycle.



#### Australia launches first National Autism Strategy with \$42.3 million

- to improve the lives of people with autism.
- will translate autism-related research into evidence-based tools and guidance for service providers and policymakers.

The Albanese Labor Government has just launched Australia's first



#### What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a **developmental disability** caused by differences in the brain.
- People with ASD may behave, communicate, interact, and learn in ways that are different from most other people.
- ASD begins before the age of 3 years and can last throughout a person's life, although symptoms may improve over time.



#### 'Ghost island' appears and disappears in Caspian Sea

- This "ghost island" formed due to an eruption from the Kumani Bank mud volcano and vanished shortly after.
- NASA recorded the phenomenon using satellite images.
- The Kumani Bank mud volcano erupted in 2023, creating a transient landmass off Azerbaijan's coast.
- The island was composed of a mix of fluids, gases, and sediments forced to the surface due to subsurface pressure.
- The island measured around 1,300 feet across.

#### What is Pink Fire Retardant?

- As multiple wildfires continue to torch Southern California on, authorities are using planes to drop a large amount of bright pink fire retardant to curb the blaze.
- Typically, it is made of salts such as ammonium polyphosphate, which does not evaporate easily like water and stays for longer.
- Colour is usually added to the fire retardant to ensure that firefighters can see it against the landscape.



### What are the concerns?

- Environmental experts have said that spraying fire retardant using planes is **ineffective, expensive and a growing source of pollution for rivers and streams.**
- These toxic metals include **chromium and cadmium** which can cause cancer, and kidney and liver diseases in humans.

### US state of Ohio designates October as 'Hindu Heritage Month'

- October 2025 will be Ohio's 1st official Hindu Heritage Month.



### US removes 3 Indian nuclear entities from export control list

- The three entities are Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (**BARC**), Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Centre (**IGCAR**) and the Indian Rare Earths (**IRE**).
- Facilitate the implementation of the landmark India-US civil nuclear pact that was sealed 16 years back.
- India and the US unveiled an ambitious plan to cooperate in civil nuclear energy in July 2005 following then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's meeting with then American President George W Bush.
- The Entity List has long been a tool used by the United States to regulate trade with organisations considered potential risks to national security or foreign policy.



### Mt Everest becomes more expensive for mountaineers, Nepal to increase permit fees

- Mount Everest, is about to get more expensive with Nepal set to increase the permit price by over 36 percent.
- The new rate will be effective on September 1, 2025.
- a 36 per cent hike in the \$11,000 fee to \$15,000 (nearly Rs 13L). This price rise to climb the 8,849 metre (29,032 feet) Mount Everest comes after nearly a decade.
- Mount Everest, locally known as Sagarmatha or Qomolangma, is the highest mountain above sea level. The 8,848.86 metres tall mountain is located in the Mahalangur Himal sub-range of the Himalayas.



### Strategic Significance of Philadelphi Corridor

- The Philadelphi Corridor is an important strip of land along the Gaza-Egypt border. It serves as link for Gaza, particularly for Hamas, amidst ongoing conflicts and ceasefire negotiations.
- It is a 14 kilometres long strip of land that represents the entirety of the border area between Gaza and Egypt.
- It includes the Rafah crossing and runs from the Mediterranean Sea to the Kerem Shalom crossing with Israel.
- This area is vital for smuggling activities, connecting Gaza to Egypt.
- Under the Camp David peace treaty 1979, a limited number of Egyptian troops were allowed, but no heavy armour was permitted.
- After the 2005 Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, the corridor was designated a demilitarised border zone.
- Since 2005, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority were responsible for managing the corridor.
- It was the only link for Gaza with the outside world not controlled by Israel.
- Hamas gained control of Gaza in 2007, which led to increased tension and ongoing cross-border smuggling activities.

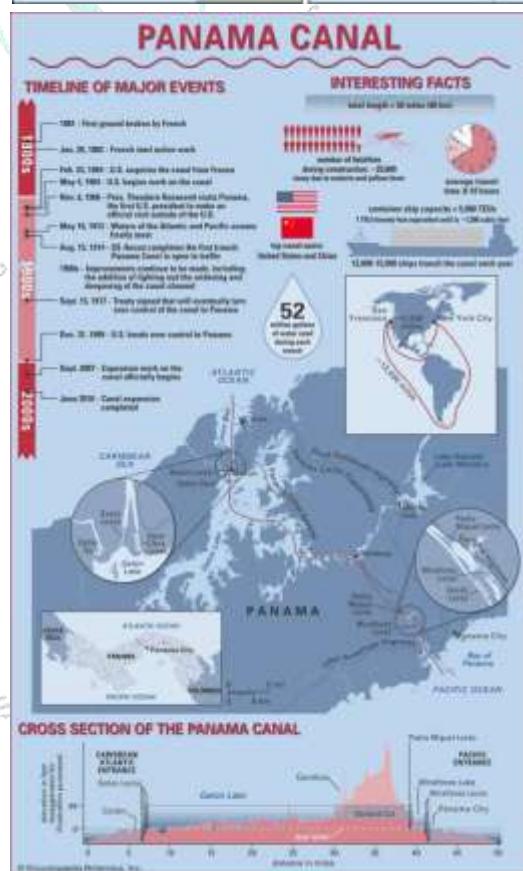
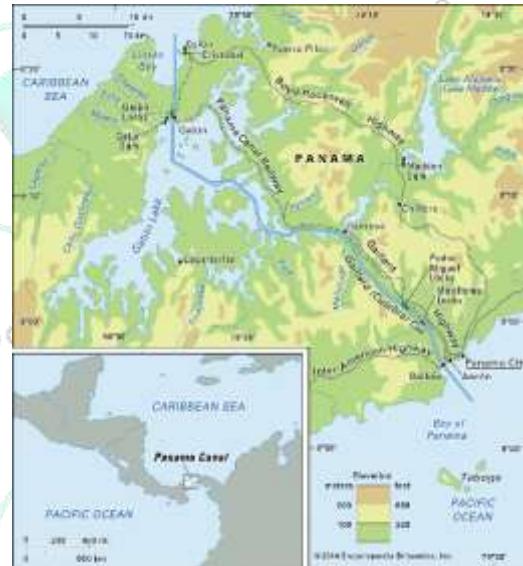


## Panama Canal- Controversy, History and Ownership

Recently, the US President-elect Donald Trump has hinted that his administration might attempt to regain control of the Panama Canal.

### About Panama Canal:

- It is a **man made waterway** that connects the **Atlantic and Pacific oceans** across the Isthmus of Panama.
- It is owned and administered by Panama, and it is 40 miles long from shoreline to shoreline.
  - It was built by the United states and **completed in August 1914**,
  - It is one of the two most strategic artificial waterways in the world, the other being the Suez Canal.
  - From its opening in 1914 until 1979, the Panama Canal was controlled solely by the United States, which built it.
  - In 1979, however, control of the canal passed to the Panama Canal Commission, a joint agency of the United States and the Republic of Panama, and complete control passed to Panama at noon on December 31, 1999.
  - It is a **sophisticated, highly-engineered system** which uses a system of locks and elevators to take ships from one end to the other.
  - This is needed because the two oceans that the Panama Canal connects do not lie at the same elevation, with the Pacific slightly higher than the Atlantic.
  - This difference means that for a ship entering the canal through the Atlantic, it needs to gain elevation during its journey to the Pacific.
  - This is achieved **using a lock system** which lifts and drops vessels to the required sea level at either end of the canal.
  - Basically, locks are either flooded (to gain elevation) or drained (to lose elevation), and act as water elevators.
  - In total, the system comprises three sets of locks — 12 locks in total — which are serviced using artificial lakes and channels.



## China Unveils World's Longest Tunnel, Enhances BRI Connectivity

- China has completed the construction of the 22.13-km Tianshan Shengli Tunnel in the Xinjiang region, marking a significant milestone in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- The tunnel, which is the longest expressway tunnel of its kind, is expected to enhance connectivity within Xinjiang and between Central Asia and eastern China, extending to the Pacific.
- the tunnel will drastically reduce travel time through the Tianshan Mountains—one of the world's longest mountain ranges—from three hours to just 20 minutes.

## China Unveils World's Fastest High-Speed Train Prototype

- China has unveiled the **CR450**, a next-generation high-speed train prototype capable of reaching speeds of **450 km/h**, making it the fastest train in the world.
- This technological milestone surpasses the CR400 Fuxing trains, currently operating at 350 km/h.



### Joint Logo of India Singapore represents 60 years of establishment of diplomatic relations

- President Murmu and President Shanmugaratnam unveiled a joint logo to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- The joint logo incorporates colours from the Indian and Singaporean national flags and national flowers, which symbolize the enduring friendship, mutual trust, and shared values between the two countries.
- The President of Singapore is on a five-day visit to India. This is his first visit to India as the President of Singapore.
- Capital: Singapore (city-state)
- Currency: Singapore dollar
- Singapore is **India's largest trade partner in ASEAN**; it's India's 6th largest trade partner (2023-24).
- India signed **Direct Tax Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)** with Singapore in 2016 to check tax evasion.
- **Bilateral exercises** by the three services: **Exercise Agni Warrior** (Army), **Exercise SIMBEX** (Navy) and **Air Force Exercise Joint Military Training (JMT)**.
- India was one of the first countries to recognize Singapore in 1965.



### India-Spain Declare 2026 as 'Dual Year' for Culture, Tourism, and AI

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, announced that 2026 will be marked as a 'dual year' between India and Spain to celebrate culture, tourism, and advancements in artificial intelligence.
- India and Spain currently annual trade worth USD 10 billion.



### Georgia Certified Malaria-Free by WHO

- Georgia joins the ranks of 45 countries and 1 territory that have achieved this milestone.
- Certification of malaria elimination is granted by WHO when a country has proven, beyond reasonable doubt, that the chain of indigenous transmission has been interrupted nationwide for at least the previous three consecutive years.



### About Malaria:

- caused by the **Plasmodium parasite** - spread to humans through the bites of **infected female Anopheles mosquitoes**.
- It is a **life-threatening** disease primarily found in **tropical countries**.

### Transmission

- Five species of parasites can cause malaria in humans and 2 of these species – **Plasmodium falciparum** and **Plasmodium vivax** – pose the greatest threat.



### International Pashmina Festival

- The first three-day International Pashmina Festival cum Exhibition organised by Nepal Pashmina Industries Association and the Confederation of Nepalese Industries
- Nepal is one of the prominent producers of authentic Pashmina, often branded as "**Chyangra Pashmina**".

### Pashmina Shawl:

- **Originating from Kashmir**, these shawls are known for their exceptional craftsmanship and the **use of fine Ladakhi Cashmere wool**.
- The word "Pashmina" is derived from the **Persian word "Pashm,"** which means "soft gold" or "soft wool."
- A **cashmere wool** itself is obtained from the undercoat of the Changthangi goat (**Capra aegagrus hircus**), also known as the **Pashmina goat**, which is native to the high altitudes of the Himalayas in regions like **Ladakh in India, Nepal, and Tibet**.

## Sports

### **Khelo India Winter Games begins**

- The fifth edition of Khelo India Winter Games 2025 will be held in the UT of Ladakh and J&K from Jan. 23-27 and Feb. 22-25, respectively, across two ice and four snow disciplines.
- The first phase of the event is being hosted by the Union Territory of Ladakh and will run until January 27th, 2025. The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will host the snow games from February 22nd to 25th.
- Under the Khelo India Scheme, the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) organizes National-level competitions, i.e., Khelo India Youth Games, Khelo India University Games, Khelo India Para Games and Khelo India Winter Games
- Starting in 2020
- So far 8 editions of Khelo India Youth and University Games and 3 editions of Winter Games and 1 edition of Khelo India Para Games have been successfully conducted.
- In KIWG 2024, Maharashtra excelled in skating, clinching 20 medals, including six golds.
- Karnataka also bagged six golds, finishing second with a total of eight medals, while host Ladakh achieved a historic milestone with two gold medals in speed skating, securing third place overall with 13 medals.



### **5<sup>th</sup> edition of Khelo India Winter Games concludes in Ladakh**

- The KIWG 2025 is being held in two phases.
- The **first phase** (competing in ice hockey and ice skating) **was held in Ladakh from January 23 to 27**
- The **second phase** (Alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, ski-mountaineering and snowboarding) will be held in **Jammu and Kashmir from February 22 to 25**.
- **In the first phase - Ladakh finish on top**
- Tamil Nadu shines in skating
- Army retains ice hockey crown
- Competing in disciplines **across six winter sports** - A total of 136 medals
- The **Indian Army won the Khelo India Winter Games last year** after winning 10 gold medals, five silver and six bronze.
- The **first three editions of KIWG were hosted and won by Jammu and Kashmir in 2020, 2021 and 2023**.

### **Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Smriti Mandhana on ICC 2024 Winner List**



### **ICC Awards 2024 winners list**

- **ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year** - Jasprit Bumrah
- **ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year** - Smriti Mandhana

- ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year** - Azmatullah Omarzai (AFG)
- ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year**: Arshdeep Singh (IND)
- ICC Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year**: Amelia Kerr (NZL)
- ICC Umpire of the Year** - Richard Illingworth (ENG)
- Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year** - to be announced
- Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year** - to be announced

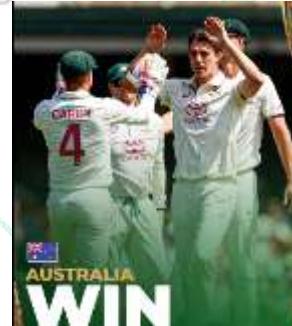


#### ICC Awards 2024

- Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year** New Zealand's Melie Kerr
- Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year** - India's Jasprit Bumrah

#### **Cricket: Australia defeated India to Clinch Border-Gavaskar Trophy**

- In Test Cricket, Australia defeated India in Sydney and clinched the Border-Gavaskar Trophy
- Australia has also qualified for the final of the ICC World Test Championship 2023-2025.**
- They will face South Africa in the final, which is to be held in June this year.
- Jasprit Bumrah** declared **Player of the Series**.
- Scott Boland** adjudged the **Player of the Match**.
- The Border-Gavaskar Trophy is an International Test cricket trophy played between India and Australia
- Instituted in the 1996-97 season.
- The series is named after distinguished former captains, Australia's Allan Border and India's Sunil Gavaskar.
- It is played via Test series



Year	Host Country	Winner	Winning captain
2024-25	Australia	Australia	Pat Cummins
1996-97	India	India	Sachin Tendulkar

#### **Karnataka Clinch Vijay Hazare Trophy For Record 5th Time**

- Karnataka ended a five-year title drought as they defeated Vidarbha by 36 runs to claim their record-extending fifth Vijay Hazare Trophy title after the 2024-25 edition final at the Kotambi Stadium in Vadodara.
- Karnataka claimed their maiden title in the 2013-14 season before defending the title in the following season.



Edition	Winner	Runner-up	Most runs	Most wickets
2007-08	Saurashtra	Bengal (1)	Ajinkya Rahane (Mumbai)	Vishal Bhatia (Himachal Pradesh)
2008-09	Tamil Nadu (1)	Bengal (2)	Virat Kohli (Delhi)	Shoaib Ahmed (Hyderabad)
2009-10	Tamil Nadu (2)	Bengal (3)	Shreevats Goswami (Bengal)	Yo Mahesh (Tamil Nadu)
2010-11	Jharkhand	Gujarat	Ishank Jaggi (Jharkhand)	Amit Mishra (Haryana)
2011-12	Bengal	Mumbai	Wriddhiman Saha (Bengal)	Parvinder Awana (Delhi)
2012-13	Delhi	Assam	Robin Uthappa (Karnataka)	Pritam Das (Assam)
2013-14	Karnataka	Railways	Robin Uthappa (Karnataka)	Vinay Kumar (Karnataka)
2014-15	Karnataka (2)	Punjab (1)	Manish Pandey (Karnataka)	Abhimanyu Mithun (Karnataka)
2015-16	Gujarat	Delhi	Mandeep Singh (Punjab)	Jasprit Bumrah (Gujarat)
2016-17	Tamil Nadu (3)	Bengal (4)	Dinesh Karthik (Tamil Nadu)	Aswin Crist (Tamil Nadu)

2017–18	Karnataka (3)	Saurashtra	<a href="#">Mayank Agarwal</a> (Karnataka)	<a href="#">Mohammed Siraj</a> (Hyderabad)
2018–19	Mumbai (1)	Delhi (2)	Abhinav Mukund (Tamil Nadu)	Shahbaz Nadeem (Jharkhand)
2019–20	Karnataka (4)	Tamil Nadu	Devdutt Padikkal (Karnataka)	Pritam Das (Assam)
2020–21	Mumbai (2)	<a href="#">Uttar Pradesh</a> (1)	<a href="#">Prithvi Shaw</a> (Mumbai)	Shivam Sharma (Uttar Pradesh)
2021–22	Himachal Pradesh	Tamil Nadu (2)	Ruturaj Gaikwad ( <a href="#">Maharashtra</a> )	Yash Thakur (Vidarbha)
2022–23	Saurashtra (2)	Maharashtra	Narayan Jagadeesan (Tamil Nadu)	Vasuki Koushik (Karnataka)
2023–24	Haryana	<a href="#">Rajasthan</a> (2)	Arslan Khan ( <a href="#">Chandigarh</a> )	<a href="#">Harshal Patel</a> (Haryana)
2024–25	Karnataka (5)	Vidarbha	Karun Nair (Vidarbha)	Arshdeep Singh (Punjab)

### Australia Clinches ICC Women's Championship Trophy

- Australia have now **won all three editions** of the championship, which was **instituted in 2014**
- The team was **presented with the prestigious ICC Women's Championship Trophy** in Melbourne after emerging victorious in the **10-team competition** that serves as a **pathway to the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025**.
- Captain Alyssa Healy**
- ICC Director Mike Baird.
- First two editions (2014–16 & 2017–20) featured 8 teams
- Third edition (2022–25) expanded to 10 teams



### NZ batter Martin Guptill retires from international cricket

- will continue to play in the T20 leagues around the world.
- last played for New Zealand in 2022
- Guptill is the first Kiwi player to score a hundred on ODI debut** and he also became the **first New Zealander to score an ODI double-century** during the ICC World Cup 2015 .



### Smriti Mandhana smashes fastest ODI hundred by an Indian woman cricketer

- Smriti Mandhana smashed the fastest ODI century by an Indian woman **during the third ODI against Ireland** at the Niranjan Shah Stadium in Rajkot
- She reached the milestone **in just 70 deliveries**, surpassing Harmanpreet Kaur's record of 87 balls
- The Indian women's team hit 435 for five wickets and has now crossed the men's highest ODI score (418/5 against West Indies in Indore back in 2011)



### Bumrah named ICC Men's Player of Month for December 2024

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the ICC Men's and Women's Players of the Month for December 2024 as India's Jasprit Bumrah and Australia's Annabel Sutherland.



### Bangladesh Cricketer Tamim Iqbal Retires from International Cricket

- Former Bangladesh one-day captain Tamim Iqbal has announced his retirement from international cricket.

- Tamim made his international debut in a 2007 One-Day International (ODI) against Zimbabwe in Harare.

### Ira Jadhav becomes highest individual scorer in Women's U19 One Day trophy

- 14-year-old Ira Jadhav smashes 346, sets record for highest U-19 score by an Indian
- Fourteen-year-old Ira Jadhav became the first Indian to score a triple hundred in Under-19 Women's ODI trophy (Youth List-A) match between Mumbai and Meghalaya at the Alur Cricket Stadium in Bangalore.
- world record in the segment stands in the name of Lizelle Lee of South Africa, who made 427 in 2010 in a domestic match



**Shreyas Iyer appointed as Punjab Kings captain for IPL 2025**

### Michael Clarke inducted into Australian Cricket Hall of Fame

- Former Australian cricketer Michael Clarke was inducted into the Australian Hall of Fame
- The 43-year-old is the 64th member to be included in the list.
- Under Clarke's leadership, Australia won the 2015 World Cup and also won the famous 2013/14 Ashes Down



### Spanish Super Cup: Barcelona defeats Real Madrid

- Barcelona crushed Real Madrid to secure their 15th Spanish Super Cup crown at King Abdullah Sports City in Jeddah Saudi Arabia.



**Nagaland Chief Minister launches inaugural season of Nagaland Super League 2025**

CM Neiphiu Rio inaugurates Chumoukedima Football Stadium and launches Nagaland Super League  
President of All Indian Football Federation & Jt. Secretary Indian Olympic Association - **Kalyan Chaubey**

### AFC Asian Cup 2027

- The AFC Asian Cup 2027 will take place from January 7 to February 5 across three cities in Saudi Arabia—Riyadh, Jeddah, and Al Khobar. The Kingdom will be hosting Asia's top 24 national teams.
- The AFC Asian Cup is a men's football championship that takes place every four years and is the premier football tournament in Asia
- The first AFC Asian Cup was held in 1956, with South Korea winning the inaugural title.



### R Vaishali Wins Bronze at World Blitz Chess Championship 2024

- Indian Grandmaster Vaishali Rameshbabu clinches Bronze at the World Blitz Chess Championship 2024.
- Ju Wenjun clinched the women's blitz crown



### Magnus Carlsen & Ian Nepomniachtchi share World Blitz Chess Championship title 2024

- Norway's Magnus Carlsen and Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi opted to share World Blitz Championship title after three sudden-death games failed to produce a winner.
- This is the first time in history that two players have shared the World Blitz title



### Gukesh becomes highest-ranked Indian at 4th in latest FIDE rankings, displaces Erigaisi

Indian Grandmaster Iniyan Panneerselvam clinched the 9th Johor International Open chess tournament title in Malaysia



### India to Host FIDE Chess World Cup 2025

- India will host the prestigious FIDE World Cup 2025 chess tournament
- It will be held from October 31 to November 27.
- India has previously hosted a FIDE World Cup — that was way back in 2002 in [Hyderabad](#).
- Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand had won that event.
- 2025 will see a separate FIDE Women's World Cup also being hosted



### Australian Open: Jannik Sinner & Madison Key won singles titles

- **Jannik Sinner from Italy** won his second consecutive Australian Open championship
- defeated World No. 2 **Alexander Zverev**
- Jannik Sinner continued to occupy the No. 1 spot in the latest ATP Rankings
- **Madison Key of the US** wins Women's singles Australian Open title, her first Grand Slam crown
- Defeated two-time defending champion **Aryna Sabalenka**



### Djokovic Sets Record for Most Grand Slam Matches

- Novak Djokovic added yet another record to his lengthy list, by reaching 430 at the Australian Open
- Djokovic has won the most Grand Slam singles titles of any man, 24, ahead of Rafael Nadal's 22 and Federer's 20



### The India Open 2025

- Paris 2024 Olympic champions Viktor Axelsen of Denmark and Republic of Korea's An Se-young registered thumping victories to clinch the men's and women's singles titles, respectively, at the India Open 2025 badminton tournament in New Delhi
- **Men's doubles:** Goh Sze Fei/Nu Izzuddin (MAS) bt Kim Won-ho/Seo Seung-jae (KOR)



- **Women's doubles:** Arisa Igarashi/Ayako Sakuramoto (JPN) bt Kim Hye-jeong/Kong Hee-yong (KOR)
- **Mixed doubles:** Jiang Zhenbang/Wei Yixin (CHN) bt Thom Gicquel/Delphine Delrue (FRA)

#### Anahat Singh clinches U-17 Girl's Singles title at British Junior Open

- India's **Anahat Singh** defeated Egypt's Malika Elkaraksy for the women's Under-17 title at the **British Junior Open 2025 squash** tournament in Birmingham.
- This marked Anahat's third British Junior Open title, after 2019 and 2023.
- Anahat clinched the **Western India Slam in Mumbai** in December
- and the list also includes the **JSW Willingdon Little Masters**, the Hamdard Squashers Northern Slam and the Chennai and Kolkata legs of the HCL Squash Tour.
- The teenager also successfully **defended her Indian senior and junior national titles in 2024** and broke into the top 100 of the women's PSA rankings for the first time.
- She is currently world No. 82 in the senior rankings.



#### Kiran Jadhav wins air rifle gold at Lakshya Cup shooting Championship

- Kiran Jadhav of Navy clinched the gold medal in the **air rifle open event of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lakshya Cup shooting championship** at the Kamala Sports Academy in Panvel



#### India's Jyothi Yarraj wins gold medal in women's 60m indoor hurdles in France

- Jyothi Yarraj clinched gold in her first race of the season, that too with a **national record, winning the 60m hurdles event by clocking 8.04 seconds** at the Elite Indoor Meeting in Nantes, France.
- She also holds the **national outdoor 100m hurdles record of 12.78 seconds**.
- She is the **reigning 100m hurdles Asian champion** and won a **silver medal in the Hangzhou Asian Games in 2023** with a time of 12.91 seconds.



#### Odisha Warriors crowned inaugural champions of Women's Hockey India League (HIL) 2024-25

- Odisha Warriors clinching the title victory over JSW Soorma Hockey Club in the final,
- held at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Munda Astro Turf Hockey Stadium in Ranchi.
- Player of the Tournament: Jyoti (JSW Soorma Hockey Club)



#### 10-year-old Atiqa Mir set to become first Indian female to race in World Series Karting

- India's 10-year-old karting sensation Atiqa Mir is set to become the first female from the country to race in the World Series Karting (WSK) Championships after being signed by 29-time champions Babyrace for a full season.
- She will race in all three WSK Championships this year: the WSK Super Master Series, the WSK Euro Series and the WSK Final Cup as a debutant.



#### Rupa Bayor becomes India's first taekwondo player in top 10 World Poomsae rankings

- Rupa Bayor, a 23-year-old Taekwondo player from Arunachal Pradesh, has etched her name in history as the first Indian to break into the top 10 of the World Poomsae Rankings.



- achieved significant success on the international stage, including a silver medal at the Asian Open in Indonesia.

### Inaugural edition of World Pickleball League to begin in Mumbai

- The World Pickleball League (WPBL), India's first franchise-based Pickleball league, is set to make history at Mumbai's iconic Brabourne Stadium Cricket Club of India (CCI) stadium.
- Beginning January 24, the league becomes the first non-cricket sporting tournament to be held on CCI's renowned cricket ground in over 15 years.
- Established in 1933, the Cricket Club of India stands as an enduring symbol of India's rich sporting heritage.
- Co-founded by former Indian tennis players Gaurav Natekar and Arati, Co-founder of WPBL, Gaurav Natekar



### Kho Kho World Cup 2025: Trophy, mascots Tara and Tejas unveiled in Delhi

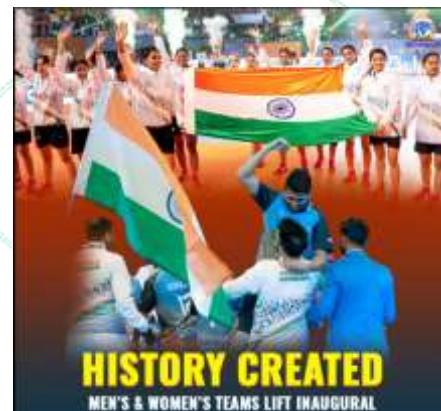
ahead of inaugural edition

- The Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) unveiled the trophies for the first-ever Kho Kho World Cup, scheduled for January 13-19, 2025.
- Under the aegis of the Sports Authority Of India (SAI), the tournament will showcase 21 men's and 20 women's teams from 24 countries across six continents at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi.
- The World Cup will feature two trophies – a blue trophy for the men's championship and a green trophy for the women's event.
- The Federation also introduced 'Tejas' and 'Tara,' a dynamic duo of gazelles serving as the official mascots for the tournament.
- KKFI have roped in Tiger Shroff as co-brand ambassador for Kho-Kho World Cup 2025 along with Salman Khan
- The World Cup's official tagline, #TheWorldGoesKho



### Kho Kho World Cup 2025: India scripts history in inaugural edition as both Men's & women's teams lift trophies

- The Indian men's and women's teams created history at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in by beating Nepal in their respective finals and winning the Kho Kho World Cup 2025 titles.
- The Kho Kho World Cup 2025 was held in New Delhi, India, from January 13-19, 2025.
- This was the inaugural edition of the Kho Kho World Cup. Backed by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), the tournament featured 20 men's and 19 women's teams.
- Men's Final India defeated Nepal 54-36. Key player: Captain Pratik Waikar.
- Women's Final India defeated Nepal 78-40. Key player: Captain Priyanka Ingle.



### Mascots:

- Tejas (Men's Team): A blue gazelle symbolizing brilliance and energy.
- Tara (Women's Team): An orange gazelle representing guidance and aspiration.



Eritrea's Berhane Tesfay and Kenya's Joyce Chepkemoi Tele won the men's and women's elite races, respectively, at the Mumbai Marathon 2025.

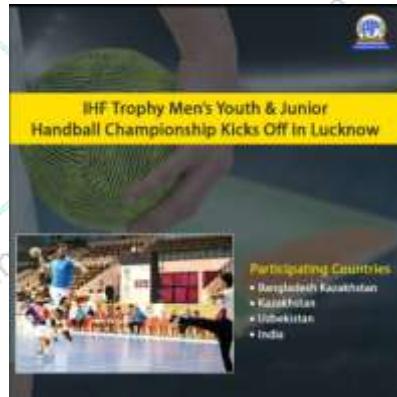


### Logo and Mascot Unveiled for 23<sup>rd</sup> National Para Athletics Championship 2025

- Scheduled to take place from February 17-20, the championship will bring together over 1,700 para athletes from across the country,
- Location: Tamil Nadu
- Upcoming Event: Para Athletics World Championships 2025 in New Delhi (Sept 26 – Oct 5, 2025)

**IHF Trophy Men's Youth & Junior Handball Championship Kicks Off in Lucknow**

- The men's youth and junior tournaments of the IHF Trophy Asia will be staged in Lucknow, India from 3 to 7 January 2025.
- The event serves as qualification event for the Intercontinental Phase of the IHF Trophy.
- Four countries**—Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and India—are taking part in the tournament.

**Varun Tomar Clinches National Shooting Championship Title in Men's 10m Air Pistol**

- Varun Tomar from the Indian Army** has become the national shooting champion after winning the **Men's 10-meter Air Pistol** finals of the **67th National Shooting Championship 2024** at Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi.

**Neeraj Chopra named world's best male javelin thrower in 2024 by US magazine**

- India's Neeraj Chopra has been named the best javelin thrower of 2024 by the respected **US-based sports magazine Track and Field News**.
- Chopra had secured a silver medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

**Mo Farah to Lead 20<sup>th</sup> Mumbai Marathon as International Ambassador**

- Mo Farah, the legendary distance runner**, has been named the International Event Ambassador for the **20th edition of the Tata Mumbai Marathon**, to be held on January 19.
- holds a record number of **four Olympic and six World Championship gold**.
- Mo Farah, a Somalia-born former British athlete**, is the **first man in history to retain the 5000m and 10000m titles at the Olympics as well as the World Championships**.

**BCCI Will Have New Secretary and Treasurer**

- Devajit Saikia**, a former Assam cricketer, is set to become the **new secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)**, while **Prabhtej Singh Bhatia from Chhattisgarh State Cricket Sangh (CSCS)** will take over as the **new treasurer**.
- Saikia**, currently the joint secretary and interim secretary since December, **will succeed Jay Shah**, who recently took over as independent chairman of the International Cricket Council.

**Bahadur Sagoo to Succeed Sumariwalla as AFI President**

- Former Asian Games champ Bahadur Singh Sagoo elected as new **Athletics Federation of India** president unopposed for a **four year term**.
- He **replaced Adille Sumariwalla**, who was the president for three consecutive terms.
- Sagoo is a **one-time Asian Games gold medallist** and a two-time Olympian in shot put. He clinched gold at the **2002 Asiad in Busan**.
- A **Padma Shri recipient (2006)**, Bahadur Singh Sagoo represented India at the **Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004 Olympics**.

**Jay Shah Joins New MCC Advisory Board (World Cricket Connects Advisory Board)**

- Jay Shah, the ICC chair and ex-secretary of the BCCI**, has joined a new **Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) advisory board**, which will replace the club's **world cricket committee**.



- He is among 13 founding members of the new World Cricket Connects advisory board, which will be chaired by former MCC president Kumar Sangakkara.

#### Geoff Allardice to step down as ICC CEO

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) confirmed that Geoff Allardice has decided to step down as ICC Chief Executive.
- Appointed as the ICC's CEO in November 2021
- ICC Chair - Mr. Jay Shah
- The ICC Board will now begin the process to identify Allardice's successor.
- The eight-team Champions Trophy tournament is scheduled to take place from February 19 to March 9.



#### Unprecedented 6 women in AFI Athletes Commission; Neeraj among 3 male members

- Long-jump great Anju Bobby George named Chairperson of AFI's Athletes Commission
- Other 5 women on the commission :
  1. runner Jyotirmoyee Sikdar,
  2. discus thrower Krishna Poonia,
  3. hurdler M.D. Valsamma,
  4. steeplechaser Sudha Singh
  5. runner Sunita Rani.
- 6. The previous Commission featured four women.
- 7. Neeraj Chopra being its most prominent male member.
- 8. The other two male members of the Commission are 3000m steeplechaser Avinash Sable and newly-elected AFI president Bahadur Singh Sagoo
- 9. Outgoing AFI President Adille Sumariwalla will continue to be a part of the executive council as an ex-officio member as he is a part of the World Athletics Council.

#### Gujarat to host 1st Olympic Research Conference

- Officials from Indian Olympic Association (IOA) along with a host of experts are scheduled to meet in Gujarat for discussing the strategies and innovative economic models for financing and building "sustainable" sports infrastructure that will help India position itself as a strong contender to host the 2036 Olympics.
- The 1st International Olympic Research Conference from January 27-30, which will discuss financing and innovative economic models for hosting the Olympics in India
- The four-day event to be held in collaboration with Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports,
- The event will be held at Gandhinagar-based Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) campus.

#### Kalaripayattu, a traditional martial art from Kerala, is included only as a demonstration event in the 38th National Games in Uttarakhand

- The Indian Kalaripayattu Federation has accused the Indian Olympics Association (IOA) of downgrading the Kalaripayattu to the demonstration section of the event, not the competitive section.
- It was included as a competitive sport in the 37<sup>th</sup> National Games, Goa but relegated to a demonstration sport in the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games, Uttarakhand.



- Kalaripayattu athletes won **22 medals**, including 19 gold, in the 2023 National Games.
- It is one of the **oldest and most scientific** martial arts globally, originating in Kerala.
- The warrior sage **Parasurama** is credited with establishing Kalaripayattu, which **Bodhidharma** (a Buddhist monk from South India) later introduced to China at the **Shaolin Temple in the 5th century AD**.
- Philosophy:** The term "Kalari" in Malayalam refers to a **traditional gymnasium** where "Payattu" (fight or exercise) is taught.
- It emphasizes **mind-body coordination** with techniques inspired by the attack and defense systems of eight animals i.e., elephant, lion, boar, horse, snake, rooster, cat, and fish.

**Types:** Kalaripayattu has two types i.e.,

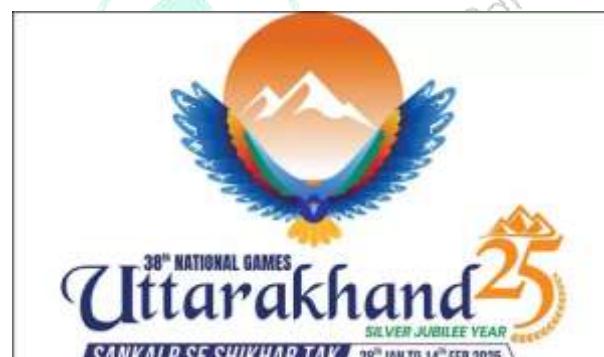
- Northern:** It focuses on **weapons and linear movements**, and
- Southern:** It emphasizes **multi-directional movements with fewer weapons**.

#### Stages of Training:

- Maippayattu:** **Body conditioning** to prepare for combat.
- Kolthari:** Training with **wooden weapons** like short and long sticks.
- Angathari:** Introduction to **sharp metal weapons** after overcoming fear.
- Verumkai:** **Bare-hand fighting** focusing on anatomy for strategic strikes.

#### Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates 38th National Games in Dehradun

- The Uttarakhand government is hosting the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games, with the **support of the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)**.
- From 28<sup>th</sup> Jan-14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025
- The **theme - "Green Games."**
- The Mascot Mauli:** Named after Uttarakhand's State bird, the Himalayan Monal, the mascot Mauli
  - Himalayan monal is a **Schedule – I bird**, according to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and classified as Least Concern (LC) by the IUCN.
- The official torch of the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games, named **Tejaswini**
- The Indian Kalaripayattu Federation has raised concerns over its listing to the "**demonstration section**" after being part of the competition section in the 37th National Games held in 2023.
- It originated and is **widely practiced in Kerala**. The term "**Kalari**" in Malayalam refers to a traditional gymnasium where this martial art, known as Payattu, is taught.



## Economic Survey

### Economic Survey

- The Economic Survey provides a summary of the performance of the Indian economy, government policies, and the outlook for the upcoming financial year.
- First Economic Survey of India: 1950-51.** It was initially presented along with the Union Budget until 1964.
- Now, it is presented one day or a few days before the presentation of the budget.
- Preparation Process: Prepared by the Economic Division of the Department of Economic Affairs in the Finance Ministry. Guided by the **Chief Economic Adviser of India**

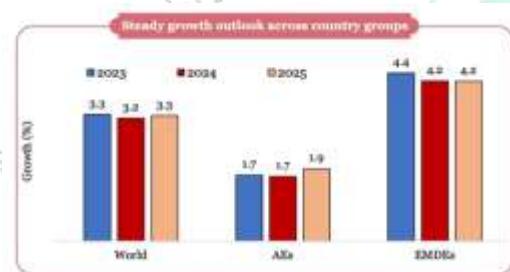
**Content**

- Preface
- STATE OF THE ECONOMY: GETTING BACK INTO THE FAST LANE
- MONETARY AND FINANCIAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS: THE CART AND THE HORSE
- EXTERNAL SECTOR: GETTING FDI RIGHT
- PRICES AND INFLATION: UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS
- MEDIUM TERM OUTLOOK: DEREGULATION DRIVES GROWTH
- INVESTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE: KEEPING IT GOING
- INDUSTRY: ALL ABOUT BUSINESS REFORMS
- SERVICES: NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE OLD WAR HORSE
- AGRICULTURE AND FOOD MANAGEMENT: THE SECTOR OF THE FUTURE
- CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT: ADAPTATION MATTERS
- SOCIAL SECTOR: EXTENDING REACH AND DRIVING EMPOWERMENT
- EMPLOYMENT AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT: EXISTENTIAL PRIORITIES
- LABOUR IN THE AI ERA: CRISIS OR CATALYST

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### STATE OF THE ECONOMY

- 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.



### STATE OF THE ECONOMY

- 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.



### Global Challenges:

- Geopolitical tensions (e.g., Russia-Ukraine conflict, Israel-Hamas conflict) created instability, affecting energy and food security and causing inflation.
- Cyberattacks increased**, with greater impacts due to the digitization of critical infrastructure.



**India ranked second in global cyber attack targets: Report**

### Global Challenges:

- Volatility in global financial markets was influenced by political instability and uncertainty in trade policies.
- The Euro Area:** Growth forecasted to improve from 0.4% in 2023 to 0.8% in 2024, and 1.0% in 2025, supported by a stronger services sector. However, some countries like Germany and Austria faced manufacturing slowdowns.

Chart L.3: Structural weakness in the German economy

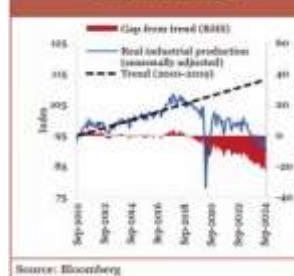
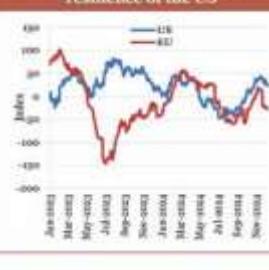


Chart L.4: Citi Economic Surprise indices indicating unexpected resilience of the US



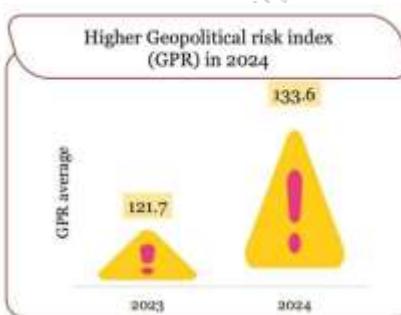
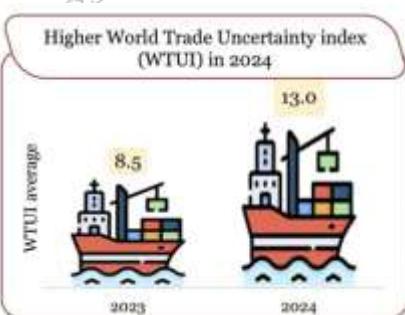
### Eurozone

- The eurozone (or Economic and Monetary Union-EMU) is the geographic area made up of the **20 countries of the European Union that have adopted the euro as the single currency**. The 20 Member States of the Euro Zone are: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.



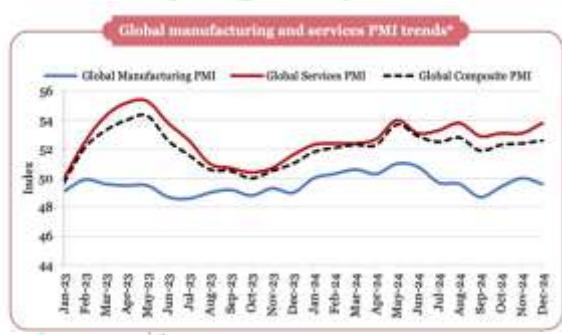
### Suez Canal

- Trade Disruptions : Disruptions in the Suez Canal and shipping delays increased global freight rates, impacting trade flows
- The Suez Canal is a waterway that connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean through the Mediterranean and Red Sea respectively.
- The Canal was built as a joint enterprise between the **French and the Ottoman Empire**.



### Global Manufacturing vs. Services

- Manufacturing:** The global Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for manufacturing showed contraction. Global manufacturing activity was weaker in 2024, with mixed results across regions. India reported the strongest output growth.
- Services:** The global Services PMI remained strong, showing expansion for 23 consecutive months. The financial services sector showed the fastest growth.



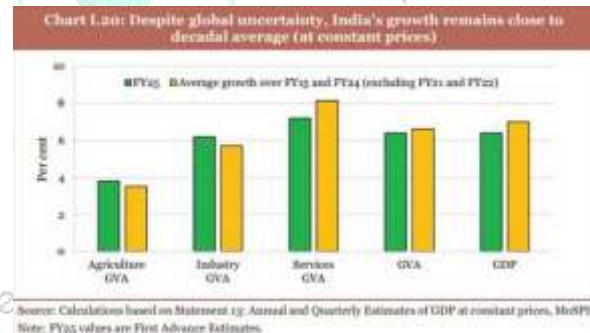
### Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)

- Manufacturing PMI, or Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an economic gauge derived from monthly surveys of companies.
- Started in 1948 by the Institute for Supply Management, PMI is produced globally.
- It assesses business conditions in manufacturing and services sectors.
- Types of PMI :
  - Manufacturing PMI
  - Services PMI

- PMI helps determine if conditions are expanding, contracting, or stable, offering insights into current and future economic health.

## DOMESTIC MACROECONOMIC SITUATION

- Agriculture :** Healthy growth, particularly from the Kharif crop, has helped the sector perform strongly in FY25, improving prospects for food inflation.
- Industry:** The industrial sector showed mixed results, with strong growth in construction, utilities, and recovery in manufacturing. However, global slowdowns and seasonal disruptions have impacted manufacturing growth.
- Services:** Services continued to grow robustly, with financial, real estate, and professional services performing well. Other areas like hospitality, IT, and transport also showed positive growth.



### Inflation and Price Volatility

- Headline inflation dropped** from 5.4% in FY24 to 4.9% in FY25 due to a decline in **core inflation** (non food, non-fuel items). However, food prices remained volatile, driven by factors like supply chain issues and weather disruptions.
- Food inflation rose** from 7.5% in FY24 to 8.4% in FY25, mainly due to price hikes in vegetables and pulses.



### External Sector Stability:

- Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows increased by 17.9% YoY**, showing strong investor confidence. However, foreign portfolio investment (FPI) flows were volatile due to global factors.
- Remittances from abroad played a vital role** in maintaining a stable current account deficit (CAD), which remained manageable at 1.2% of GDP in Q2 FY25.



### Banking and Financial Sector

- The banking sector is stable, with **declining non-performing assets (NPAs)** and strong capital buffers. The profitability of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) improved significantly in FY25.
- The mismatch between credit growth and deposit growth remains a concern but is being monitored.



### Employment and Labour Market:

- India's unemployment rate has dropped from 6% in 2017-18 to 3.2% in 2023-24. The labor force participation rate (LFPR) and worker-to-population ratio (WPR) also showed improvement.
- The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers opportunities to enhance labor productivity and create new jobs.
- However, it will require investments in education and skill development to adapt the workforce for AI-driven changes.

### Worker Population Ratio (WPR)

WPR signifies the proportion of workers/employed persons in the total population.

$$\text{Labor Force Participation Rate} = \frac{\text{Labor Force}}{\text{Working Age Population}}$$




$$WPR = \frac{\text{no. of employed persons}}{\text{Total population}} \times 100$$

## MONETARY POLICY TRENDS

- In October 2024, the MPC shifted to a 'neutral' stance, considering the prevailing inflation and growth outlook.
- CRR Reduction** : In December 2024, the MPC reduced the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) to 4% from 4.5%. This move is expected to inject Rs 1.16 lakh crore liquidity into the banking system.



## Performance of the Banking Sector

- Asset Quality: The Gross Non-Performing Asset (GNPA) ratio of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) has decreased to a 12-year low of 2.6% by September 2024, due to better recoveries, write-offs, and fewer loan defaults.
- Bank deposits continued to grow at double-digit rates**, with term deposits growing faster than current and savings account deposits.
- In December 2024, the RBI raised the interest rate ceiling on **Foreign Currency Non-Resident (FCNR) deposits**, encouraging more foreign inflows.
- Use of AI in Banking: Banks globally have integrated technology like **ATMs, electronic payments, and online banking**.
- AI in India is used in **credit underwriting, risk assessment, portfolio optimization, and chatbots for customer service**. While AI offers benefits, it poses risks like transparency issues, accountability, cyber risks, and system dependencies.



## ROLE OF CAPITAL MARKETS

- Active Listing and Investor Enthusiasm : The primary market witnessed heightened listing activities in FY25. India's share in global IPO listings surged to 30% in 2024 (up from 17% in 2023), making it the top contributor to global capital mobilisation.
- Market Trends : The secondary market experienced significant volatility during FY25, influenced by events like the 2024 general elections, geopolitical tensions, and global economic shifts. Despite this, the market showed a consistent upward trend until September 2024, driven by strong domestic economic prospects and institutional investor inflows.



## India's Insurance Market Performance

- Growth in Premiums : India's total insurance premiums grew by 7.7% in FY24, reaching ₹11.2 lakh crore, despite a slight drop in insurance penetration from 4% to 3.7%.
- Government Initiatives to Increase Insurance Coverage in India
  - Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana (PMJJBY)
  - Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)
  - Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)
  - Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

## CYBERSECURITY IN INDIA

- According to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), the number of cybersecurity incidents reported has been on the rise, with 11.6 lakh incidents in 2020, 14 lakh in 2021, and 13.9 lakh in 2022.
- In the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024**, India secured a Tier 1 ranking with a remarkable score of 98.49 out of 100.



### External Sector- Getting FDI Right

- 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.
- 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.



### Shift Towards Friend-shoring & Nearshoring

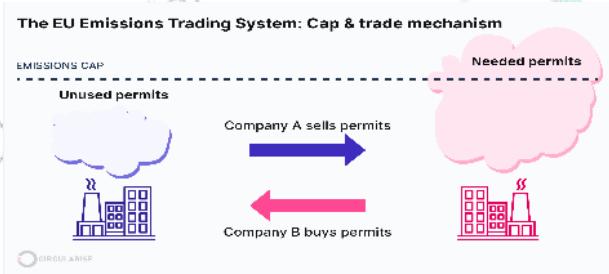
- Friend-shoring:** Countries are shifting trade relations towards politically aligned partners to reduce dependency on geopolitical rivals.
- Nearshoring:** A growing trend where nations shift supply chains closer to home to ensure stability and minimize risks from trade disruptions.

### NON-TARIFF MEASURES

- Governments are increasingly using NTMs (such as regulatory barriers and technical requirements) to control trade flows.
- Many nations protect domestic industries by imposing significant tariffs on certain items.
- World tariff profiles 2023 published by the WTO lists the data on the highest tariff charged by countries.
- The highest tariffs of some other countries include 457% by Japan, 887% by Korea and 350% by the US.

### Climate-Change-Related NTMs on the Rise

- Upcoming EU policies, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), will impact major exporters like India, China, and Turkey.



### India's Textile Exports:

- India is the 6th largest exporter of textiles and apparel globally, contributing 2.3% of GDP, 13% of industrial production, and 12% of total exports.
- India's apparel market share (2.8%) is much lower than China (30%), Bangladesh (9%), and Vietnam (7%).
- Key markets: Europe and the US: 66% of India's apparel exports UK: 8% UAE: 7%



### DGFT 'Trade Connect e-Platform' to Boost MSME Exports

- A single-window online portal launched to help exporters, particularly MSMEs, explore new international markets.
- Developed in collaboration with MSME Ministry, EXIM Bank, Ministry of External Affairs, and financial institutions.
- The platform provides real-time trade insights, connects exporters with government trade entities, and addresses information gaps.



### BALANCE OF PAYMENT (BOP)

- Despite external trade and investment uncertainties, India's BoP remains stable, supported by:

  - Resilient services exports
  - Lower crude oil prices
  - Revival in Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) inflows
  - Recovery in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows

### Current Account Deficit (CAD)

- India's CAD moderated to 1.2% of GDP in Q2 FY25, down from 1.3% in Q2 FY24.
- Strong net services receipts (USD 44.5 billion) and private remittances (USD 31.9 billion) helped cushion the rising CAD.



### FDI Performance

- India crossed USD 1 trillion in cumulative FDI inflows (April 2000 - September 2024), reinforcing its status as a key global investment hub.
- Top FDI recipient sectors in H1 FY25: Services (19.1%) Computer Software & Hardware (14.1%) Trading (9.1%) Non-conventional Energy (7%) Cement & Gypsum (6.1%)



### Portfolio Investment Trends (FPI)

- FPIs turned net buyers in Indian equities from June to September 2024, but outflows of USD 11.5 billion in October and USD 2.5 billion in early November reversed this trend.
- Concerns over slowing earnings growth, high valuations, and geopolitical risks led to temporary investor pullback.

### NRI Deposits & External Borrowings

- NRI deposits surged to USD 10.2 billion (H1 FY25), doubling from USD 5.4 billion in the previous year.
- External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) also increased to USD 9.2 billion, signaling higher foreign lending appetite for Indian corporates.
- India ranks 4th globally in forex reserves, behind China, Japan, and Switzerland.



### External Debt Position

- India's external debt stood at USD 711.8 billion (September 2024), with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 19.4%, a slight increase from 18.8% in June 2024.
- Major currency composition of India's external debt: US Dollar (53.4%) Indian Rupee (31.2%) SDRs (5%) Euro (3%)

### PRICES AND INFLATION

- 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.



### Inflation Rate of Tur

- Tur dal (pigeon pea) prices increased due to production shortfalls in 2022-23 and 2023-24.
- Tur production declined by 13.6% (2022-23) and 10.8% (2023-24).
- A negative correlation (-0.8) between production and inflation shows that low production leads to high price inflation.

### INDIA'S MEDIUM-TERM OUTLOOK

- India aims to become a developed nation (Viksit Bharat) by 2047, requiring an average 8% growth rate at constant prices for the next 10-20 years.
- Geo-Economic Fragmentation (GEF)** is replacing globalization leading to imminent economic realignments and readjustments.



- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is increasingly flowing only to geopolitically aligned countries especially in strategic sectors.
- Policies like Friend-shoring (investing in allied nations) and re-shoring (bringing production back home) hurt these economies the most.



### Investment & Infrastructure

- 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).
- 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.

### Industry

- 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.
- As per the WIPO Report 2022, India ranks sixth among the top 10 patent filing offices globally.

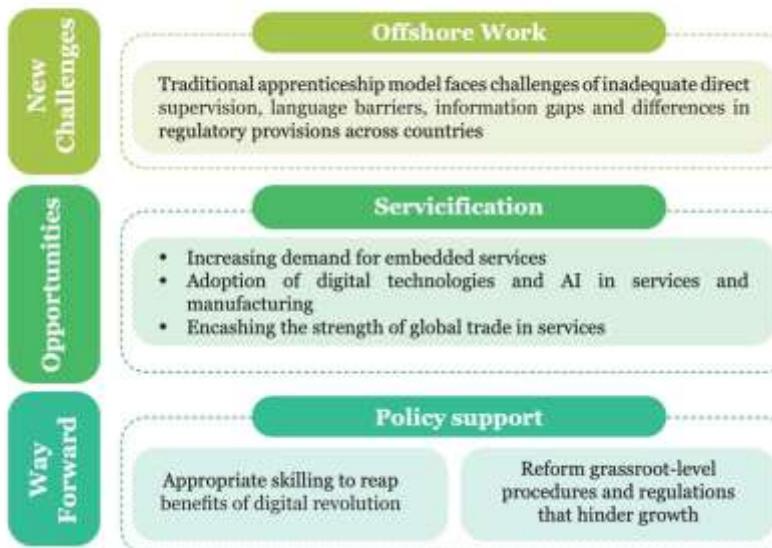


### Services

- 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)**.
- India's services export growth surged to 12.8 per cent during April–November FY25, up from 5.7 per cent in FY24.

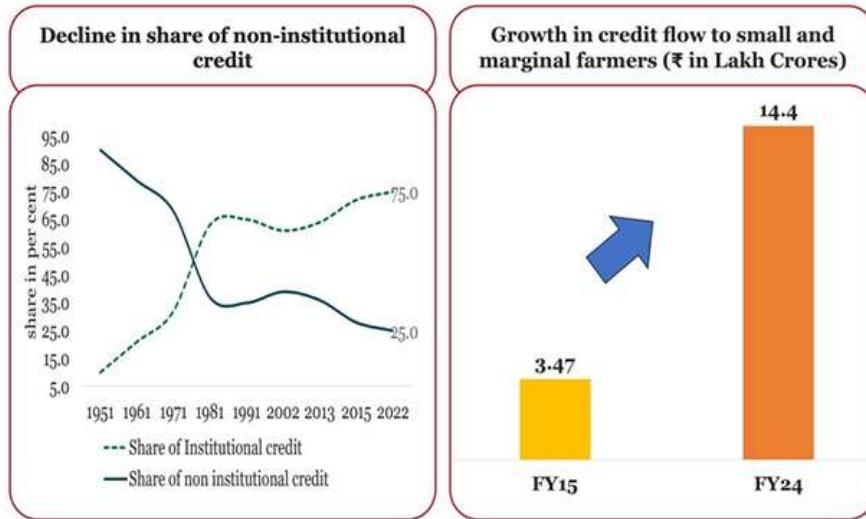


#### Challenges, opportunities and way forward for services



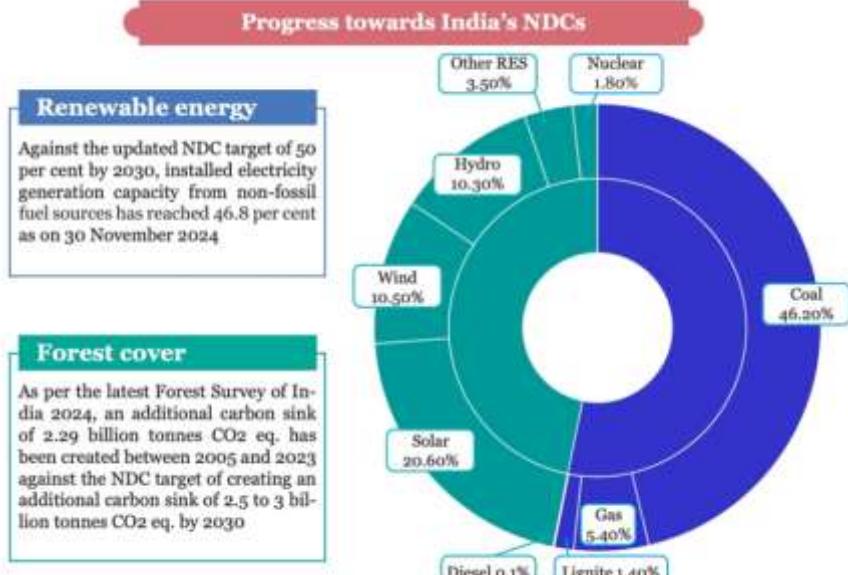
### Agriculture & Food Management

- The 'Agriculture and Allied Activities' sector contributes approximately 16 per cent of the country's GDP for FY24 (PE) at current prices.
- 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.
- The provision of free food grains under PMGKAY for another five years, reflects the long term commitment of Govt towards food and nutrition security.



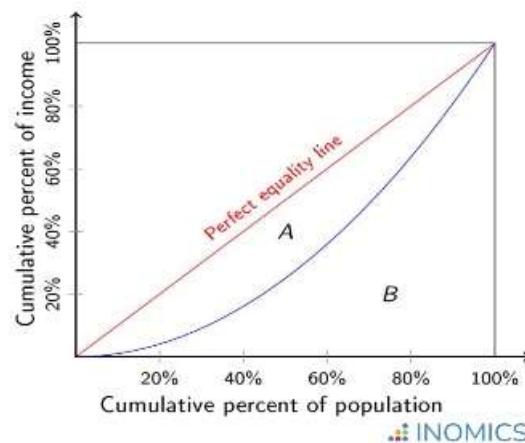
### Climate & Environment

- 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**.



### Social Sector

- 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.
- The Gini Coefficient is a number that measures income inequality in a country.
- It tells us how evenly or unevenly wealth is distributed among people in a society.
- If everyone earns the same amount, the Gini Coefficient is 0 (perfect equality).



- If one person has all the money and everyone else has nothing, the Gini Coefficient is 1 (perfect inequality).
- Most countries fall somewhere in between, with values between 0 and 1.
- 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.

### Employment & Skill Development

- 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.

### AI Era

- AI is anticipated to surpass human performance in critical decision-making across various fields, including healthcare, research, criminal justice, education, business, and financial services.
- 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.
- 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.

